Funny How PowerPoint Technology Comes Back to Bite You, Says Michigan Chamber of Commerce to Byrum & Fisk Firm

PRNewswire-USNewswire
LANSING, Mich.

When Byrum and Fisk Advocacy Communications and their employee, Thomas Morgan, were creating a PowerPoint presentation on a government reform ballot proposal back on November 21, 2007, at 4:08 p.m., little did they know it would come back to bite them, reports the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

That PowerPoint presentation -- entitled, "Government Reform Proposal: Changing the rules of politics to help Democrats" -- was found last week by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy on a United Auto Worker's Region 1-C website. The creation date, time and author show up on the document properties of the PowerPoint presentation.

The date the PowerPoint presentation was created is significant, notes Bob LaBrant, Senior Vice President of Political Affairs & General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber, because this would have required Reform Michigan Government Now! (RMGN) to both file as a ballot question committee in 2007 and to file an annual report disclosing their contributors and expenditures.

"If the PowerPoint presentation was the 'smoking gun' that blew away Diane Byrum's and Michigan AFL-CIO President Mark Gaffney's assertion that the ballot initiative was somehow a bi-partisan reform proposal, the creation date of the PowerPoint presentation proves conclusively that RMGN was required to file as a ballot question committee in 2007, not as they did on February 22, 2008 when their statement of organization was filed with the Secretary of State," LaBrant stated. "If RMGN had registered back in 2007 as required, they would have been required to file an annual report that was due January 31, 2008 disclosing their contributors and expenditures."

LaBrant noted that both Byrum and Brewer have strangely refused to disclose who the funders are behind the Reform Michigan Government Now! initiative, cynically saying that they would be disclosed when the committee is required to report in late September or early October ... "their post-qualification or, increasingly likely, non-qualification report."

The PowerPoint presentation contains a slide that discloses that the Washington, D.C. research firm of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner did two statewide surveys and nine focus groups between May and November 2007 testing out the various concepts contained in the ballot proposal.

"A research project of that scope has been estimated by other pollsters to cost at least $75,000-$100,000 or more -- well over the $500 threshold that requires registration as a ballot question committee," noted LaBrant.

The Michigan Chamber is currently preparing a complaint on this campaign finance violation and expects to file it with the Secretary of State later this week.

In recent media reports, Lieutenant Governor John Cherry disclosed that both he and Governor Jennifer Granholm invested some of their political money (Leadership PACs? Candidate committees?) in developing the plan. "We participated in an effort to do research, polling, focus groups, etc.," Cherry recently told the Detroit Free Press, "We had some concern about the direction it was going."

"Strangely, a review of JDC Genesee Fund (Cherry Leadership PAC) or the Cherry for Lieutenant Governor Committee, does not show any expenditure in 2007 or 2008 for research," said LaBrant.

"U.S. Senator Howard Baker, during the 1973 Watergate hearings, is most remembered for his repeated question, 'What did the President know, and when did he know it?'" said LaBrant. "Perhaps 'PowerPoint-gate' will lead to a similar question being asked of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor: 'When and in what amount did they contribute, and to whom did they write the check?'"

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business advocacy organization representing over 7,000 employers of every type and size in all 83 counties in Michigan.

Paid for with regulated funds by Michigan Chamber PAC II, 600 South Walnut Street, Lansing, MI. 48933

First Call Analyst:
FCMN Contact:

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

CONTACT: Bob LaBrant of Michigan Chamber of Commerce, +1-517-371-7653

Web site: http://www.michamber.com/

---

https://michamber.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=19845&item=39717