

Senate Ethics Committee

LUKE A. RANKIN
CHAIRMAN

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THE SENATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
P. O. BOX 142
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29202

April 17, 2013

VIA HAND-DELIVERY

Senator Robert I. Ford
506 Gressette Building
Columbia, SC 29202

**RE: Complaint of the South Carolina Senate Ethics Committee Against
Senator Robert I. Ford**

Dear Senator Ford:

The Senate Ethics Committee (the "Committee") hereby issues this sworn Complaint against you for alleged violations of South Carolina's Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (the "Act"). After a preliminary investigation, the Committee has concluded that probable cause exists to support each of the allegations herein listed. Therefore, pursuant to Senate Rules 44 and 44.1, it is necessary to convene a formal hearing on this matter.

You have the right to be represented by independent counsel and to file a response to this Complaint with the Committee within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt. Prior to the hearing, you also have the right to examine all evidence in the Committee's possession relating to the charges. The Committee has the right to issue subpoenas to compel the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books and papers, as necessary to more fully investigate this matter.

At the hearing, you and/or your attorney have the right to call and examine witnesses, introduce exhibits, and cross-examine any opposing witnesses. The hearing must be conducted in open session. You also have the right to waive your appearance at the hearing, in which case the Committee will proceed with a disposition based on its preliminary findings and any additional evidence that it may obtain via subpoena or otherwise.

After the hearing, the Committee shall determine and issue its findings of fact. If the Committee finds, based upon competent and substantial evidence, that any of the alleged violations have occurred, it shall do the following: (1) administer a public reprimand; (2) require the payment of a civil penalty not exceeding \$2,000 for each non-technical violation; (3) require

the forfeiture of all gifts, receipts, profits, or the value thereof, obtained in violation of Chapter 13, Title 8 or Chapter 17, Title 2; (4) recommend expulsion; (5) in the case of alleged criminal violations, refer the matter to the Attorney General for investigation; or (6) require a combination of items (1) through (5), as deemed necessary and appropriate.

The Committee shall then report its findings in writing to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Such report must be accompanied by an order of punishment and supported and signed by a majority of the Committee's members. You would then have ten (10) days from the date of the notification of the Committee's decision to appeal any action to the full Senate. If the Committee finds that you have not violated the Act, it shall dismiss the charges.

The Committee will notify you in writing once it has scheduled a hearing on this matter.

ALLEGATIONS

The Committee alleges, during the reporting periods covered by Campaign Disclosure Reports due July 10, 2009, through April 10, 2013 (the "Periods Involved"), the following:

1. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you utilized campaign funds to defray personal expenses that were unrelated to your campaign or office and otherwise converted such funds to personal use, each of which is a separate violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-1348 (Supp. 2012).
2. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you misrepresented on your Campaign Disclosure Reports the amounts of various expenditures such that they were inconsistent with the actual amount of such expenditures reflected on your campaign banking statements, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.
3. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you misrepresented on your Campaign Disclosure Reports the purpose of certain expenditures to make such expenditures appear as if they were related to you campaign or office when the actual purpose of such expenditures were personal in nature, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.
4. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you made numerous cash withdrawals in excess of \$100, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1348.
5. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you failed to report numerous contributions from individuals and entities on your Campaign Disclosure Reports, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.
6. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you failed to report numerous expenditures from your campaign banking account on your Campaign Disclosure Reports, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

7. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you failed to report on your Campaign Disclosure Reports various campaign loans and campaign loan repayments, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

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State of South Carolina
County of Richland

PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME, this 17th day of April, 2013, the following
Members of the Senate Ethics Committee:

Senator Luke A. Rankin, Chairman

Luke A. Rankin

Senator Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.

Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.

Senator John E. Courson

John E. Courson

Senator Robert W. Hayes, Jr.

Robert W. Hayes, Jr.

Senator J. Yancey McGill

J. Yancey McGill

Senator Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.

Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.

Senator Glenn G. Reese

Glenn G. Reese

Senator C. Bradley Hutto

C. Bradley Hutto

Senator John W. Matthews, Jr.

John W. Matthews, Jr.

Senator Darrell Jackson

Darrell Jackson

Who, first being duly sworn, says that he has read and knows the contents of the above
Complaint and that the allegations contained therein are true and correct to the best of his own
knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those,
he believes them to be true.

Leonard P. Odom

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission Expires: 3-15-2021

PROOF OF SERVICE

I, Luke A. Rankin, hereby certify that I hand-delivered and served a sworn Complaint of the Senate Ethics Committee upon Senator Robert I. Ford on this 17th day of April, 2013.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke A. Rankin", is written over a horizontal line.

Luke A. Rankin
Chairman, Senate Ethics Committee