

January 25, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Challengers' Compliant Strikes at Heart of Pay-to-Play

CHICAGO—Independent Democratic candidates for State Rep. Joe Laiacona and Rudy Lozano Jr. filed a complaint with the State Board of Elections today, citing numerous violations of state election law related to the pre-election reports filed last week by Democratic incumbents Rep. Daniel Burke (D-23), Rep. Deborah Mell (D-40), Rep. Carol Sente (D-59) and Rep. Michael Zalewski (D-21).

Despite the fact that each of the incumbents was engaged in a time-consuming ballot access challenge, they all failed to report any expenditures or in-kind donations for attorney fees or staff costs.

“In November last year, I objected to my opponent’s petition on the grounds that she was not a registered voter,” said Laiacona. “We were both represented by attorneys. The fees I paid my attorney are reported. Mell’s report does not include any attorney’s fees.”

Lozano said, “We filed eight times the minimum number of signatures required. Burke never had a prayer of knocking us off the ballot but that wasn’t their goal. They wanted to cost us a bunch of money and divert us from campaigning. Burke’s report hides this essential information from the voters.”

Rep. Dan Burke admits his campaign is behind the objection to Lozano but said he didn’t pay the lawyer and doesn’t know who did. The lawyer in each of these cases is one of the State’s top lobbyists, leading some to believe that lobbying clients may be the ones who are paying. “Was it the hard liquor industry who paid? Or was it the video gaming industry?” asked Lozano.

Contacts: **Richard K. Means** 708-386-1122
Joe Laiacona 312-206-8793
Rudy Lozano, Jr. 773-600-9446
Suzanne Elder 773-718-2822

Independent Democrat Terry Collins is challenging Rep. Zalewski. “In that case, the Madigan people committed crimes gathering ‘evidence’ and had to dismiss their objection when they were caught. They may be able to avoid fines or jail for what was done by their campaign but it is illegal to hide the spending from the voters and they are directly responsible for what is and what is not on their reports,” said Richard Means, the attorney for the independent candidates.

“The whole purpose of campaign finance disclosure is to inform the voters of how a candidate is trying to win the election, how much it is costing, and to whom he or she may be obligated,” said Laiacona. “Not reporting these costs is unethical and illegal; it’s an abuse of the process. Somebody is paying and the fact that these candidates are hiding who pays suggests that payback may come in votes on the House floor.”

Illinois law requires the complaint case to be heard immediately and the State Board of Elections to make a decision in a week.

See: *Laiacona v. Mell* (Case No. 10 EB RGA 26)
Acosta v. Lozano (Case No. 09 COEB RGA 07)
Molaro v. Collins (Case No. 09 COEB RGA 06)
Rosenzweig v. Hebda (Case No. 09 SEOB GP 521) ■