

Sasha Linker

From: Cynara Velazquez <Cynara@communityengagementresources.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 11:49 AM
To: CommAsst
Subject: Comment to FPPC Commission/Digital Task Force Commission

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EXTERNAL EMAIL

I would like to request that my below comments be forwarded to commissioner Richard C. Miadich and the members of the Digital Transparency Task Force, as well as to include these comments as non-agenda public comments in the upcoming January 21st meeting of the FPPC.

Thank You,
Cynara Velazquez

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My Comments:

Dear Commissioner Miadich and the members of Digital Transparency Task Force,

Last month, as part of your task force meeting agenda, you saw a presentation from the New York City Campaign Finance Board on their online political advertising archive. Additionally, on the FPPC website, there is a link to the City of Los Angeles Advertising Archive.

I have created a similar advertising archive for San Diego county, <http://politicalpropaganda.org/>, as a volunteer effort, through the non-profit, Alliance for Community Engagement, because I saw a gap in campaign transparency and a gap in voter knowledge of the messages being sent from candidates to other voters. The goal of the site is to capture all campaign messaging received from all political campaigns by voters in San Diego County, including communications from state and national races.

I believe that such an political advertisement archiving effort would be of great value to voters, journalists and ethics professionals across the state of California, and that FPPC would be the best organization to take on such an effort.

PoliticalPropaganda.org allows voters to:

- See the quantity of campaign messaging being sent to individual voters for a race.
(Example: <http://politicalpropaganda.org/?elections=proposition-22-2020-general>)
- Allow voters to see how many pieces are sent for/against a particular candidate/initiative.
(Example: <http://politicalpropaganda.org/?candidates=catherine-s-blakespear>)
- See all of the advertisements produced by a certain campaign committee, in all races for which they advertised
(Example: <http://politicalpropaganda.org/?campaigns=ethics-transparency-in-government>)
- See the details of a specific advertisement that was sent.
(Example: http://politicalpropaganda.org/?propaganda_pieces=will-moore-is-lobbyist)

The disadvantage to doing this archiving effort as a non-profit volunteer endeavor is that it is not possible to capture every advertisement sent by every campaign, since this would require a volunteer who can submit in every race/jurisdiction/demographic target. Moreover, we do not have the resources to archive online advertisements, radio advertisements, television commercials nor texts, although the site is configured to do so. Also, this site's scope is San Diego County only, and is not a resource to voters in other counties of California.

For these reasons, **I would like to request that the FPPC undertake the archiving of campaign advertising as a statewide, state funded, effort.** Sites such as ours, as well as that of Los Angeles county and New York City, are vital to give transparency as to which organizations are actively advertising in what races and what messages they are sending, in what quantities, to voters. This is something that would be of value for all voters across the state, as well as a vital tool for tracking campaign financing and investigating ethics complaints. Moreover, the state has the power to mandate that all campaigns submit copies of all advertisements they transmit to voters, which would eliminate the missed advertisements for which there are no volunteer submittals.

I urge you to pursue a statewide political advertising archive effort. I believe that the site I created, politicalpropaganda.org, can serve as a good model for these efforts - it allows for simple and intuitive navigation to categories of advertisements by candidate, race and campaign. I am available for any questions and would be more than happy to share the knowledge I have acquired on how best to archive political advertisements with the commission.

Thank You,

Cynara Velazquez

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