

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Campaign and Political Finance

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**OCPF, Norton Committee sign
disposition agreement**

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance announced today that it has entered into a disposition agreement with former state Senate candidate James R. Norton Jr. of East Sandwich, his campaign committee, and his parents, James Sr. and Maureen, for violations of the campaign finance law in 1999 and 2000.

In the agreement OCPF concluded that the James R. Norton 2000 Election Committee received excess contributions from Mr. and Mrs. Norton totaling \$18,549.07 over the two-year period. The contributions consisted of both loans and direct payments of campaign expenses.

In the agreement, Mr. and Mrs. Norton agreed to make a payment of \$2,500 to the Commonwealth in the nature of a civil forfeiture. OCPF agreed not to refer the matter to the Attorney General for further action.

James Norton Jr. ran for the Senate in the Plymouth and Barnstable District in the 2000 election. His committee was dissolved in February 2001.

According to the agreement, Mr. and Mrs. Norton used their joint checking account to make direct campaign-related expenditures on behalf of the Committee totaling \$17,857.36: \$1,160.32 in 1999 and \$16,697.04 in 2000. These expenditures were disclosed as expenditures on the Committee's campaign finance reports.

In addition to the direct payments made on behalf of the Candidate, Mr. and Mrs. Norton deposited \$1,941.73 directly into the Committee's account. The total amount of loans provided by the Candidate's parents to the Candidate, and in turn reported as loans from the candidate, was \$19,799.09, according to materials provided by the Committee to OCPF after OCPF began its review.

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OCPF concluded that the payments by Mr. and Mrs. Norton were contributions to the Committee, while the Nortons contended that they were loans made directly to James Norton Jr., who then loaned the money to his Committee. The Nortons asserted that a portion of the money was loaned to the candidate or disbursed for the campaign pursuant to a May 21, 2000 "restricted gift" in the amount of \$50,000.

Maureen Norton contributed \$1,160.32 to the Committee in 1999. Given the statutory limit on individual contributions of \$500 per year, she made an excess contribution in violation of M.G.L. c. 55, section 7A and the Committee received a contribution in violation of section 7, of \$660.30 that year. James Norton, Sr. did not make any contributions in 1999. In 2000, however, the contributions made by James Norton, Sr. and Maureen Norton, including a \$5,000 loan from Maureen Norton, a \$250 contribution from Maureen Norton, and a joint loan of \$13,638.77, totaled \$18,888.77. The excess contribution amount from James Norton, Sr. and Maureen Norton jointly for 2000 was therefore \$17,888.77 and the total amount of excess contributions made jointly by James Norton, Sr. and Maureen Norton during 1999 and 2000 was \$18,549.07.

The agreement was signed by OCPF Director Michael J. Sullivan, James Norton Jr., James Norton Sr. and Maureen Norton. James Norton Sr. signed in his individual capacity and as treasurer of the Committee.

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

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