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CANDIDATE IN TROUBLE OVER LATE FINANCE DATA

Leonard, Christina. *Arizona Republic* [Phoenix, Ariz] 17 Aug 2002: .1.

Abstract (summary)

The head of the state commission in charge of distributing public money to politicians has recommended that attorney general candidate John Greene be disqualified and fined \$10,000 for violating finance report deadlines.

Full Text

The head of the state commission in charge of distributing public money to politicians has recommended that attorney general candidate John Greene be disqualified and fined \$10,000 for violating finance report deadlines.

"This is my recommendation, and frankly, I don't think I'm going to change my mind," said Colleen Connor, executive director of the Citizens Clean Elections Commission. "It's pretty clear the statute says you shall disqualify the candidate, and you shall impose this penalty."

The commission found that Greene, who is not a Clean Elections candidate, filed six finance reports late, including one turned in 60 days after the deadline. The amount not reported in time involved more than \$78,000, Connor said.

Greene, 54, referred questions to attorney Lee Miller, who said, "I'm confident the commission will take a different view.

"We don't challenge the fact the reports were filed late," he said. "The finance reporting system that the Clean Elections Act created is immensely complex, and reporting the right numbers on the right day is a job that unfortunately, campaigns have come to learn, you can't just give to a volunteer and trust they get it right."

Miller added that finance reports have since been reported in full and on time.

If candidates do not file campaign finance reports in a timely manner, matching funds to Clean Elections candidates are delayed.

"It is clear that if we had not filed our complaint and forced John Greene's campaign to comply with the law, we would have been greatly prejudiced, and our ability to communicate with voters would have been hurt tremendously," said Andrew Thomas, a Clean Elections candidate and one of Greene's opponents.

Greene has 10 days to send a brief to try to change Connor's recommendation before the panel makes its decision.

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Indexing (details)

Subjects:	Elections
Company/Org:	Clean Elections
Title:	CANDIDATE IN TROUBLE OVER LATE FINANCE DATA
Authors:	Leonard, Christina
Publication title:	Arizona Republic

Pages: B.1
Publication year: 2002
Publication Date: Aug 17, 2002
Year: 2002
Section: Local
Publisher: Gannett Co., Inc.
Place of Publication: Phoenix, Ariz.
Country of publication: United States
ISSN: 08928711
Source type: Newspapers
Language of Publication: English
Document type: News
Subfile: Elections
ProQuest Document ID: 238186001
Document URL: <http://0-search.proquest.com.libcat.scottsdaleaz.gov/docview/238186001?accountid=6131>
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Last updated: 2010-06-11
Database: Arizona Republic

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