

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alan Wilson, Attorney General for the State of South Carolina

FROM: Peter vonLehe Ruegner, Candidate for SC House of Representatives 110

DATE: June 6, 2012

SUBJECT: Political Intimidation, Requesting Investigation in regards to SECTION 7-25-200 of the SC Code of Laws.

Dear Honorable Attorney General Wilson,

I am making a formal complaint against the Charleston County Republican Party Chair, Lin Bennett, and requesting that an investigation be opened regarding the matter detailed herein. It pains me to make this request; however, I feel that the integrity of our election process is at stake. No County or Statewide Chair should ever try to “arm twist” or “bribe” a candidate in order to influence their decision to run for office. Unfortunately, that was exactly my experience when I filed my candidacy for SC House 110 on March 24, 2012. The entire exchange between Ms. Bennett and myself was caught on film, which can be readily provided for your review. In addition to the video, I am also able to provide Facebook messages written by Ms. Bennett that clearly show her resentment toward my chosen candidacy and illustrate her attempts to dissuade me from pursuing the SC House 110 candidacy. I am also able to provide witnesses who can corroborate the details of the events of my candidacy filing on March 24, 2012.

After speaking with an attorney, it is clear that State law was broken. The law in question comes from the SC Code of Laws SECTION 7-25-200: Unlawful inducement to file for or *withdraw from candidacy for election*. This subsection states the following:

- A. It is unlawful to offer or accept, or attempt to offer or accept, either directly or indirectly, money, a loan of money, or any other thing of value which includes, but is not limited to, employment or the promise of employment to induce a person to file or withdraw as a candidate for any state or federal elected office.

The law goes on to state that the Attorney General shall prosecute:

- B. The Attorney General or the solicitor of the judicial circuit in which the violation occurred, shall prosecute immediately a person violating the provisions of this section.

As the video will show, Ms. Bennett, the Charleston County Republican Party Chair, attempted to “bribe” me as to dissuade me from running for the SC House 110 candidacy. Ms. Bennett stated she had “another seat” for me should I choose to withdraw my candidacy for SC House 110.

It is clear that Ms. Bennett knowingly attempted to induce me to withdraw my candidacy and bribe me to prevent me from pursuing the SC House 110 candidacy. This is clearly in violation

of the SC Code of Laws. For the reasons I have stated, I hope an investigation will be initiated and carried out expeditiously by your office in order to resolve this matter.

The people of South Carolina deserve a high level of integrity from the electoral process, as well as from those individuals by whom they are represented.

Sincerely,

Peter vonLehe Ruegner