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August 6, 2021

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City of Brunswick
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Dear Prosecutors:

A recent advertisement for a fundraising event to be held at the Diamond Event Center in Brunswick has caused some concerns which we are asking your offices to address. Specifically, on Saturday, September 11, 2021 the Republican Party of Medina County has scheduled, and is advertising, a fundraising event featuring Lara Trump. A copy of the relevant portion of the advertisement is attached to this letter for your reference.

According to that advertisement the event includes "...Multi Gun Raffle! 50-50 Raffle! Lottery Basket Raffles!". The fact that multiple raffles are part of the program appears to violate a number of state and local prohibitions.

Specifically, raffles by an entity other than a charitable or educational organization are prohibited by the Ohio Revised Code. ORC §2915.092(B) provides that "[e]xcept as provided in division (A) or (B) of this section, no person shall conduct a raffle that is for profit or a raffle drawing that is not for profit." The referenced exceptions being limited to "...a charitable organization, a public school, a chartered nonpublic school, a community school, or a veteran's organization, fraternal organization or sporting organization that is exempt from federal income taxation...."

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Additionally, the Codified Ordinances of the City of Brunswick include restrictions against conducting raffles which mirror the prohibitions found in the Ohio Revised Code. Given that Diamond Event Center is located within the City of Brunswick's municipal boundaries, the local ordinances prohibiting gambling, and specifically raffles, are applicable to the Republican Party of Medina County's advertised event. Specifically, 603.08 prohibits raffles from being conducted unless an organization "...is exempt from federal income taxation under subsection 501(a) and as described in subsection 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(7), 501(c)(8), 501(c)(10) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code..."

Both the Ohio Revised Code and City of Brunswick Codified Ordinances provide that conducting a raffle in violation of the prohibition is a first-degree misdemeanor for a first offense, with subsequent offenses escalating to fifth degree felonies.

Based on the above, it would appear that the "raffles" planned by the Republican Party of Medina County for fundraising at their September 11, 2021 event would violate both the provisions of the Ohio Revised Code and the Codified Ordinances of the City of Brunswick.

Quite plainly, this should be a law enforcement issue and not a partisan political one. It is in that spirit that we write to you in the hopes that this matter can be addressed and corrected without the need for any additional action.

We hope you can advise us that the matter has been resolved (or that the raffles will not be conducted in a way that violates local and state law) within fourteen (14) days of the date on this letter so that we can assure the community that the issue has been addressed and that no further individual or collective action is necessary.

We look forward to your reply with every confidence that our shared respect for the laws of the City of Brunswick and the State of Ohio will be respected and fairly enforced.

Sincerely,

Mike Kovack, Chair
Medina County Democratic Party
Executive Committee