

July 30, 2018

Mr. Thomas Holbrook  
St. Clair County Clerk  
10 Public Square  
Belleville, Illinois 62220

Mr. Brendan Kelly  
St. Clair County State's Attorney  
10 Public Square  
Belleville, Illinois 62220

**Re: Ethics and Campaign Violations  
Sheriff Richard Watson and Campaign**

Dear Sirs:

I advise you of, and formally complain, about the campaign and the actions of St. Clair County Sheriff Harold Richard "Rick" Watson. The treasurer of his campaign, Margaret Eros, who is an employee of the St. Clair County Clerk, also has a responsibility to comply with the below listed statutes. These include campaigning for reelection as Sheriff utilizing public funds and failing to comply with the Illinois Election Code, and the required disclosures.

Statutes and Regulations

Specifically, the following regulations and statutes are identified:

***St. Clair County Ordinance Chapter 1, Article 9, specifically Section 1-9-2(A):*** "No officer or employee shall intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time, as defined herein. No officer or employee shall intentionally use any property or resources of the county of St. Clair in connection with any prohibited political activity."

***St. Clair County Ordinance Chapter 1, Article 9, specifically Section 1-9-2(B):*** "At no time shall any officer or employee intentionally require any other officer or employee to perform any prohibited political activity (i) as part of the officer or employee's duties, (ii) as a condition of employment, or (iii) during any compensated time off (such as holidays, vacation or personal time off)."

***Illinois Constitution Article VIII "Finance," Section 1 "General Provisions":*** "Public funds, property, or credit shall be used only for public purposes."

***10 ILCS 5/9-9:*** "Any political committee shall include on all literature and advertisements soliciting funds the following notice: "A copy of our report filed with the State

Board of Elections is (or will be) available on the Board's official website (insert the current website address) or for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois.'"

**10 ILCS 5/9 – 9.5(a) Disclosures in political communications:** "Any political committee, organized under the Election Code [10 ILCS 5/1-1 et. seq.], that makes an expenditure for a pamphlet, circular, handbill, Internet or telephone communication, radio, television, or print advertisement, or other communication directed at voters and mentioning the name of a candidate in the next upcoming election shall ensure that the name of the political committee paying for any part of the communication, including, but not limited to, its preparation and distribution, is identified clearly within the communication as the payor..."

**10 ILCS 5/9 -10 Disclosures of contribution and expenditures:** This section, too lengthy to cite in total, requires the reporting of in-kind contribution on expenditure reports.

#### Factual Allegations

Attached to this complaint is "Exhibit A," which is a flyer that Watson, either individually or through his campaign, sent out from his office just prior to the primary in March, 2018. This flyer solicited funds for his campaign. It clearly identifies that the contact information are land telephone lines in the Sheriff's office, being (618)825-5722, and the Sheriff's landline fax number, (618)277-4213. These lines are maintained by public funds and are being used for politically related activity. Nowhere does it identify the name of the political campaign and the required disclaimer that a report will be filed with the Illinois Board of Elections. The flyer appears to be coming from the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department, and uses the badge of the department for its logo.

I also bring to your attention reports that I have received that there are campaign materials present at the Sheriff's office. Additional reports indicate that the employees in the Sheriff's office have been, and are being, challenged regarding politically protected activity occurring on their own personal time. These reports include that deputies have been challenged for not voting in the election during which the recent tax referendum the Sheriff was trying, and failed, to pass. Reports are that deputies have also been challenged for "liking" or "sharing" or commenting on social media posts made by the Republican candidate for Sheriff, Nick Gailius. Furthermore, these activities are reported to be occurring while employees of the Sheriff's Department are on duty.

Next, I enclose a photo of St. Clair County Sheriff's deputy in a squad car accompanying Watson in a parade. This was in the middle of the parade, and not at the front. This St. Clair County Sheriff car, #62, was acting as a personal escort for Sheriff Watson in his campaign car. This cannot be anything other than the use of public property for campaign purposes.

Lastly, the use of public funds should have been reported as in kind donations, which they were not.

I request a thorough investigation of the ongoing improper political activity taking place in the Sheriff's Office. I anticipate that a thorough investigation would include, but not

necessarily be limited to, interview with deputies, employees, suspects, victims, and potential witnesses, as well as analysis of phone records into and out of the Sheriff's Department that are political in nature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Viviano".

Barbara Viviano, Chairperson  
St. Clair County Republican Party Central Committee

BV/pje  
Enclosures





# St. Clair County Sheriff's Department

## *Sheriff Richard Watson*

P.O. Box 54 • Belleville, Illinois, 62222

This November you will be asked to vote for a candidate for St. Clair County Sheriff. I proudly currently hold this position. I am asking for your help in the upcoming election.

My goal as Sheriff is to make all the citizens of St. Clair County feel safe and secure throughout the county. Over the last 6 years this department has worked extremely hard to make significant improvements. Through community based programs and an emphasis on professionalism, we hope to reduce the number of gun-related crimes, thefts, incidents of domestic violence and other disturbances. An example of our plans and objectives include:

- Provide state of the art training opportunities for Sheriff's, Deputies, Corrections Officers and office staff
- Promote the importance of Neighborhood Watch programs
- Continue our initiatives in specialized technical training and the latest crime prevention measures
- Involvement in civic-minded programs and services, such as providing deserving young citizens with college scholarships where they can further their education, capture a heightened sense of belonging, and participate in constructive activities to build character and responsibility
- We hope to work closely with local organizations and shelters to provide counseling and support for victims of spousal and child abuse
- Maintain our goals to improve our correctional facilities, incorporating the latest security measures to remove more criminals from the streets
- Integrate special rehabilitation programs that aim to help criminals by preparing them to become productive members of society
- Implement productive activities that help children by redirecting them from illegal activity.

I personally want to thank you for supporting myself and the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department and for the support of these initiatives-those in place now and as well as those planned. I am not afraid of change and I know changes have to be made to achieve these goals.

I look forward to again serving the citizens of St. Clair County and I am privileged to have this opportunity.

For pledging support of my campaign I have enclosed an envelope for your convenience.

618-825-5722 • Fax 618-277-4213



