

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION**

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY: CASE NUMBER C2019-006

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Drive Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 803-253-4192
TITLE:

RESPONDENT: Neal Collins
ADDRESS: PO BOX 906
Easley, SC 29641
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 864-350-4175
TITLE: Rep Dist. No.5 Pickens County
Email: collins.neal@gmail.com

Set forth in detail specific facts upon which you based your complaint against above-named respondent (only detailed, clear factual allegations will be considered.) (If additional space is needed, attach supplemental sheets).

SECTION 8-13-1346. Use of public funds, property, or time to influence election prohibited; exceptions.

- (A) A person may not use or authorize the use of public funds, property, or time to influence the outcome of an election.
- (B) This section does not prohibit the incidental use of time and materials for preparation of a newsletter reporting activities of the body of which a public official is a member.
- (C) This section does not prohibit the expenditure of public resources by a governmental entity to prepare informational materials, conduct public meetings, or respond to news media or citizens' inquiries concerning a ballot measure affecting that governmental entity; however, a governmental entity may not use public funds, property, or time in an attempt to influence the outcome of a ballot measure.

Commission staff received information regarding a June 2018 newsletter Representative Collins sent to his constituents in Pickens County. A review of the newsletter revealed the following statement: "After two decades, we were finally able to put to voter referendum granting the Governor the authority to appoint the office of Superintendent of Education. I strongly recommend that you vote for Superintendent to be an appointed position."

On July 2, 2018, Investigator Bagnall contacted Representative Collins regarding the newsletter. Representative Collins stated the newsletter was paid for using public money and campaign money. Representative Collins also stated the newsletter was printed at the House/Senate print shop.

The initiation of a Commission Complaint is requested to determine if Representative Collins did use public funds, property, or time to influence the outcome of an election in violation of §8-13-1346, S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

All investigations, inquiries, hearings, and accompanying documents must remain confidential until a finding of probable cause or dismissal unless the respondent waives the right to confidentiality. The willful release of confidential information is a misdemeanor, and any person releasing such confidential information, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisoned not more than one year. Section 8-13-320(10)(g).

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan L. Walker who, first being duly sworn, says that he/she 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/her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those he/she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this

24th day of July, 2018

Rod C. Arment

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission expires August 11, 2025

Meghan Walker

SEC-7 (Revised

2/2018)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192

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