

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BOARD**

CONCILIATION AGREEMENT

In the matter of the Minnesotans for Julie Blaha committee (18218);

1. Minnesotans for Julie Blaha is the principal campaign committee of State Auditor Julie Blaha. The Blaha committee's 2021 year-end report of receipts and expenditures disclosed five contributions of \$25 each received during the time period spanning January 9 through May 9, 2021, from Denise Specht, who is a lobbyist registered with the Board. Minnesota Statutes section 10A.273, subdivision 1, prohibits the principal campaign committee of a candidate for constitutional office from accepting a contribution from a registered lobbyist during a regular session of the legislature and the legislature was in regular session on the dates the contributions were received.
2. The Blaha committee's finance director, Chris Kluthe, self-reported the violation and explained that the contributions were the result of a recurring website contribution that was not turned off during the legislative session. The committee has provided documentation showing that the contributions were refunded in February 2022. The contributions were not returned within 90 days of deposit and are therefore deemed accepted under Minnesota Statutes section 10A.15, subdivision 3.
3. The parties agree that the Blaha committee accepted contributions from a registered lobbyist during a regular session of the legislature in violation of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.273, subdivision 1. This is the committee's second violation of the statute. The committee previously entered into a conciliation agreement regarding a contribution accepted from a political fund during the 2020 legislative session.
4. To avoid a similar violation in the future, the committee agrees that it:
 - a. Will not accept recurring contributions from lobbyists, political committees, political funds, or unregistered associations; and
 - b. Will ensure that contributions are reviewed and entered in the software used by the committee to file its periodic reports within 30 days of receipt.
5. The committee agrees to the imposition of a civil penalty of \$250, two times the amount of the violation, for accepting contributions from a registered lobbyist during a regular session of the legislature. Payment is due within 30 days of the date the agreement is signed by both parties.

6. If the committee does not comply with the provisions of this agreement, this matter may be reopened by the Board and the Board may take such actions as it deems appropriate.

/s/ Julie Blaha
Julie Blaha
Minnesotans for Julie Blaha

Dated: March 17, 2022

/s/ Faris Rashid
Faris Rashid, Chair
Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Dated: March 2, 2022