

Senate Ethics Committee

LUKE A. RANKIN
CHAIRMAN

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THE SENATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
P. O. BOX 142
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29202

**In the Matter of the South Carolina)
Senate Ethics Committee's Complaint)
Against Senator Robert I. Ford)
_____)**

FINAL ORDER

FINDINGS OF FACT

Pursuant to Senate Rules 44 and 44.1, the Senate Ethics Committee (the "Committee") hereby makes the following findings of fact with respect to each Allegation contained in the Committee's Complaint and Amended Complaint filed against Senator Robert I. Ford encompassing the period July 10, 2009, through April 10, 2013 (the "Periods Involved"):

1. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you utilized campaign funds to defray personal expenses that were unrelated to your campaign or office and otherwise converted such funds to personal use, each of which is a separate violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-1348 (Supp. 2012).

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

2. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you misrepresented on your Campaign Disclosure Reports the amounts of various expenditures such that they were inconsistent with the actual amount of such expenditures reflected on your campaign banking statements, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

3. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you misrepresented on your Campaign Disclosure Reports the purpose of certain expenditures to make such expenditures appear as if they were related to you campaign or office when the actual purpose of such expenditures were personal in nature, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

4. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you made numerous cash withdrawals in excess of \$100, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1348.

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

5. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you failed to report numerous contributions from individuals and entities on your Campaign Disclosure Reports, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

6. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you failed to report numerous expenditures from your campaign banking account on your Campaign Disclosure Reports, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

7. Upon information and belief, during the Periods Involved, you failed to report on your Campaign Disclosure Reports various campaign loans and campaign loan repayments, each of which is a separate violation of Section 8-13-1308.

The overwhelming competent and substantial evidence proved that Senator Ford improperly reported a home improvement loan as a campaign loan and made payments thereon with campaign funds.

8. Upon information and belief, you knowingly and willfully altered copies of documents (and made false and misleading descriptive notations thereon), including, but not limited to, copies of your campaign banking records, and submitted or caused to be submitted the altered copies to the Committee during the course of the Committee's review of your campaign records, and such actions were done with the intent to deceive the Committee.

Proven on multiple counts by overwhelming competent and substantial evidence

ORDER OF PUNISHMENT

The Committee hereby acknowledges Senator Robert I. Ford's immediate and irrevocable resignation from the South Carolina Senate, which is tantamount to the ultimate sanction allowed by the Committee, the recommendation of Expulsion.

The Committee further affirmatively concludes that the multiple violations of South Carolina's Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act proven by the overwhelming competent and substantial evidence warrants the immediate referral herewith to the Attorney General's Office of all unredacted documents entered into these proceedings, including but not limited to exhibits, transcripts, and audio/video recordings.

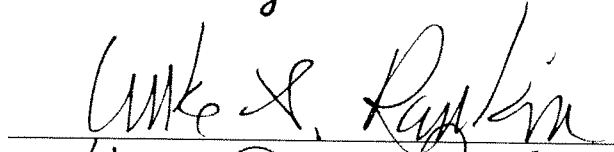
The Committee hereby directs that this Final Order and all redacted documents shall, as soon as practicable hereafter, be placed on the South Carolina Senate Ethics Committee's website.

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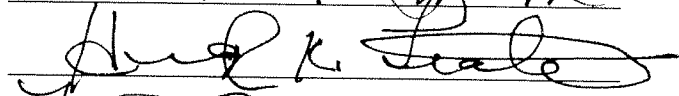
State of South Carolina
County of Richland

AND IT IS SO ORDERED, this 31st day of May, 2013, by the following
Members of the Senate Ethics Committee:

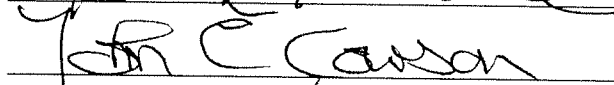
Senator Luke A. Rankin, Chairman



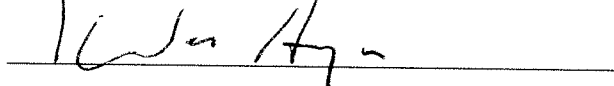
Senator Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.



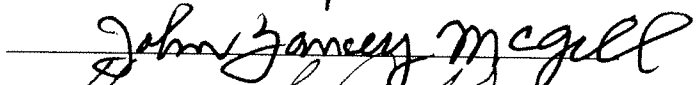
Senator John E. Courson



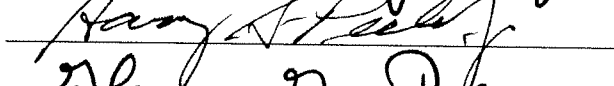
Senator Robert W. Hayes, Jr.



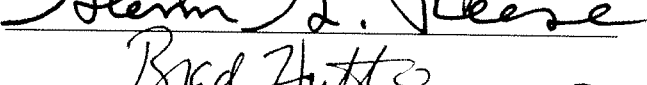
Senator J. Yancey McGill



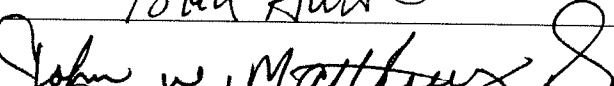
Senator Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.



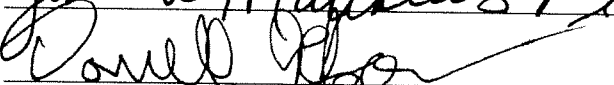
Senator Glenn G. Reese



Senator C. Bradley Hutto



Senator John W. Matthews, Jr.



Senator Darrell Jackson

