

Concerned Taxpayers of Kootenai County and Kathleen Sims send letter of apology and pay civil penalty to settle Coeur d'Alene lawsuit

The Concerned Taxpayers of Kootenai County ("CTKC") and its treasurer Kathleen Sims have sent a letter of apology to the city of Coeur d'Alene and paid a civil penalty of \$2,500.00 to settle a lawsuit filed by the city in 2008 over the CTKC and Ms. Sim's failure to comply with campaign reporting laws in the 2007 Coeur d'Alene municipal election.

CTKC distributed a campaign flyer in the 2007 Coeur d'Alene municipal election without complying with the laws regulating fund raising, expenses and accounting for such political activity. Ms. Sims was the political treasurer for CTKC and was responsible for compliance.

In September 2008, the city of Coeur d'Alene filed suit against CTKC and Sims for violations of Idaho campaign finance laws arising from CTKC's involvement in the 2007 Coeur d'Alene municipal election. The lawsuit stated that CTKC and Sims violated Idaho law by 1) accepting donations and making expenditures before appointing a political treasurer; 2) failing to file timely and accurate campaign financial disclosure reports concerning contributions received and expenditures made; 3) failing to timely disclose and itemize campaign contributions in excess of \$50.00; and 4) failing to keep detailed accounts of contributions and expenditures.

"Idaho election law has clear requirements on how money is raised, spent and accounted for. Compliance with the elections laws is essential to ensuring fair and honest elections," said Coeur d'Alene city attorney Mike Gridley. "We will actively pursue any individual or organization that fails to comply with the law."

In the April 6, 2009 letter addressed to the city of Coeur d'Alene, Sims stated that, "I recognize that the election laws are important to protecting the integrity of our democracy and I support their enforcement." She went on to state that, "On behalf of myself and Concerned Taxpayers of Kootenai County, I can state that we are sorry that we failed to comply with the campaign reporting laws and we are committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the law in future elections."