

BEFORE THE ALASKA PUBLIC OFFICES COMMISSION APOC - ANCH PM HC FAX ELE

ALASKANS FOR BETTER)	
ELECTIONS, INC.,)	
Complainant,)	
•)	APOC Case No. 23-02-CD
V.)	
)	
PRESERVE DEMOCRACY, KELLY)	
TSHIBAKA and ALASKANS FOR)	
HONEST ELECTIONS,)	
)	
Respondents.)	
•)	

PRESERVE DEMOCRACY AND KELLY TSHIBAKA RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT

I. INTRODUCTION

Kelly Tshibaka and Preserve Democracy ask that the complaint be dismissed. The complainant, Mr. Kendall, is a political operative who files similar complaints every election cycle, often on thin or non-existent evidence. Such is the case here. The things that Mr. Kendall complains about are the free exercise of speech, protected by the First Amendment, and do not trigger any reporting or registration obligations. APOC should not be used as a tool to silence debate on important political topics or to punish those whose views happen to be opposite those of the complainant and his darkmoney clients.

II. BACKGROUND

After the results of the November 2022 election in Alaska and across the United States, a group of concerned citizens joined together to form Preserve Democracy. The

original founders of the organization include Simcha Weed of Brownsville, TX; Stuart Gates of Lakewood Ranch, FL; Heather Gottshall of Anchorage, AK; and Kelly Tshibaka of Anchorage, AK. This group formed a 501(c)(4) entity, Preserve Democracy (PD), for the purpose of preserving the fundamentals of our democracy—"election systems should be simple to understand and accessible to all Americans." Ms. Weed, Mr. Gates, and Ms. Gottshall serve as the Board of Directors for the organization; Ms. Tshibaka serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a position for which she does not draw a salary or other compensation.

The founders of PD were concerned by the low voter turnout in the Southern U.S. and Alaska compared to the rest of the United States. They were focused on increasing low voter turnout and fixing some of the causes behind low turnout. They were inspired by the Honest Elections Project, which talks on its website about "preserving our democracy," "election integrity," and how "[i]t should be easy to vote and hard to cheat."

The directors and officers of PD are not all registered as members of the same political party; their intent was to start an apolitical group with an overarching mission of "protecting election integrity and increasing voter turnout."

The projects the Board had the CEO focus on included:

- 1. A Get-Out-the-Vote pilot project in the 2023 Anchorage Municipal race to determine if and how medium propensity voters of all political persuasions could be motivated to vote.
- 2. A statewide poll to determine the reasons Alaskans did not vote in 2022.

- 3. Speaking at events to inform constituents how they could be involved in election integrity, from contacting their legislators about HB 1 ("An Act Relating to Elections") or HB 4 ("An Act Relating to Elections"), to encouraging state compliance with the National Voter Registration Act.
- 4. Fighting the spread of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) in states where it was *not yet* implemented by providing information, data, or testimony to legislatures or advocacy groups.
- 5. Assisting with voter registration and absentee ballot drives in advance of the 2024 election.

Preserve Democracy initiated contact with APOC in mid-January and a couple times in February to seek guidance on its Get-Out-the-Vote campaign, which was its primary focus through the beginning of the year. PD has sought to comply with Alaska law in all regards. PD also began seeking guidance from APOC in mid-January and retained legal counsel from Birch Horton Bittner & Cherot in February, to help navigate the rules of APOC. Birch Horton attorney Jason Brandeis conferred with APOC on behalf of PD in several communications between March and May, 2023, as PD sought guidance to confirm that its activities would not trigger reporting obligations.

In response to guidance Ms. Tshibaka received from APOC and follow-up guidance from Birch Horton Bittner & Cherot, Tshibaka and PD took action to be extra careful in their messaging and activities to ensure they were neither making expenditures nor giving an appearance that they were making an expenditure to support an initiative proposal application. Complainants, Alaskans for Better Elections (ABE), are trying to conflate Ms. Tshibaka's personal political views, protected under the First Amendment and the Alaska State Constitution, with her activities as the CEO of PD.

The two are not the same. APOC regulates expenditures, not speech, and PD has not incurred any expenditures intended to influence a candidate or ballot initiative election.

III. TESTIFYING ONCE IN PUBLIC LEGISLATIVE HEARING DOES NOT REOUIRE REGISTRATION AS A LOBBYIST

The complaint asserts that Kelly Tshibaka was required to register as a lobbyist because she testified at a hearing before the Alaska legislature. As a matter of law, Ms. Tshibaka is not a lobbyist. Alaska Statute 24.45.171(11) defines a "lobbyist" as "a person who:

- (A) is *employed and receives payments*, or who contracts for economic consideration, including reimbursement for reasonable travel and living expenses, to communicate directly or through the person's agents with any public official for the purpose of influencing legislation or administrative action for more than 10 hours in any 30-day period in one calendar year; or
- (B) represents oneself as engaging in the **influencing of legislative or administrative action** as a **business**, occupation, or profession.

Alaska Statute 24.45.171(9) defines "influencing legislative or administrative action" as "to communicate directly for the purpose of introducing, promoting, advocating, supporting, modifying, opposing, or delaying or seeking to do the same with respect to any legislative or administrative action."

Pursuant to AS 24.45.161(a)(1)(B), a person is exempt from registering as a lobbyist if the person "limits lobbying activities to appearances before public sessions of the legislature, or its committees or subcommittees, or to public hearings or other public proceedings of state agencies."

Because the only "lobbying" identified by the complaint is that Ms. Tshibaka on one occasion testified at a public hearing of the legislature, the complaint does not identify "more than 10 hours in any 30-day period" and does not identify any activity other than conduct that is expressly exempt because it involves testifying before a public hearing of the legislature. Thus, the complaint fails to identify any conduct that would require registration as a lobbyist.

Furthermore, the complaint erroneously speculates that Ms. Tshibaka is paid as the CEO of Preserve Democracy. This fact is untrue. Ms. Tshibaka's role as CEO is voluntary. [See Affidavit of Tshibaka] In her one appearance in front of the legislature, Ms. Tshibaka appeared remotely and did not incur any travel or other expenses. PD did not incur any expenses associated with Ms. Tshibaka's single appearance in a public hearing of the legislature.

Dismissal is generally appropriate when the allegations of a complaint fail to state a valid claim. Because the complaint fails to state a claim regarding lobbying, that allegation should be dismissed.

IV. PRESERVE DEMOCRACY WAS NOT FORMED TO SUPPORT OR OPPOSE A BALLOT INITIATIVE

A group is required to register with APOC when it is formed for the purpose of supporting or opposing a ballot initiative. *See* AS 15.13.050. PD was not formed for such purpose, and so had no obligation to register as a ballot group. Instead, PD was formed with regard to more general concerns about the health of democracy, including

the need to improve voter turnout and stop the national spread of ranked-choice voting.

PD is not a sponsor of any ballot initiative and has not spent money in support of any initiative.

V. PRESERVE DEMOCRACY HAS NOT MADE ANY EXPENDITURES THAT TRIGGER INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE GROUP REPORTING

A group or individual is required to report independent expenditures in excess of \$500 that are made in support of or against a ballot initiative. *See* AS 15.13.110. PD has not incurred \$500 in such expenditures. First, Ms. Tshibaka is not paid in her role as CEO. [*See* Affidavit of Tshibaka] When she attends events, provides testimony, or provides an interview, she is not being paid. Second, PD has not incurred any expenses in excess of \$500 related to events. PD has not rented space, paid for catering, or paid for advertising for any events. On one occasion, a volunteer intended to donate some supplies for an event but did not have the cash available, and so PD provided \$209.89 to the volunteer for supplies, and the volunteer later reimbursed PD for the same amount. This \$209.89 is the only expenditure PD has made for events, and this amount does not trigger a reporting obligation under AS 15.13.110.

APOC regulates political spending, not political speech. People are not required to register with the government before expressing their opinions. Because PD has not made independent expenditures in support of a ballot initiative, it is not an Independent Expenditure group under AS 15.13.110 and had no reporting requirement.

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Complainant asserts that the language on earlier versions of the PD website could only be read as advocacy related to the ballot initiative. This is untrue. The exhibit Complainant provides, Exhibit F, makes no mention of a ballot initiative. The website did not ask for voters to vote a certain way. Rather, the website discusses the spread of ranked-choice voting around the country and the risks that this phenomenon poses to democracy.

During a ballot initiative about the Pebble mine, APOC issued advisory opinions that distinguished educational communications from initiative-related advocacy. APOC advised that an issue group was not required to report expenditures for issue advertisements that do not mention ballot initiatives, do not advocate a position on the initiatives, and are susceptible to interpretations other than as exhortations to vote for the initiatives. See Advisory Opinion 08-02-CD. Under APOC's established advisory opinion, PD did not come close to the line in its earliest website iterations, because it made no mention of a ballot initiative, nor did it advocate a position on the initiatives, and its message can reasonably be interpreted as educating readers about the national spread of ranked-choice voting, not the circumstances in Alaska. PD's website language that was critical of ranked-choice voting was intended to halt the spread of the phenomenon in other states, and can reasonably be read as such. Nonetheless, as PD interacted with APOC and as the initiative effort heated up, PD sought to avoid any concerns in this regard, and so toned down its mention of ranked-choice voting on its

The complaint alleges, without factual support, that PD conducted a poll and

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shared it with Alaskans for Honest Elections (AHE). This is untrue. While PD did conduct a poll to try to understand the reasons for low voter turnout in Alaska's recent election, it did so to inform its own Get-Out-the-Vote efforts. PD has not conveyed the poll results to AHE, nor any of its principals or agents.

PD contracted with Cygnal to conduct a poll concerning the causes for low voter turnout in the Alaska November 2022 General Election. Cygnal is an award-winning international polling, public opinion, and predictive analytics firm that pioneered multimode polling, text-to-web collection, and emotive analysis.

PD conducted a poll to assess the reasons for low voter turnout in 2022. The poll questions focused exclusively on previous election experiences. The poll fell outside of APOC regulation because: (1) the intent of the poll was for purposes other than to influence the outcome of any candidate or ballot initiative election; (2) the substance of the poll did not express support for or opposition to the 22AKHE ballot proposition or RCV; and (3) the polling information was not used for or supplied to a campaign or ballot initiative group and was not used to influence any election.

VII. PRESERVE DEMOCRACY DID NOT TARGET PARTISAN VOTERS IN THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ELECTION

The complaint alleges, without factual support, that PD must have targeted partisan voters in its Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) effort because two lawyers for complainant did not receive PD's mailers, and those lawyers reside in Assembly Districts 3 and 4. PD targeted its GOTV effort at Anchorage Assembly Districts 5

and 6. Within those districts, PD did not distinguish partisan affiliation. The majority of recipients of mailers in the two targeted districts were not registered as Republicans, but instead as non-partisan, unregistered, or Democrats. PD targeted those two Assembly districts because data showed them to have a high percentage of voters who had not voted in the past election but had voted in prior elections. In other words, PD targeted districts where it thought it would have the most success in getting out the votes. PD's mailers do not identify specific candidates or issues, and are plainly permissible GOTV communications not regulated by APOC.

As stated by Complainants, "nonpartisan GOTV efforts are not regulated by APOC." PD engaged in a *nonpartisan* GOTV campaign during the 2023 Anchorage Municipal race.

- 1. PD focused its GOTV campaign on medium-propensity voters in Districts 5 and 6, with the intent of evaluating whether voters who otherwise were less inclined to vote in an election could be motivated to vote.
- 2. PD worked with Cygnal to identify districts that had a large number of "medium propensity voters" who did not vote in 2022, but could be motivated to vote in the Municipal race.
- 3. PD asked Cygnal to include voters of all registered parties in the mailer list group.
- 4. To the best of PD's knowledge, Cygnal worked with a contractor to create a voter file that included voters of all parties in Districts 5 and 6.
- 5. In total, 42% of voters' parties were Republican, 41% of voters' parties were Democrat or Other, and 17% of voters' parties were Independent. In other words, 58% of voters identified were not registered Republican.

- 6. The raw voter file was not shared with Ms. Tshibaka or PD before or during the GOTV campaign.
- 7. Messaging for the GOTV campaign was neutral as to candidates, political parties, and issues.
- 8. Ms. Tshibaka sought and received guidance from APOC staff between mid-January 2023, and February 16, 2023, on the Get-Out-the-Vote effort.
- 9. In her originating e-mail to APOC, Tshibaka indicated PD "intend[ed] to run Get-Out-the-Vote ads targeting medium or low propensity voters in up to 3 districts for the Anchorage Assembly races." She also indicated that PD emailed APOC in mid-January, left a message for APOC in early February, and left a message for the Director of APOC. Tshibaka's clear intent was to comply with the letter and spirit of APOC's guidance, which is why she made those efforts to communicate with APOC.
- 10. The statements of support Tshibaka made for individual candidates on her *personal* social media sites: a) did not represent PD, b) did not constitute an expenditure, and c) were not made in coordination, direct or indirect, with the candidate(s). Tshibaka took a photo of a PD mailer received by a moderate voter registered at her house. Posting a photo of the front of that mailer with support for candidates by name on her personal social media account did not constitute an APOC regulated expenditure. Any Alaskan who receives mailers has the right to post a photo online with support for their candidate or ballot proposition of choice. If this were to fall within APOC's jurisdiction, APOC staff would become social media police. Regulating Tshibaka's ability to make statements of support for candidates on her personal social media sites would prohibitively infringe on her First Amendment free speech rights.
- 11. On the *Must Read Alaska* podcast, Tshibaka described PD's GOTV efforts in party-neutral terms, explaining that PD targeted only 2 districts:

The idea behind this was to do a pilot project, John, to figure out can we actually mobilize voters to vote, because we saw in 2022, we had such strong voter drop off. And so we used some of the same methods and techniques that they were using in Florida. We used one of the top analytics firms...data analytics firms in the country to target voters who normally vote in every four year elections or the two year elections (emphasis added). Maybe they don't vote in

Muni races, but they could be prompted to vote (emphasis added). ...And we targeted just two districts, too, because it's just an experiment (emphasis added).

12. On the *Must Read Alaska* podcast, Tshibaka made recommendations for the 2024 election cycle in her personal capacity. She recommended Republicans use data analytics, absentee ballots, and ballot chasing strategies to help increase voter turnout in the 2024 election. Those statements had no relevance to PD's GOTV efforts in 2023. Ms. Tshibaka was not being paid by PD to participate in the podcast.

Complainants' only evidence that PD targered Republican voters are two affidavits stating that two attorneys, who are not registered Republican and who live in separate districts not targered by PD, did not receive PD GOTV mailers. These attorneys would not have received the PD GOTV mailers because: a) they did not live in either District 5 or 6, where PD's GOTV campaign occurred, and b) even if they had lived in those districts, they are super-voters, not medium propensity voters.

There is no merit to Complainants' allegation that PD or Ms. Tshibaka led a partisan GOTV campaign.

VIII. PRESERVE DEMOCRACY'S EVENTS ARE NOT REPORTABLE TO APOC

The United States and Alaska Constitution protect the right of people to gather peaceably and discuss politics. This free speech activity is core to our democracy. APOC does not regulate political speech, and citizens are not required to register with the state before they gather or express an opinion. Because PD has not coordinated with any ballot group and has not incurred expenditures of over \$500, it has no reportable obligations with regard to any public events. PD did not purchase or transfer

money or anything of value, nor promise or agree to purchase or transfer money or anything of value, in order to speak at or have these events.

Furthermore, the purpose of PD's events was not to "influence the outcome of" 22AKHE. Rather, the purpose of these events was to support the passage of HB 1, to increase voter participation, enhance election integrity, determine the cause for low voter turnout in 2022, and fight the spread of RCV in states other than Alaska (to avoid any misperception of attempting to influence the outcome of a ballot question, PD refrained from speaking on this after receiving guidance from APOC and legal counsel in late February). If 22AKHE came up, it did so after PD's main remarks, during Q&A time as a question from an attendee, which shows influencing the outcome of 22AKHE was not the "purpose" of the event.

Mat-Su Republican Women's Event on January 14th

- 1. On January 14, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka was invited to speak at a Mat-Su Republican Women's meeting in Wasilla, Alaska.
- 2. PD does not know whether this event was open to the public.
- 3. This event occurred before 22AKHE was approved by the Lt. Governor as a pending ballot initiative.
- 4. PD does not have an invitation for this event.
- 5. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting the event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any expenditures for this kind of event.
- 6. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring

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Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship. Nor does PD know everyone who may have attended the event.

- 7. PD understands that the Mat-Su Republican Women's Club invited Phil Izon to speak at the event, and he spoke before Ms. Tshibaka. Ms. Tshibaka does not recall having any prior knowledge that Phil Izon would be in attendance at the event.
- 8. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event.
- 9. Ms. Tshibaka has no recollection of advocating for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor supporting 22AKHE, nor advocating for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 10. No attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 11. Neither Tshibaka nor PD filmed the events, broadcast them on social media, disseminated them on the internet, posted them online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 12. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event did not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 13. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a Get-Out-the-Vote campaign and a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.

Kenai Republican Women's Meeting on February 7th

- 1. On February 7, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka spoke at a Kenai Republican Women's meeting in Kenai, Alaska.
- 2. This meeting was open to the public.
- 3. An invitation for this meeting is attached as Exhibit 1.
- 4. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting the event.

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AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.

- 5. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 6. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event, nor did members of the organization attend the event.
- 7. Ms. Tshibaka has no recollection of advocating for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor supporting 22AKHE, nor advocating for the gathering of signatures at the event.
- 8. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 9. No attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 10. Neither Tshibaka nor PD filmed the events, broadcast them on social media, disseminated them on the internet, posted them online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 11. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event did not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 12. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a Get-Out-the-Vote campaign and a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.

Bell's Nursery Event on February 9th

- 1. On February 9, 2023, Tshibaka spoke at a fundraiser for PD at Bell's Nursery, hosted by leaders in Anchorage.
- 2. This event was open to the public.
- 3. An invitation for this meeting is attached as Exhibit 2.

- 4. A volunteer for PD wished to pay for supplies for this event but did not have funds available on the day, and so PD advanced \$209.89 for supplies to the volunteer, who later reimbursed PD in the same amount. This is the only time that PD expended any funds on an event, and after reimbursement the net cost to PD was zero (\$0).
- 5. Except as explained above, Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting the event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 6. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 7. Neither Phillip Izon, nor Art Mathias, nor any principal nor agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries nor Wellspring Fellowship spoke at the event.
- 8. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event, nor did principals or agents of the organization attend the event.
- 9. No attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 10. When Ms. Tshibaka was asked if AHE and PD were "combining the efforts to coordinate," she did not say PD and AHE were coordinating efforts because PD and AHE were not and have never coordinated efforts.
- 11. Ms. Tshibaka did not and does not have any knowledge of the structure or organization of AHE, including its principals or agents. When she said, "We have many of the people who are the co-leads of Alaskans for Honest Elections in the room right now, they are the co-hosts on this," Ms. Tshibaka was referring to co-hosts for the PD event who had told Ms. Tshibaka that they were volunteering for AHE. Ms. Tshibaka was incorrect in labeling them "co-leads;" they were merely volunteers.
- 12. It is clear from the recording of the event that Ms. Tshibaka did not know where AHE's event would be, what date it would be, or what time it would be—she asked members in the audience who were supporting AHE's initiative for that information. This is further evidence that PD was not

- coordinating with AHE and PD had no intent to promote AHE's petition signature launch event at the February 9th PD fundraiser. In other words, the purpose of the event was not to influence the outcome of 22AKHE.
- 13. Ms. Tshibaka's intent in saying "we [PD and AHE] are running in parallel" was to convey that PD is not working with, supporting, or contributing to AHE. Ms. Tshibaka's intent in saying, "what they [AHE] are doing...Alaskans for Honest Elections have a ballot initiative to overturn Ranked-Choice Voting. They're collecting signatures," was to distinguish the activities of PD from AHE.
- 14. When Ms. Tshibaka said, "We wanted the petitions to be here tonight," the "we" referred to co-hosts who sponsored the event who intended to bring the petition books to collect signatures afterwards.
- 15. Ms. Tshibaka said, "please join them [AHE] there [at their event]...that's absolutely critical." "We've got to get a counter message out there so when it's on the ballot, we win. I think that's super important." "Please volunteer to help get them signed."
- 16. Ms. Tshibaka then turned her comments back to fundraising for PD by talking about educating the public about how voters were affected in the Alaska November 2022 election. At the time, she thought a voter education effort might work "in tandem" with the efforts of AHE, but after receiving guidance from APOC shortly after this event, Ms. Tshibaka refrained from including in her education efforts any material that could be considered to support or oppose 22AKHE.
- 17. No attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 18. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD filmed the events, broadcast them on social media, disseminated them on the internet, posted them online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 19. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a Get-Out-the-Vote campaign and a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.
- 20. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event did not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).

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21. Ms. Tshibaka has a First Amendment protected free speech right to endorse and encourage gathering of signatures for 22AKHE, and such statements are not regulated by APOC if Ms. Tshibaka and/or PD did not make an expenditure in support of 22AKHE.

February 13th Event Hosted by Edna DeVries at the Mat-Su School of Government

- 1. On February 13, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka was invited to speak at a "School of Government," hosted by Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor, Edna DeVries.
- 2. PD does not know whether this event was open to the public.
- 3. PD does not have an invitation for this event.
- 4. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting the event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 5. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 6. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD were involved with planning or organizing the event.
- 7. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event, nor did members of the AHE organization attend the event, as best as PD knows.
- 8. Ms. Tshibaka does not recall advocating for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor did she support 22AKHE, nor did she advocate for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 9. No attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 10. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD filmed the events, broadcast them on social media, disseminated them on the internet, posted them online, or intended to

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- disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet.
- 11. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a Get-Out-the-Vote campaign and a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.
- 12. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event do not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 13. Ms. Tshibaka has a First Amendment protected free speech right to endorse and encourage gathering of signatures for 22AKHE, and such statements are not regulated by APOC if Tshibaka and/or PD did not make an expenditure in support of 22AKHE.

Bell's Nursery Event on February 22nd

- 1. On February 22, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka spoke at a fundraiser for PD at Bell's Nursery, hosted by leaders in Anchorage.
- 2. This event was open to the public.
- 3. An invitation for this meeting is attached as Exhibit 3.
- 4. Neither Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting the event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 5. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 6. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event, nor did members of the organization attend the event.
- 7. To Ms. Tshibaka's knowledge, the co-hosts who sponsored the event did not intend to bring petition books to collect signatures afterwards.

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- 8. Neither Tshibaka nor PD filmed the events, broadcast them on social media, disseminated them on the internet, posted them online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 9. Ms. Tshibaka's prepared remarks did not advocate for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor support 22AKHE, nor advocate for the gathering of signatures.
- Sometime after Ms. Tshibaka began speaking, an attendee circulated a 10. 22AKHE signature book around the room. Ms. Tshibaka has no recollection of saying the petition was "important" nor encouraging attendees to sign it. Ms. Tshibaka was particularly cautious about her comments at this event, and ensuring they did not qualify as APOC-regulated statements, given that she had just received guidance from APOC and retained Birch Horton Bittner & Cherot as counsel for APOC compliance.
- 11. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a Get-Out-the-Vote campaign and a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.
- 12. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event did not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 13. Ms. Tshibaka has a First Amendment protected free speech right to endorse and encourage gathering of signatures for 22AKHE, and such statements are not regulated by APOC if Tshibaka and/or PD did not make an expenditure in support of 22AKHE.

Tongass Conservatives of Southeast Alaska Event in Ketchikan on February 25th

- 1. On February 25, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka was invited to speak at a Tongass Republicans meeting in Ketchikan, Alaska.
- 2. PD does not know whether this event was open to the public.
- 3. PD does not have an invitation for this event.
- 4. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with this event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.

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- 5. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 6. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event, nor did members of the organization attend the event.
- 7. Ms. Tshibaka did not advocate for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor did she support 22AKHE, nor did she advocate for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 8. Ms. Tshibaka recalls a 22AKHE signature book was at the event. Ms. Tshibaka did not know before her trip to Ketchikan that there would be a petition signature book at the event.
- Neither Tshibaka nor PD filmed the events, broadcast them on social media, 9. disseminated them on the internet, posted them online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 10. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event did not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 11. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks focused on encouragement, the retelling of a faith-based story, and included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, focusing primarily on the Get-Out-the-Vote campaign. Ms. Tshibaka does not recall whether she discussed the statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.

Biblical Citizenship Class on March 1st

- 1. On March 1, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka was invited to speak about PD at a Biblical Citizenship Class in Anchorage, Alaska.
- 2. PD does not know whether this event was open to the public.
- 3. An invitation for this meeting is attached as Exhibit 4.

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- 4. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting the event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 5. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 6. AHE did not bring a signature book(s) to the event, nor did members of the organization attend the event.
- 7. Ms. Tshibaka did not advocate for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor did she support 22AKHE, nor did she advocate for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 8. No principal or agent of PD was aware that individuals seeking signatures in connection with the 22AKHE initiative application were present, if any.
- 9. To the best of Ms. Tshibaka's knowledge, no attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 10. Neither Tshibaka nor PD filmed the event, broadcast it on social media, disseminated it on the internet, posted it online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 11. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event did not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 12. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, focusing primarily on the Get-Out-the-Vote campaign. Ms. Tshibaka does not recall whether she discussed the statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.

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Republican Women of Fairbanks Meeting on May 24th

- 1. On May 24, 2023, Ms. Tshibaka was invited to speak at a Republican Women of Fairbanks meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska.
- 2. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting this event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 3. PD does not know whether this event was open to the public.
- 4. An invitation for this meeting is attached as Exhibit 5.
- 5. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD were involved in organizing this event.
- 6. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 7. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD filmed the event, broadcast it on social media, disseminated it on the internet, posted it online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 8. Ms. Tshibaka did not advocate for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor did she support 22AKHE, nor did she advocate for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 9. No principal or agent of PD was aware that individuals seeking signatures in connection with the 22AKHE initiative application were present, if any.
- 10. To the best of Ms. Tshibaka's knowledge, no attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 11. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event do not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).

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- 12. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.
- 13. Regardless, Ms. Tshibaka has protected First Amendment free speech rights that may not be abridged.

District 33 and District 34 PD Fundraiser on May 25th

- 1. Districts 33 and 34 hosted a fundraiser for PD on May 25, 2023 in Fairbanks, Alaska.
- 2. This event was open to the public.
- 3. An invitation for this meeting is attached as Exhibit 6.
- 4. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting this event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 5. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD were involved in organizing this event.
- 6. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 7. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD filmed the event, broadcast it on social media, disseminated it on the internet, posted it online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 8. Ms. Tshibaka did not advocate for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor did she support 22AKHE, nor did she advocate for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 9. No principal or agent of PD was aware that individuals seeking signatures in connection with the 22AKHE initiative application were present, if any.

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- 10. To the best of Ms. Tshibaka's knowledge, no attendees brought a 22AKHE signature book to the event.
- 11. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the event do not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).

Friday Republican Luncheon in Fairbanks on May 26th

- 1. Ms. Tshibaka was invited to speak about Preserve Democracy at the Friday Republican Luncheon on May 26, 2023.
- 2. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD have a record of any expenditure, transfer of money, or anything of value made in connection with hosting this event. AS 15.13.400(7). It was PD's intent to not make any APOC-regulated expenditures.
- 3. This event was not open to the public.
- 4. PD does not have an invitation for this event.
- 5. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD were involved in planning or organizing this event.
- 6. Principals or agents of PD did not specifically invite Phillip Izon, Art Mathias, or any principal or agent of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship to attend the event. Ms. Tshibaka does not know who the principals or agents are of Alaskans for Honest Elections, Ranked Choice Education Association, Wellspring Ministries or Wellspring Fellowship.
- 7. Neither Ms. Tshibaka nor PD filmed the event, broadcast it on social media, disseminated it on the internet, posted it online, or intended to disseminate her communications at the event through print, broadcast media, or the internet. Neither PD nor Tshibaka ever had a Facebook Live video of this event posted online.
- 8. Ms. Tshibaka did not advocate for repealing RCV in Alaska, nor did she support 22AKHE, nor did she advocate for the gathering of signatures at the event. No principal or agent of PD requested attendees to sign 22AKHE initiative application booklets.
- 9. No principal or agent of PD was aware that individuals seeking signatures in connection with the 22AKHE initiative application were present, if any.

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- 10. Ms. Tshibaka's statements at the events do not constitute a regulated "express communication" that was an "exhortation to vote for or against a specific candidate" as defined under AS 15.13.400(8).
- 11. At this event, Ms. Tshibaka's remarks included the types of activities PD would be engaging in, including a statewide poll to determine the causes for low voter turnout.

IX. CONCLUSION

At some point, APOC must recognize complainant as the "boy who cried wolf." Each election cycle, Mr. Kendall manufactures yet another dramatic, hyperbolic set of accusations that are intended to generate headlines and media attention around his candidates and ballot initiatives while tying up political opponents in needless agency proceedings. This is an obvious abuse of the process envisioned under Alaska law and is a waste of this agency's limited time and resources. The complaint is frivolous and should be dismissed.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 7th day of August, 2023.

SCHWABE, WILLIAMSON & WYATT, P.C. Attorneys for Respondents Preserve Democracy and Kelly Tshibaka

By:

Matthew Singer

Alaska Bar No. 9911072

msinger@schwabe.com

Lee C. Baxter

Alaska Bar No. 1510085

lbaxter@schwabe.com

PRESERVE DEMOCRACY AND KELLY TSHIBAKA
RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT
ALASKANS FOR BETTER ELECTIONS V. PRESERVE DEMOCRACY, ET AL.
APOC CASE NO. 23-02-CD – PAGE 26 OF 27

1	CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
2	I hereby certify that on the day of August, 2023, a true and correct copy of the PRESERVE DEMOCRACY AND
3	KELLY TSHIBAKA RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT (27 pages) with AFFIDAVIT AND EXHIBITS (8 pages) was served upon
4	the following by:
5	☑ US Mail ☑ Email ☐ Fax ☐ Hand-Delivery
6	Scott M. Kendall Cashion Gilmore & Lindemuth LLC
7	510 L Street, Suite 601 Anchorage, AK 99501
8	scott@cashiongilmore.com
9	Kevin G. Clarkson Law Offices of Kevin G. Clarkson
10	2223 Latona Dr. NE Keizer, OR 97303
11	kclarkson@gci.net ha Hadaa
12	Jeanine M. Huston
13	jhuston@schwabe.com
14	

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1	BEFORE THE ALASKA PUBLIC OFFICES COMMISSION
2	ALASKANS FOR BETTER)
3	ELECTIONS, INC.,
4	Complainant,) APOC Case No. 23-02-CD
5	v.
6	PRESERVE DEMOCRACY, KELLY)
7	TSHIBAKA and ALASKANS FOR) HONEST ELECTIONS,)
8	HONEST ELECTIONS,
9	Respondents.)
10	
11	AFFIDAVIT OF KELLY TSHIBAKA
12	STATE OF ALASKA)
13) ss. THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT)
14	I, Kelly Tshibaka, being first duly sworn, depose and state as follows:
15	1. I serve as the CEO of Preserve Democracy in a volunteer capacity and
16	am not noid for my CEO role
17	am not paid for my CEO role.
18	2. To the best of my knowledge, neither I nor Preserve Democracy has
19	shared the raw data from the poll we commissioned with any third party, including
20	Alaskans for Honest Elections and/or anyone else.
21	
22	3. Our pollster prepared an analysis and summary of the poll results, which
23	I shared on a national listserv established by the Conservative Policy Institute's Election
24	Integrity group. I do not know the identity of all participants on that listserv. My
25	purpose in sending the analysis and summary was to educate fellow concerned citizens
26	porpose in sending the unarysis and summary was to educate renow concerned entizens

from the Lower 48 who share similar concerns about low voter turnout and how to improve participation in future elections.

4. I also wrote an Op-Ed piece that was published in Must Read Alaska in which I discuss the poll: https://mustreadalaska.com/tshibaka-new-poll-shows-main-cause-of-2022-low-voter-turnout-in-alaska/. As is clear from the opinion piece, the purpose of my communication was to address concerns about low voter turnout and encourage ideas for improved participation in future elections.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

Kelly Tshibaka

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this _____ day of August, 2023, at Anchorage, Alaska.

"Official Seal"
Notary Public
Lakiesha Pleasant
State Of Alaska
Commission #191113016 Expires 11/13/2023



Kristie Babock



with Kelly Tshibaka

FIGHT RANKED-CHOICE VOTING & INCREASE VOTER PARTICIPATION

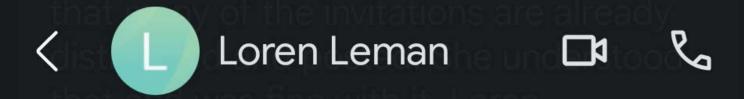
FEB. 7TH, 6:00 P.M. PARADISOS -- KENAI

CO-HOSTS:



KRISTIE & TUCKERMAN BABCOCK FORMER REP. RON GILLHAM CINDY & MARK GLASSMAKER TAMMY WALTON & CATHY STURMAN WAYNE & HELEN OGLE MIKE CRAWFORD JILL SCHAEFER & APRIL ORTH CODY & BETH MISHLER FRED BRAUN RON HYDE & ROB WALL

IF WE DON'T ACT NOW, THE ENTIRE U.S. ELECTION SYSTEM IS ABOUT TO CHANGE







With Kelly Tshibaka
FIGHT RANKED-CHOICE VOTING &
INCREASE VOTER PARTICIPATION

FEB. 9TH, 5:30 P.M. BELL'S NURSERY (13700 SPECKING AVE)

HOSTS

LOREN & CAROLYN LEMAN

MIKE MOSESIAN

PAUL & SUSANNE GIONET

CRAIG CAMPBELL
MEAD TREADWELL
SHELLEY SOUTH
ALYCE HANLEY
RANDY & HEATHER SULTE
JASON BAER
CALVIN & CHANDLER HOFFMAN
MARC & SUZANNE LUIKEN
JOSEPH & ERICA LEMAN
WES & CYNDI SAUNDERS
MAYOR DAN & LYNNETTE

SULLIVAN

JEFF & STEPHANIE LENTFER
JIM & KIM MINNERY
DAN & ROBERTA ZIPAY
MARTIN & ROBIN ECKMANN
BUD & CHRIS DUKE
NATE CALLINA
JUDY & RANDY ELEDGE
WIN FAULKNER
ALAN & PORTIA ERICKSON
BOB & CHEN GRIFFIN
AL SMAY

EDGAR BLATCHFORD
PETE & LAUREL HICKEL
SAMI & BRUCE GRAHAM
KATHY & STEVE HENSLEE
LORAN & DUBY BAXTER
WARD & CRISTIN HINGER
STEPHANIE & MIKE TAYLOR
BILL & ROSEMARY BORCHARDT
JEFF & LISA GARNESS
SANDY & TONY BLOMFIELD
CHELSEA & CHARLIE POHLAND

IF WE DON'T ACT NOW, THE ENTIRE U.S. ELECTION SYSTEM IS ABOUT TO CHANGE



Terri Hall (Steve...







Wednesday, Feb 15 • 9:21 AM



with Kelly Tshibaka

FIGHT RANKED-CHOICE VOTING & INCREASE VOTER PARTICIPATION



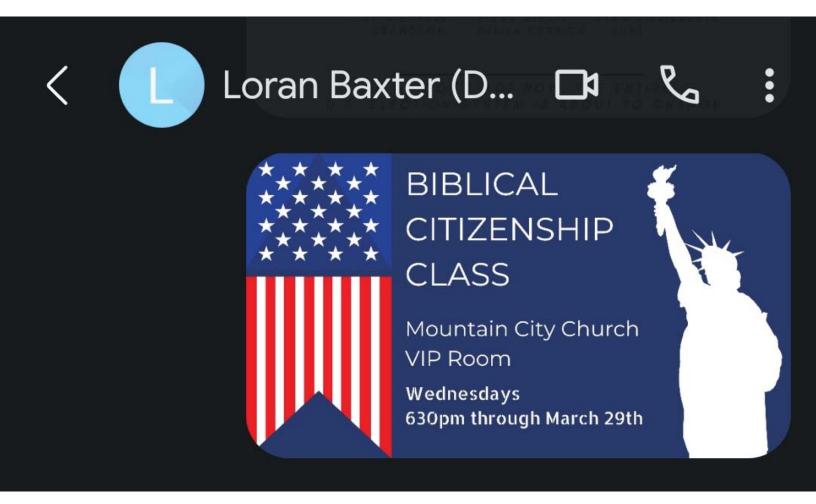
FEB. 22, 5:30 P.M. BELL'S NURSERY 13700 SPECKING AVE | FREE WINE & APPETIZERS SILENT AUCTION

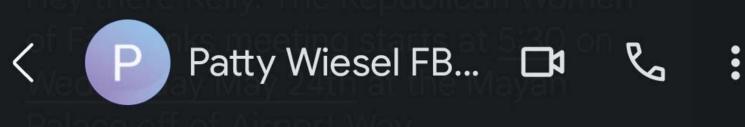
CO-HOSTS

TERRIE PISA JAY & LORELEI CREWDSON

MIKE MOSESIAN CATHY DUXBURY CHRISTINE HILL TERRI HALL KEVIN DURLING STEVE STRAIT RYAN & ELIZABETH SHEILA CERNICH HUNT

IF WE DON'T ACT NOW, THE ENTIRE U.S. ELECTION SYSTEM IS ABOUT TO CHANGE





alace on or Allport way.





Barbara Haney ... 🗖









with Kelly Tshibaka

HELP OVERTURN RANKED-CHOICE VOTING & INCREASE VOTER PARTICIPATION

MAY 25TH, 7 P.M. GENE'S CHRYSLER DODGE (3400 S CUSHMAN)



HOSTS

LANE & JULIE NICHOLS JOHN COGHILL JOSH & RUTH CHURCH MELISSA BURNETT CORY MONTAGUE AILEEN COTTER BONNIE KULZER DUSTIN & MANDI HART D&G ENTERPRISES

BARBARA HANEY LIBBY DALTON-SLANE RICH EIDE RUTH & JON EWIG CHRISTINE ROBBINS JOHN MOWERY

GARY & BARB TYNDALL RALPH & CONNIE SEEKINS ARTHUR & SALLY DUNCAN JOHN & PATTY WISEL RON & AMANDA WALL HANK & CANDY BARTOS HARMONY TOMASZEWSKI DON & RITA TROMETTER TIM BYRNES PAM & LONNIE LOFTS DON THOMPSON

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