

Respondent Names
Citizens for Liberty and Labor
Complainant Name
John Estey
Complaint Description
<u>John Estey</u> reported via the portal (Wed, 15 Oct 2025 at 4:04 PM) On or around October 15, 2025, the political committee Citizens for Liberty and Labor mailed a political advertisement (attached) opposing incumbent Spokane City Councilmember Jonathan Bingle. However, according to publicly available filings, Citizens for Liberty and Labor has not reported any contributions or expenditures since January 2025. This constitutes a clear violation of RCW 42.17A.235 and RCW 42.17A.240, which require timely and accurate disclosure of contributions and expenditures. The failure to report the costs associated with the production and distribution of the mailer is an additional violation of these same statutes, as well as RCW 42.17A.320, which requires expenditures to be reported within 24 hours once a political advertisement is publicly distributed close to an election. Furthermore, RCW 42.17A.320 mandates that political advertising disclose the names of the top five contributors to the sponsoring committee. The mailer in question lists the following organizations as top contributors: FUSE Votes, SEIU Washington State Council PAC, UFCW International, AFSCME, and the Spokane Firefighters Union. However, as Citizens for Liberty and Labor has not reported any contributions since October 2024, their most recent public filings list only four contributors: FUSE Votes, Hamilton Studios, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and Washington Conservation Voters Action Fund. The inaccurate listing of top contributors constitutes a violation of RCW 42.17A.320 for false sponsor identification on campaign advertising. In addition, the mailer lists AFSCME and the Spokane Firefighters Union in the “paid for by” line. However, both organizations have publicly endorsed Jonathan Bingle in his re-election campaign. Listing them as sponsors of opposition advertising misrepresents their position and constitutes a violation of RCW 42.17A.335, which prohibits political advertising from making false claims about the support or endorsement of any person or organization. Taken together, these violations represent a serious breach of Washington’s campaign finance and transparency laws. They deprive the public of accurate, timely, and truthful information at a critical stage in the election cycle, as ballots are about to be mailed. The blatant concealment of donors and expenditures is especially egregious. That a political committee with a long history of activity and hundreds of thousands of dollars in spending would so

flagrantly disregard the law is deeply concerning. Such willful violations warrant the strongest penalties available under Washington State law.

What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

These violations pose an immediate and serious threat to the integrity of Washington's electoral process, particularly as ballots are set to be mailed within days. By failing to disclose contributions, expenditures, and donor information, the subject of this complaint is knowingly withholding critical information that voters are legally entitled to before casting their ballots. Because Washington conducts its elections entirely by mail, the period immediately before ballots are sent is when disclosure is most vital—voters are actively filling out ballots while these reports remain hidden. This deliberate lack of transparency not only erodes public trust, but also denies voters the ability to make fully informed decisions at one of the most crucial moments in the election cycle.

By concealing the sources of its funding, this committee is engaging in the kind of dark money activity that Washington's disclosure laws were expressly written to prevent. Voters have a right to know who is paying to influence their decisions—not after the election, but before they cast their ballots. Washington voters established one of the nation's strongest campaign-finance disclosure systems more than fifty years ago through Initiative 276, affirming their belief that transparency is the cornerstone of public trust. These violations strike at that very foundation.

The concealment of financial activity and campaign sponsorship distorts the political playing field and undermines the principles of fairness and accountability that Washington's campaign finance laws were designed to protect. It is not a matter of oversight—it is a calculated disregard for the law. Allowing such concealment to go unaddressed places compliant campaigns at a competitive disadvantage and sends a dangerous message that transparency obligations are optional.

What makes these violations especially egregious is the fact that they are being committed by a seasoned political committee with a well-documented history of campaign activity and significant financial resources. For such an entity to blatantly ignore its legal obligations suggests a knowing and willful intent to deceive the public. These are not minor infractions—they are serious breaches that merit the most severe penalties available under Washington State law.

Washington's disclosure laws exist so that "the public's right to know of the financing of political campaigns and lobbying shall be fully protected." The respondents' actions subvert that right, reintroduce the very secrecy Washington voters rejected more than fifty years ago, and warrant decisive enforcement.

List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found

1. Front Side of Mail Piece 1 against Councilmember Jonathan Bingle
2. Back Side of Mail Piece 2 against Councilmember Jonathan Bingle
3. Endorsement post from Councilmember Jonathan Bingle (AFSCME)

4. Endorsement post from Councilmember Jonathan Bingle (Firefighters Union)

List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them

Geoffrey Bracken
Ministerial Treasurer

Sean Doyle
Chair

Sabrina Kimm
Co-Chair

Certification (Complainant)

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

We Need Councilmembers Committed to Helping Spokane Families in Challenging Times...

Spokane consumers likely to see
higher costs for cars, groceries,
homes with new tariffs – The
Spokesman-Review 3/3/25

The Trump administration wants
to cut a grant program that
helps low-income households
in Spokane – Inlander, 9/30/25

Spokane faces healthcare
challenges after federal budget
cuts – Nonstop Local News,
KHQ 9/23/25

Paid for by Citizens for Liberty and Labor, PO Box 88845, Spokane, WA 99228. Top 5
Contributors: Fiske Votes, SERU Washington State Council PAC, UFCW International,
AFSCME, Spokane Firefighters Union, Top 3 Donors to PAC. Contributors: SERU
International, Washington State Association for Justice, League of Conservation Voters



Instead of protecting Spokane families, Councilmember Jonathan Bingle is pushing his MAGA ideology.

-  With Trump threatening harm to American cities, Bingle voted against prohibiting ICE from entering private events without a warrant. [Spokane-News 8/10/20](#)
-  Instead of focusing on important issues, Bingle introduced five different measures to take rights away from transgender people. [Spokane-News 6/6/20](#)
-  Instead of helping residents struggling to pay bills, Bingle opposes new laws protecting low-income seniors and working families from predatory rent increases. [Spokane-News 6/6/20](#)

We deserve a Councilmember who fights to make life easier for us—Jonathan Bingle is making it worse.





Jonathan Bingle for City Council

October 1 at 8:13 PM · 🌐



🚩 ENDORSEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT 🚩

[1... See more](#)

**PROUDLY
ENDORSED BY:**

Local 270



AFSCME®

Spokane City Employees



JONATHAN

BINGLE

City Council, District I



Jonathan Bingle for City Council

September 29 at 12:35 PM · 🌐

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I'm proud to be endorsed by the men and women who put their lives on the line to keep Spokane safe! Thank you to the [Spokane Firefighters](#) and the [Spokane Police Guild](#). ... See more

**PROUDLY
ENDORSED BY:**



**JONATHAN
BINGLE**
City Council, District I