

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Campaign and Political Finance

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***OCPF, Asselin Committee sign
disposition agreement***

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance announced today that it has entered into a disposition agreement with state Rep. Christopher Asselin of Springfield and his campaign committee for violations of the campaign finance law in 1999 and 2000.

The agreement states that the Asselin campaign did not promptly reimburse a Springfield business corporation for the use of its postage meter, phone and facilities, amounting to an undisclosed corporate contribution to the campaign. The corporation, Palmer Goodell Insurance Agency Inc., provided a total of \$7,485.10 in services to the Asselin Committee without being reimbursed within a reasonable period of time, according to the agreement. In addition, Asselin's committee did not report its liability to the corporation or pay it until OCPF initiated its review.

In the agreement, Asselin agreed to make a personal payment of \$750 to the Commonwealth and to promptly report all future campaign finance activity, including liabilities. OCPF agreed not to refer the matter to the Attorney General for further action.

Asselin ran unsuccessfully in a special election for the 9th Hampden House seat in 1999. He ran again for the seat and was successful in 2000.

In April and May 1999 the Committee incurred a liability of \$1,967.05 for the use of a postage meter operated by Palmer Goodell. From May 28, 2000, to Sept. 30, 2000, the Committee incurred an additional liability to Palmer Goodell in the amount of \$5,518.05, primarily for postage, but also for overhead, facility and telephone use.

The use of corporate resources by a candidate and/or a candidate's committee is permitted only if the corporation is reimbursed in the normal course of business and if expenditures and/or liabilities to the corporation are disclosed on campaign finance reports. The Committee did not

disclose any payments or liabilities to Palmer Goodell in its 1999 reports, and reported only a payment of \$248.20 to the company in its pre-primary report filed on Sept. 6, 2000.

OCPF received a complaint concerning the Committee's activity in September 2000. After being contacted by OCPF, the Committee made further payments to Palmer Goodell in the amount of \$7,485.10 and amended previously filed campaign finance reports to reflect the liabilities to Palmer Goodell.

In addition to stating that campaign finance reports must disclose liabilities and that payments for goods and services rendered by corporations must be made in a timely manner, the agreement noted that the campaign finance law prohibits a business corporation from making any contribution or payment to a candidate and prohibits a candidate's committee from soliciting any such contribution or gift. The fact that the Committee was not billed for a substantial portion of services provided until after it was contacted by OCPF led the agency to conclude that the receipt of services by the Committee was intended to be an undisclosed corporate contribution.

The agreement was signed by OCPF Director Michael J. Sullivan, Rep. Asselin and the committee's treasurer, Raymond B. Asselin Jr.

"In addition to the importance of disclosure and timely payment of liabilities, this agreement highlights the importance of candidates maintaining arms' length relationships with corporations during a campaign," Sullivan said. "Great care must be taken to make sure a delayed payment or billing does not amount to a corporate contribution."

A copy of the agreement and the committee's reports are public record and may be viewed at OCPF's office in Room 411 of the John W. McCormack Building, One Ashburton Place, Boston.

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