

September 17, 2015

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

The Honorable Stacey Pickering  
Auditor, State of Mississippi  
501 North West Street  
Suite 801  
Jackson, MS 39201

RE: Complaint against Dr. Jesse Smith, Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves, and Speaker Philip Gunn

Dear Mr. Pickering:

This letter will serve as a complaint against Dr. Jesse Smith, Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves, Speaker Philip Gunn, and Rebekah Staples for violating state law governing elections and public servants. This letter also requests an investigation by the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor into the allegations and facts set forth below.

**Allegations and Statement of Facts**

On September 16, 2015, an email was made public from Dr. Jesse Smith, the President of Jones County Junior College, to all community college presidents in Mississippi, suggesting that they oppose statewide ballot Initiative 42 and contribute money to a political initiative committee called Improve Mississippi to further the goal of defeating Initiative 42.

The email went on to provide details concerning the founding and management of the Improve Mississippi Political Initiative Committee, including that it was created by Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves and Speaker Philip Gunn, and that it was being actively managed by Rebekah Staples. Ms. Staples is currently listed as the Director of Policy for Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves.

If Lieutenant Governor Reeves and Speaker Gunn organized and sponsored the creation of the Improve Mississippi Political Initiative Committee while acting in their official capacities, and if Ms. Staples is indeed actively managing Improve Mississippi while working as the Lieutenant Governor's Director of Policy, then clear violations of state law regarding elections and public servants have taken place and an investigation is warranted.

Please find attached a copy of the email from Dr. Smith, the statement of organization for the Improve Mississippi Political Initiative Committee, and a staff directory from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at 601-552-3258 or by email at [rana.mitchell@gmail.com](mailto:rana.mitchell@gmail.com).

Sincerely,



Rana Mitchell



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## JCJC leader asking other CCs to oppose 42

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**From:** Jesse Smith [mailto:[jesse.smith@jcjc.edu](mailto:jesse.smith@jcjc.edu)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 16, 2015 9:42 AM  
**To:** Presidents MACJC <[presidents@sbcjc.cc.ms.us](mailto:presidents@sbcjc.cc.ms.us)>  
**Subject:** Improve Mississippi Political Initiative

Presidents,

I hope you are well and enjoying somewhat cooler temperatures. It is beginning to feel like Fall. When we last met, I proposed that we use our efforts to raise funds to help battle the passing of Ballot Initiative 42. If you would like to support the opposition to this initiative of which I fully plan to, the following information will be helpful for contributions:

- Payable to: Improve Mississippi Political Initiative
- Filed with Secretary of State by: BIPAC
- Created by: Lt. Gov Reeves and Speaker Gunn
- Managed by: Rebekah Staples (601) 319-8887
- Address: P.O. Box 23021, Jackson, MS 39225-3201
- Reporting Period: The 10th of Every Month Following the Month of Contribution

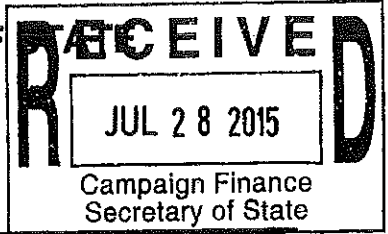
I hope you have had some luck in garnering support for the opposition of this initiative. I realize that there are pockets of support throughout our state and we find ourselves in a tenuous position with our local school districts and our superintendents who serve on our Board of Trustees. Nonetheless, I am wholeheartedly opposed to Initiative 42 because it very well may be the straw that could break the community college back, if it passes.

I look forward to seeing you next Tuesday at our meeting that will begin at 8:30 a.m. next Tuesday at the Capitol. Hope you have a great week.

All the Best,

Jess

OFFICE OF THE MISSISSIPPI SECRETARY OF STATE



STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION FOR A POLITICAL COMMITTEE

1. Name of committee Improve Mississippi Political Initiative Committee (IMPIC)
2. Address of committee P.O. Box 23021
City, State, Zip Jackson, MS 39225-3021 Email vanwhite@bipec.org
Phone 601.353.4941 FAX
Contact Person Van White Phone same Email same
Contact Full Address same

3. Is the committee registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC)? Yes
FEC Identification Number X No

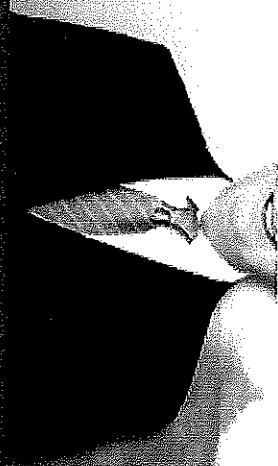
4. If the committee is authorized by a candidate:
Name of Candidate
Address
Office sought Party

5. Describe, as concisely as possible, the purpose of this committee and, if applicable, the identification of affiliated or connected organizations:
To oppose Initiative 42 based upon the potentially negative impact passage would have on MS's economic development, economic attractiveness, and general prosperity; IMPIC derives guidance from the research/educational activities of BIPEC

6. Names and addresses of all officers: (attach separate sheet if necessary)
A. Name Office Address
B. Name Office Address
C. Name Office Address
D. Name Office Address

7. Director Van White (Type Name) [Signature] 28 JULY 2015 (Date)
8. Treasurer Van White (Type Name) [Signature] 28 JULY 2015 (Date)

- Send To:
1. Political Committees associated with statewide or multi-county elections should return the form to: Delbert Hosemann, Secretary of State, Elections Division, P.O. Box 136, Jackson MS 39205.
2. Political Committees associated with single county elections should return this form to their County Circuit Clerk.
3. Political Committees associated with municipal elections should return this form to their Municipal Clerk.



# TATE REEVES

THE OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF MISSISSIPPI



[ABOUT TATE](#) | [COMMITTEES](#) | [MEDIA](#) | [STAFF](#)

## Contact

To contact Lt. Governor Tate Reeves or request an appearance, please contact 359-3200.

### Staff

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**Rebekah Staples**  
Director of Policy

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