

From: Jason Shepherd <shep1975@aol.com>

To: terryjohnson@cobb.net

Subject: Pledge not to abuse taxpayer funds

Date: Thu, Jul 29, 2010 10:58 pm

Attachments: taxpayer_abuse_pledge.pdf (69K)

Dear Rep. Terry Johnson:

First I want to wish you congratulations on your primary win. I look forward to a spirited campaign in the fall that will focus on the issues that are important to the voters of our district.

It came to my attention recently that you sent out your annual legislative update to our district. While I realize it is a legitimate use of taxpayer funds to mail out legislative newsletters at the end of the legislative session, and many legislators do take advantage of the privilege, I feel it is an abuse of the privilege when such mailings are used in the middle of a re-election campaign while early voting is in progress and more days have lapsed since the end of the session then there are days left before election day. The timing of the mailer makes it more "political" than "legislative" and, as such, an abuse of taxpayer funds.

The United States Congress has recognized the ethical issues concerning taxpayer funded mailings during elections and has placed its own limitations on legislative updates by prohibiting similar mailings for 90 days before an election.

I am asking you to join me in a Pledge to the taxpayers of our district, promising not to use taxpayer funds to mail legislative newsletters less than 60 days before a contested election. Furthermore, I am asking you to join me in pledging that if you are re-elected, you will sponsor legislation to prohibit this type of taxpayer abuse by prohibiting taxpayer funded mailings less than 60 days before an election.

I am well aware that for your 2009 legislative update, you paid your Florida political consultant, Mad Dog Mail, upfront to coordinate the mailing and afterwards asked the taxpayers to reimburse you the \$6,462.00 cost. Given the state of our state's economy and the budget crisis we are facing, I am asking you to either reimburse the state if you have already used taxpayer funds to mail your 2010 newsletter, or, if you have not submitted for reimbursement of the cost, pledge you will not do so.

I have attached a copy of the Pledge to this email and, as you will see, I have already signed it. Regardless of politics, I believe this Pledge will send an important message to the taxpayers of, not just House District 37, but to our entire state, that you and I will stand with them and against this type of abuse of taxpayer funds.

I look forward to receiving your signed copy of the pledge and your assurance that you will either return the cost of the mailing or, if you have not asked to be reimbursed, your pledge that you won't.

Sincerely,

Jason Shepherd

Jason Shepherd, Candidate
State House District 37

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