

FORMAL RESPONSE

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Respondent **Friends of Niko Battle** (“FoNB”) categorically deny every material factual assertion and legal conclusion contained in the complaint filed by **Jacob A. Reed** (“Mr. Reed”) except where expressly admitted herein. Mr. Reed is a former **ministerial treasurer** whose service was riddled with repeated inaccuracies, last-minute filings, and missed compliance meetings. On information and belief, Mr. Reed filed this complaint to deflect blame for his own professional shortcomings and to advance political agendas unrelated to genuine compliance concerns.

The complaint mischaracterizes ordinary campaign operations, collapses speculative “potential” issues into “confirmed” violations, and inflates bookkeeping disagreements into accusations of falsification. It even appends an inflammatory “criminal” theory based solely on conjecture. The Commission should reject this complaint in its entirety.

II. STANDARD

The Commission enforces **RCW 42.17A** and associated rules. The complainant bears the burden to produce **competent, factual support** for violations. Complaints that amount to speculation, narrative grievances, or political tactics should be dismissed or closed without action.

III. GENERAL DENIAL

Except where specifically admitted, Respondents **deny** each allegation.

IV. SPECIFIC RESPONSES

A. “Confirmed Violation #1”: **Debts Reporting / Falsification — Denied**

1. **No reportable debt existed.**

Mr. Reed’s own narrative concedes the item at issue was a **contingent “win bonus.”** The campaign did **not** win; the contingency never occurred; therefore **no debt was incurred** and nothing was “owed.” Mr. Reed—who was retained precisely for compliance—stated he would confirm whether a “conditional” item, untriggered, required reporting as “debt.” He **never** returned with the analysis he promised and **never** requested a corrective filing reflecting any contrary conclusion.

2. **No directive to falsify; good-faith compliance efforts.**

At no time did Niko Battle **direct** Mr. Jacob A. Reed to violate law or “obfuscate”

anything. To the contrary, Niko sought Mr. Reed’s expertise on (a) whether the website development—provided pro bono by a third-party company—should be reported as an **in-kind contribution** (Niko understood it **must** be reported), and (b) how to capture **providing vendors/subvendors** for consultant travel appropriately to ensure transparency. Mr. Reed’s repeated amendments reflect **his** confusion and inconsistent advice—not any instruction to conceal. He was hired to keep FoNB compliant, was told repeatedly to verify the correct treatment, and said he would “figure it out,” leading to his own amendments.

3. **Subvendor/providing vendor treatment.**

The assertion that Niko “demanded obfuscation” is false. Niko told Mr. Reed it was his understanding that either the consulting firm’s name should appear as the providing vendor **or** that the underlying travel/expenses should be listed in accordance with providing-vendor rules. Mr. Reed rejected, then later amended filings while still failing to give a coherent, consistent explanation of the governing rule. The record shows **no** intent to obscure—only a candidate asking his treasurer to **over-disclose** to ensure compliance.

Result: The elements of a “falsification” claim are absent. There was no incurred debt, no instruction to violate the law, and a consistent pattern of **good-faith** requests from Niko to his treasurer to ensure transparent reporting. The allegation fails.

B. “Confirmed Violation #2”: **Failure to Provide Full, Accurate, and Timely C-4s (RCW 42.17A.235 & .240) — Denied**

This allegation strikes at the heart of Mr. Read’s duties — yet the record shows it was his own failures, not candidate direction, that compromised accuracy and timeliness.

1. **Candidate’s Intent Was Transparency and Accuracy.**

Beginning in late May or early June, Niko Battle required Mr. Read to attend **weekly compliance meetings** on Thursdays, during business hours, to discuss transactions and ensure that reports were **accurate before submission**. These were placed on Mr. Read’s calendar, yet he failed to attend. That requirement was not to delay reports but to avoid the very problem he now describes: repeated amendments and errors as well as delayed reports.

2. **Treasurer Chose to Delay and File Incomplete Reports.**

Mr. Read’s narrative admits that he did not begin preparing C-4s until late at night on the deadline date, then filed “unfinished” reports based on guesses. That was a unilateral decision. He had weeks of notice, a standing meeting, and the authority to

file accurate reports on time. His failure to do so and subsequently filing a complaint against said candidate must be seen for what it is, a political attack.

3. No Instruction to Misstate or Misreport.

At no point did Niko instruct Mr. Read to condense vendors, omit receipts, or guess at expenditures. On the contrary, the candidate insisted on over-disclosure, including urging Mr. Read to break out subvendors where possible.

4. Amendments Were Due to Mr. Read's Incompetence.

The frequent amendments reflect the treasurer's lack of professional competence. Mr. Read himself acknowledged, in multiple communications, that his early reports required correction. It was precisely to prevent such errors that Niko insisted on pre-filing consultation.

5. Good Faith Attempt.

RCW 42.17A.235 & .240 require candidates to ensure timely and accurate reports. That duty is discharged by hiring a qualified treasurer and providing them information. Niko did both. When Mr. Read ignored meetings, delayed preparation until the eleventh hour, and then filed incomplete reports, he was not carrying out his ministerial duty. Blame lies with Mr. Jacob A. Read, not the campaign.

6. Post-Primary Period Confirms Non-Cooperation.

After the primary, Mr. Read ceased communication altogether, leaving the campaign without compliance support. To now reframe his nonfeasance as "candidate direction" is an attempt to rewrite history.

Result: There is no violation of RCW 42.17A.235 or .240. The facts show candidate efforts to ensure transparency, treasurer incompetence in execution, and a complaint filed after the fact to cover his own failings.

C. "Confirmed Violation #3": **Books of Account Inspection — Denied**

1. Niko consulted with PDC staff and offered a date, time, and location consistent with the rule according to the PDC staff over the phone. This was done the same day as the process guidance received from the PDC despite Mr. Jacob A. Read remaining unavailable during this critical juncture.
2. Mr. Read did not reply to the rest or any emails related to it over the weekend, reinforcing Niko's reasonable belief he did not work weekends, specifically for FoNB as no prior engagements between Mr. Jacob A, Reed and the campaign over the weekend. Any delay was attributable to Mr. Read's lack of responsiveness.

3. The campaign did provide access consistent with the statute; there was no intent to deceive.

D. “Potential Violation #1”: **Improper Use of Campaign Funds — Denied**

1. **Ordinary and necessary expenses.**

The cited food/coffee/gas expenses were incurred for **staff, volunteers, field operations, events, and travel support**, including for a campaign manager commuting from **Portland** to spend **2–5 days per week** canvassing, managing volunteers, and running tabling/fundraisers. A modest stipend was provided; ancillary support (gas/food/housing) enabled a level of staffing otherwise impossible given FoNB’s small-dollar fundraising. This falls squarely within ordinary campaign expenditures.

2. **No evidence of personal use.**

Mr. Reed offers **no** receipt-based analysis, witness statements, or transaction-by-transaction proof—only “suspicion.”

3. **Contemporaneous acceptance.**

At the time, Mr. Reed indicated the arrangement was permissible given budget constraints. He cannot now recast accepted strategy as “improper” without **any** documentation.

Result: The allegation rests on conjecture; the spending categories are facially campaign-related; no violation is shown. These expenses are ordinary and necessary expenditures authorized under RCW 42.17A.425 & .445.

E. “Potential Violation #2”: **False In-Kind Contribution — Denied**

1. **Website pro bono services are in-kind and reportable.**

A third-party company that sells web services **built** the FoNB website for free. Relationship to the owner is irrelevant to **whether** it must be reported; if anything, that heightened our transparency obligation. Reporting an in-kind contribution was **required** to avoid misleading the public into believing those services were purchased with cash.

2. **Not fabricated; corroborated by prior drafts.**

Earlier versions of the site—**predating** Mr. Reed’s complaint and the reporting

period—show the third party accredited with the build. The in-kind report tracks reality; the alternative would be **concealment**, which FoNB rejected.

Result: The in-kind report was **accurate** and **law-abiding**, not fabricated. Moreover, far from deceiving donors, reporting the in-kind ensured transparency.

F. “Potential Criminal Violation”: **Impersonation / Bank Fraud — Denied in Full**

- The account was a **campaign business account**.
 - The issue was a dispute with why the bank was requiring personal information instead of business information to access the account.
 - Mr. Read admits he has no documentation, only speculation based on the candidates frustrations after the fact.
 - No false identifying information was provided, no funds were misappropriated, and no impersonation occurred.
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V. MOTIVE, CREDIBILITY, AND POLITICAL PURPOSE

- Mr. Read missed compliance meetings, ignored communications, and filed unfinished reports. His complaint attempts to rewrite these failures as “candidate direction.”
 - He was retained precisely because Niko lacked technical PDC experience. Instead of providing expertise, Mr. Read displayed confusion, amended filings repeatedly, and failed in his ministerial duty.
 - On information and belief, Mr. Read filed this complaint at the urging of other political actors to damage the campaign. The tone, timing, and rhetoric confirm a political purpose rather than a compliance concern.
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VI. REQUESTED DISPOSITION

Respondents respectfully request that the Commission:

1. Dismiss the complaint in its entirety;
2. Alternatively, decline enforcement and close the matter;

3. Note in its disposition that the complaint reflects political motive and lacks competent factual support.

VII. AFFIRMATIVE COMPLIANCE

- **Having an office ≠ misconduct.** Nothing in the complaint connects campaign finance to residency; the PDC's jurisdiction concerns **reporting and use of funds**, not ballot challenges. Moreover Mr. Reed's accusation that the office served as a campaign address to mask lack of residency in the district displays his utter lack of knowledge and explicit political motivations. The office lies squarely outside of the district in the city's downtown area, so this accusation is both not factual and not logical.
- **Good-faith transparency.** FoNB consistently sought to disclose the **in-kind website** and to ensure **providing-vendor** clarity, and attempted to coordinate meetings to **improve** accuracy.
- **Books access within the rule.** FoNB proposed an inspection within **two business days of the requested time**, consistent with Commission standards.
- **No personal use.** Expenditures were ordinary and necessary for staff/volunteer support and field operations. No documentary evidence of personal use is proffered.

VIII. RESERVATION AND PROFFERED MATERIALS

Should the Commission wish, Respondents can promptly provide:

- Calendar invites and emails reflecting **Thursday compliance meetings** and Mr. Reed's non-attendance;
- Email/text threads documenting **pre-filing coordination** requests and Mr. Reed's **post-filing** communications;
- **Website** in-kind valuation notes;
- Number of the **PDC staff whose guidance** informed the campaign's offer regarding books-inspection timing; and

- Transaction summaries evidencing **field operations** (food/coffee/gas) connected to campaign activity and staff/volunteer support.
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IX. CONCLUSION

This filing by **Jacob A. Read** is a **sweeping narrative without evidence**, repurposing his own workflow issues and post-separation grievances into allegations of misconduct. The record shows a candidate pressing for **more disclosure**, a campaign trying to **improve accuracy**, and a treasurer who failed to meet **basic ministerial** obligations—then tried to shift blame.

The Commission should **dismiss**.

Respectfully submitted,

Friends of Niko Battle (FoNB)