

# *Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance*

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## **Rep. Adams, OCPF reach agreement concerning contribution limits**

BOSTON – The Office of Campaign and Political Finance has entered into a disposition agreement with state Rep. Paul Adams of Andover, his parents and his brother concerning Massachusetts campaign finance law contribution limits.

The agreement concerns \$45,000 in loans and a \$5,000 contribution made by the candidate to his campaign committee in 2010. The candidate's loans and the contribution were made after he received \$39,000 from his parents and brother in 2010.

The campaign finance law limits a contribution from an individual to a candidate's campaign committee to \$500 in a calendar year. OCPF has consistently interpreted the limit as applying to contributions made by a candidate's family members, other than a spouse.

Whether a transfer of money is a "contribution" subject to the \$500 limit depends on a consideration of all relevant factors, including the timing of the transfer. Based on the timing and circumstances involved in the loans Adams made to his committee, OCPF concluded that some portion of the money previously given to the candidate by his family members were excess contributions to help him run for office. Additionally, the committee did not comply with Section 10 of the campaign finance law, which prohibits disguising the true source of contributions, and Section 18, which requires accurate disclosure on campaign finance reports.

To resolve the matter, the candidate has forgiven the \$45,000 liability owed to him personally from his political committee, and has made a payment of \$1,000 to the state. The candidate's parents have paid \$1,000, and the candidate's brother has paid \$2,000.

The agreement took into consideration a pattern of family giving to the candidate by his parents. Since at least 1996, the candidate's parents have given substantial gifts to each of their

five children, including the candidate. The candidate's brother, however, had not, as of 2010, demonstrated a long-term pattern of family giving. According to the agreement, Adams and his family members insist that the funds received in 2010 were not "contributions" given for the purpose of influencing the candidate's election.

The family's pattern of giving is described in the agreement.

The candidate's parents and his brother gave him a total of \$33,000 in February and March of 2010, shortly before he organized his political committee with OCPF on March 22. Additionally, the candidate's parents gave him \$6,000 on Aug. 6, 2010. Prior to receiving these funds from family members, the candidate had \$30,000 available in personal funds. He also received additional personal income of approximately \$10,000 between February and July of 2010.

The agreement was signed Jan. 13 by OCPF Director Michael J. Sullivan, and by Rep. Adams, his parents Steven and Lynette Adams, and his brother, Ammon Adams.

A copy of the disposition agreement is available under the Agency Actions tab on the OCPF website, [www.mass.gov/ocpf](http://www.mass.gov/ocpf).

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance is an independent, non-partisan agency that administers the state's campaign finance law, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 55.