

STATE OF COLORADO
SECRETARY OF STATE
1700 BROADWAY #550
DENVER, COLORADO 80290

BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF STATE, COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER

AHO Case No. _____

ED Case Nos. 2024-77; 2024-116

In the Matter of

ELECTIONS DIVISION OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

Complainant,

vs.

PUEBLO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY,

Respondent.

COMPLAINT

Pursuant to § 1-45-111.7, C.R.S. (2025), the Elections Division of the Secretary of State files this complaint against the Pueblo County Democratic Party, (“Respondent” or “the Party”).

BACKGROUND

1. To provide voters with information about the sources of election-related communications, Colorado law requires political parties, including “affiliated party organizations” to report their contributions received, and expenditures made.

2. Here, the Pueblo County Democratic Party reported minimal contributions, but did not include in those reports hundreds of thousands of dollars of contributions that were made to an affiliated party organization, the Pueblo County Democratic Central Committee (“the Central Committee”), through the Central Committee’s hosting of bingo nights. These contributions were used for party expenses, including to maintain a building that the Party used for various Party events.

3. Because the Central Committee’s contributions and expenditures were not reported, the Elections Division brings this action for appropriate relief.

PARTIES

4. Complainant is the Elections Division (“Division”) of the Colorado Secretary of State.

5. Respondent is the Pueblo County Democratic Party, a political party committee registered with the Secretary of State’s Elections Division, ID # 20095621102.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. The Division has jurisdiction under § 1-45-111.7.

7. The Division files this complaint with a hearing officer consistent with § 1-45-111.7(5)(a)(IV).

8. This complaint is filed within 30 days of the Division’s May 15, 2026, Notice of Continued Investigation. § 1-45-111.7(5)(a)(IV).

9. Venue is proper before the hearing officer under § 1-45-111.7(5).

ALLEGATIONS

10. This case involves the relationship between two entities: (1) the Pueblo County Democratic Party, and (2) the Pueblo County Democratic Central Committee.

11. Under Colorado law, a “political party” is “any group of registered electors who, by petition or assembly, nominate candidates for the official general election ballot. ‘Political party’ includes affiliated party organizations at the state, county, and election district levels, and all such affiliates are considered to be a single entity for the purpose of” Colorado law. Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(13).

12. According to the Party’s “Plan of Organization and Rules,” the Central Committee “is the name of the non-profit corporation of the Democratic Party Central Committee of Pueblo, which has been established to facilitate support for the Democratic Party, to do all lawful things to support issues and candidates of the Democratic Party, to

serve as a non-profit depository for contributions received by the Democratic party, and to assist in supporting Democratic Party issues, programs, candidates, and platforms.”

13. The Plan further states that the Central Committee is “the governing body of the Party in Pueblo County and shall be vested with all the power and authority of the Party, except that vested in the County Assembly or limited by these Rules.”

14. On information and belief, the Party’s leadership committee is the Central Committee, which is made up of Officers of the Party, its executive committee, and precinct organizers within Pueblo County.

15. The Central Committee’s registered agent, on its articles of incorporation filed with the Secretary of State’s business and licensing division is David Michael Poulin, who also serves as the Party’s registered agent on its filings with the Secretary of State’s Elections Division.

16. The Central Committee’s articles of incorporation indicate that its purpose is: “(a) to facilitate support for the Democratic Party; (b) to do all lawful things to support issues and candidates of the Democratic Party; (c) to serve as a nonprofit depository for contributions received by the Democratic Party. . . [and] (d) to serve the public through additional programs and campaigns designed to educate and provide information to and for the public and members of the Democratic Party.”

17. In addition to its organizational documents, the Central Committee also holds itself out as a political party. The Central Committee operates bingo games as a “qualified organization” under Colorado’s Bingo and Raffles law. *See* § 24-21-601 *et seq.* Under that law, a “qualified organization” includes “a political party.” § 24-21-607(37)(b)(I).

18. As a nonprofit corporation, the Central Committee prepares profit and loss statements. Those profit and loss statements have historically been titled “Pueblo County Democratic Party Profit & Loss.” The Party also advertises the bingo hosted by the Central Committee on its website, www.pueblodemocrats.com.

19. In 2024, those advertisements included the statement that the Party’s “most important ongoing party fundraiser is our Friday night bingo event,” and that “the non-prize monies that result are what keep our party financially viable.”

20. The advertisements have also said: “We own our Headquarters building outright thanks to bingo (!).”

21. Presently, the Party’s website invites visitors to “Join us for Bingo and support the Pueblo County Democratic Party,” indicating that “The Pueblo County Democratic Party (PCDP) hosts fun-filled bingo nights[.]”

22. Based on the close association between the Party and the Central Committee, the Central Committee is an “affiliated party organization.”

23. This Complaint also relates to a piece of real property owned by the Central Committee and located at 602 W. 9th St. The Central Committee purchased the building in 2013.

24. The Party lists 602 W. 9th St. as its address on its registration with the Secretary of State’s Elections Division.

25. The Party’s website, www.pueblodemocrats.com, lists 602 W. 9th St. as its “headquarters.” On Facebook, the Party often refers to 602 W. 9th St. as its “headquarters,” or “HQ.”



26. In 2023, the Party's Treasurer emailed the Secretary of State with a question regarding appropriate uses of the 602 W. 9th St. property. In that email, he indicated: "Several years back, the Pueblo County Democratic Party bought a building for our organization using bingo funds."

27. On October 16, 2024, the Division received a campaign finance complaint filed by Jonathan Ambler. The First Ambler Complaint alleged that the Party and the Central Committee were affiliated entities, but that the Party had disclosed neither a contribution nor an expenditure related to the purchase of the 602 W. 9th St. property when it was purchased in 2013.

28. The First Ambler Complaint further alleged that there "are other costs associated with this building, such as utilities," but that the Party had not disclosed any such costs on its reports of contributions and expenditures.

29. On December 23, 2024, while the Division was reviewing and investigating the First Ambler Complaint, Ambler filed a second complaint. The Second Ambler Complaint again alleged that the Central Committee was an affiliated entity of the Party, but that the Party had failed to disclose over \$5 million worth of contributions and expenditures made by the Central Committee between 2013 and 2024 related to the Central Committee's Bingo game.

30. At bottom, the core allegation at the heart of the Ambler Complaints was that the Party was reporting relatively meager financial activity, while the bulk of the Party's financial activity was being done by the Central Committee, which was not filing reports of contributions and expenditures.

31. The Division consolidated the two complaints, and on February 28, 2025, the Division moved to dismiss the Ambler Complaints on the grounds that they were not timely filed.

32. On April 4, 2025, the Deputy Secretary of State granted the Motion to Dismiss. As to "allegations stemming from alleged violations that occurred prior to April 19, 2024," the Deputy Secretary agreed that the Ambler Complaints were untimely.

33. The Deputy Secretary disagreed with the Division that allegations relating to deficiencies in the Party's reports filed on June 4, 2024, June 21, 2024,¹ and July 30, 2024, were untimely.

34. However, the Deputy Secretary dismissed claims related to those filings on the basis that because the Central Committee "segregates its bingo and raffle receipts from its other funds and only uses those funds for the [bingo] licensed organization as a whole," the proceeds from the Central Committee's bingo and raffle games did not constitute "contributions" under Colorado law.

35. Ambler sought judicial review of the Deputy Secretary's final agency decision under Section 1-45-111.7(5)(b) and Section 24-4-106.

36. On March 26, 2026, the District Court affirmed the Deputy Secretary's Order as to the timeliness of the Ambler Complaints, holding that any claims "regarding reports prior to April 19, 2024, are untimely and were properly dismissed."

37. However, the District Court reversed the Deputy Secretary's dismissal of claims relating to the reports filed after April 19, 2024. The court held that evidence in the record "makes it clear that one of the purposes of the [602 W. 9th St.] Property was to benefit the [Party] and the candidates and issues it supported."

38. As a result, the court reversed and remanded the final agency decision as to the sufficiency of all timely claims.

39. The Party filed reports of contributions and expenditures on June 4, 2024, June 21, 2024, and July 30, 2024. Those three reports identified a total of just over \$6,000 worth of contributions. None of the contributions or expenditures listed in those reports relate to the Central Committee's bingo operations or expenses related to the 602 W. 9th St. property.

¹ The Deputy Secretary's order incorrectly referred to this Complaint as having been filed on June 30, 2024.

40. The Party filed additional reports on October 15, 2024, November 1, 2024, December 10, 2024, and November 3, 2025. None of those reports included any contributions and expenditures related to the Central Committee’s bingo activity.

41. Meanwhile, the Central Committee’s 2024 Profit and Loss statement, titled “Pueblo County Democratic Party Profit & Loss” reflects \$290,971 in income, and \$217,763 in expenses. This included expenditures for “Maintenance,” “Cleaning Subcontractor,” “Payroll – Building Supervisor”, and “Utilities.”

42. On information and belief, some of these expenses relate to the 602 W. 9th St. property.

43. During the summer of 2024, the Party was advertising events at the 602 W. 9th St. property, like this Facebook post on June 29, 2024.



COLORADO CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW

44. Under Colorado law, all political parties “shall report to the appropriate officer their contributions received, . . . expenditures made, and obligations entered into.” § 1-45-108(1)(a)(I), C.R.S.

45. Colorado law defines a political party as “any group of registered electors who, by petition or assembly, nominate candidates for the official general election ballot,” and includes within the definition of a “political party,” “affiliated party organizations at the state, county, and election district levels.” Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(13).

46. A “contribution” includes “the payment, loan, pledge gift, or advance of money, or guarantee of a loan, made to any . . . political party.” Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(5)(a)(I). It also includes “any payment made to a third party for the benefit of any . . . political party.” *Id.* § 2(5)(a)(II).

47. An expenditure is “any purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money by any person for the purpose of expressly advocating the election or defeat of a candidate or supporting or opposing a ballot issue or ballot question.” Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(8)(a).

CLAIM ONE
FAILURE TO REPORT CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES
(§ 1-45-108(a)(1)(A))

48. All preceding allegations are incorporated.

49. The Party is a political party registered with the Colorado Secretary of State.

50. The Central Committee is an affiliated party organization of the Party.

51. Beginning on April 19, 2024, and continuing to the present, the Central Committee has received payments in the form of Bingo income and has made expenditures that have assisted the Party in supporting candidates and issues.

52. Despite the Central Committee being an affiliated party organization, the Party has not reported contributions received by the Central Committee on its reports of contributions and expenditures.

53. Despite the Central Committee being an affiliated party organization, the Party has not reported expenditures that the Central Committee has made that are for the purpose of supporting the Party, including expenditures related to upkeep a 602 W. 9th St., which the Party proudly advertises as its “headquarters.”

54. The Division is entitled to relief under Article XXVIII of the Colorado Constitution and the Fair Campaign Practices Act, § 1-45-101 et seq. and the Secretary of State's Rules Concerning Campaign and Political Finance.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Elections Division prays for judgment and relief as follows:

1. Penalties as set out under 8 CCR 1505-6, Rule 23.4.3.
2. Such other relief as the Hearing Officer may deem appropriate.

CLAIMS NOT PURSUED

1. The Division is not pursuing claims that the District Court has held to be untimely, specifically claims related to reports that were filed on or before April 19, 2024.

Respectfully submitted this 15th day of June, 2026

PHILIP J. WEISER
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/s/ Peter G. Baumann

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that I will cause the foregoing to be served this 15th day of June, 2026, by email and/or U.S. mail, addressed as follows:

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/s/ Peter G. Baumann