

STATE OF COLORADO  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
1700 BROADWAY, #550  
DENVER, COLORADO 80290

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BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF STATE, COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER

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AHO Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

ED Case Nos. 2025-45, 2025-103

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In the Matter of

ELECTIONS DIVISION OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

Complainant,

vs.

MICHAEL BENNET AND BENNET FOR GOVERNOR,

Respondents.

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## COMPLAINT

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Pursuant to § 1-45-111.7, C.R.S. (2025), the Elections Division of the Secretary of State (Division) files this complaint against Michael Bennet, in his capacity as a candidate for Governor of the State of Colorado, and his associated candidate committee, Bennet for Governor (together, Respondents).

## INTRODUCTION

1. To ensure fairness in campaigns for public office, Colorado law imposes limitations on the amount a candidate or candidate committee can receive in contributions from any person. Colorado law likewise prohibits candidates and their committees from accepting contributions from other candidate committees, including candidate committees established under federal law.

2. Moreover, to foster transparency and provide voters with information about the sources and expenditures of campaign funds, Colorado law requires candidates and their committees to timely report all campaign expenditures.

3. Respondents here—a gubernatorial candidate and his candidate committee—accepted 39 prohibited contributions from Bennet for Colorado—a candidate committee established under federal law—in the form of payments to third parties for travel expenses made in furtherance of Respondent Bennet’s gubernatorial campaign. Not only did Respondents accept the prohibited contributions, but they also failed to report the expenditures in their quarterly reports of contributions and expenditures, depriving voters of timely access to complete and accurate information about their expenditures for up to six months.

4. Accordingly, the Division brings this complaint to obtain appropriate relief.

#### **PARTIES**

5. Complainant, the Division, is the Elections Division of the Colorado Secretary of State.

6. Respondents are Michael Bennet, a candidate for Governor of the State of Colorado; and Bennet for Governor, his candidate committee supporting his gubernatorial campaign, registered with the Colorado Secretary of State, Committee ID # 20255048909.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

7. The Department has jurisdiction under § 1-45-111.7, C.R.S.

8. The Division files this complaint with a hearing officer consistent with § 1-45-111.7(5)(a)(IV).

9. This complaint is timely filed within thirty business days of service of the Division’s March 31, 2026 Notice of Investigation in accordance with § 1-45-111.7(5)(a).

10. Venue is proper before the hearing officer under § 1-45-111.7(5)(a).

#### **ALLEGATIONS**

11. Michael Bennet is a United States Senator for Colorado and currently is a candidate for reelection in the 2028 federal election. Respondent Bennet filed his statement of

candidacy for that election with the Federal Election Commission on March 11, 2024.

Respondent Bennet's federal reelection campaign is supported by Bennet for Colorado (the Senate Committee), a principal campaign committee authorized to raise contributions and make expenditures for Senator Bennet's federal reelection campaign under 52 U.S.C. § 30102(e)(1).

12. On April 16, 2025, Respondent Bennet also became a candidate for Governor of Colorado by filing a candidate affidavit with the Department announcing his candidacy for the gubernatorial election. Respondent Bennet's gubernatorial campaign is supported by Respondent Bennet for Governor, a candidate committee registered with the Colorado Secretary of State on April 10, 2025.

13. Following the announcement of his gubernatorial campaign, Respondent Bennet traveled for, and incurred travel-related expenses relating to, that campaign. For several months, however, it was not Respondent Bennet for Governor that paid those expenses. Rather, the Senate Committee funded the expenses, reporting to the Federal Election Commission thousands of dollars in expenditures for 39 separate travel-related expenses made in the second and third quarters of 2025: These expenses were paid and reported to the Federal Election Commission by the Senate Committee, creating the appearance to the public that these expenses were incurred in connection with travel and events for Respondent Bennet's federal campaign.

14. The Senate Committee paid these expenses directly to various third parties, including airlines, car services, and hotels, for costs incurred in furtherance of Respondents' gubernatorial campaign, including travel for out-of-state events promoting Respondent Bennet's candidacy for Governor.

15. Specifically, from April 14, 2025, to June 23, 2025, the Senate Committee paid 26 separate expenses totaling \$17,386.94 for travel to or from, or lodging in, Colorado, California, New York, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., for Bennet for Governor events:

- a. \$231.76 to United Airlines on April 14, 2025, for a May 4, 2025 flight from Denver International Airport to Los Angeles International Airport;
- b. \$264.38 to United Airlines on April 14, 2025, for a May 5, 2025 flight from Los Angeles International Airport to Dulles International Airport;

- c. \$308.02 to the Distillery Inn in Carbondale, Colorado, on April 21, 2025, for lodging;
- d. \$280.48 to American Airlines on May 5, 2025, for a May 16, 2025 flight from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport to LaGuardia Airport;
- e. \$228.15 to Carey Limousine on May 5, 2025, for transportation to and from events in California;
- f. \$169.35 to Carey Limousine on May 6, 2025, for transportation to and from events in California;
- g. \$150.00 to Amtrak on May 12, 2025, for travel to and from events in New York;
- h. \$6,851.76 to Blueprint USA on May 16, 2025, for lodging, food, and transportation for events in New York;
- i. \$121.00 to Amtrak on May 19, 2025, for travel to and from events in New York;
- j. \$876.45 to JW Marriott Essex House in New York City on May 19, 2025, for lodging;
- k. \$428.49 to United Airlines on May 19, 2025, for a June 19, 2025 flight from LaGuardia Airport to Denver International Airport;
- l. \$96.00 to Amtrak on May 23, 2025, for travel to and from events in New York;
- m. \$110.46 to Attitude New York on May 23, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- n. \$850.00 to Attitude New York on May 23, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- o. \$449.33 to United Airlines on May 23, 2025, for a July 13, 2025 flight from Denver International Airport to LaGuardia Airport;
- p. \$623.08 to United Airlines on June 2, 2025 for a June 9, 2025 flight from Denver International Airport to LaGuardia Airport;

- q. \$917.15 to United Airlines on June 6, 2025, incurred to hold a seat on a flight from Denver International Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport;
- r. \$965.10 to JW Marriott Essex House in New York City on June 10, 2025, for lodging;
- s. \$458.79 to Attitude New York on June 13, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- t. \$287.09 to Attitude New York on June 13, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- u. \$953.62 to JW Marriott Essex House in New York City, on June 19, 2025, for lodging;
- v. \$121.00 to Amtrak on June 20, 2025, for travel to and from events in New York;
- w. \$289.81 to Attitude New York on June 20, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- x. \$570.62 to Attitude New York on June 20, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- y. \$304.26 to United Airlines on June 23, 2025, for a July 27, 2025 flight from Denver International Airport to San Francisco International Airport; and
- z. \$480.79 to United Airlines on June 23, 2025, for an August 4, 2025 flight from San Francisco International Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

16. Then, from July 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025, the Senate Committee made payments for 13 additional expenses totaling \$7,053.65 for travel to or from, or lodging in, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., for Bennet for Governor events:

- a. \$155.00 to Amtrak on July 1, 2025, for travel to New York;

- b. \$381.93 to Attitude New York on July 3, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- c. \$354.48 to United Airlines on July 12, 2025, incurred to hold a seat on a flight from Denver International Airport to LaGuardia Airport for events in New York;
- d. \$408.11 to Attitude New York on July 14, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- e. \$807.89 to JW Marriott Essex House in New York City on July 14, 2025, for lodging;
- f. \$948.75 to Attitude New York on July 18, 2025, for transportation to and from events in New York;
- g. \$408.48 to United Airlines on July 22, 2025, for a September 28, 2025 flight from Denver International Airport to Boston Logan International Airport;
- h. \$53.00 to JetBlue Airways on July 22, 2025, for a September 29, 2025 flight from Boston Logan International Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport;
- i. \$110.30 JetBlue Airways on July 22, 2025, for a September 29, 2025 flight from Boston Logan International Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport;
- j. \$234.99 to the Historic Redstone Inn in Redstone, Colorado, on July 25, 2025, for lodging;
- k. \$1,133.80 to SF Black Car Daly on July 27, 2025, for transportation to and from events in California;
- l. \$219.50 to 303 Car Service on August 3, 2025, for transportation from Denver International Airport to Respondent Bennet's home for events in Colorado; and
- m. \$1,837.42 to Carey Limousine on September 30, 2025, for transportation to and from events in California.

17. Respondents did not report these 39 travel-related expenses for Respondent Bennet’s gubernatorial campaign as expenditures in their quarterly reports filed on July 15, 2025, and October 15, 2025.

18. On September 24, 2025, Alyssa Holladay filed a campaign finance complaint with the Division, alleging that Respondents violated state campaign finance law by accepting prohibited contributions from a candidate committee established under federal law, failing to report contributions, and making prohibited expenditures in the second quarter of 2025.

19. After Ms. Holladay filed that complaint, Bennet for Governor reviewed Respondent Bennet’s travel for the second and third quarters of 2025 and determined that certain travel expenses related to Respondent Bennet’s gubernatorial campaign were improperly paid by the Senate Committee. On September 30, 2025, Bennet for Governor reimbursed the Senate Committee by two checks totaling \$17,386.94 and \$7,053.65, respectively:

1. Date Expended 09/30/2025	4. Name BENNET FOR COLORADO
2. Fair Market Value \$7,053.65	5. Address PO BOX 3078
Electioneering Comm? <b>No</b>	6. City/State/Zip DENVER CO 80201
	7. Purpose Travel & Lodging
	8. Coordinated? No
	REIMBURSEMENT-Q3 TRAVEL ITEMIZED BY VENDOR AND DATE

1. Date Expended 09/30/2025	4. Name BENNET FOR COLORADO
2. Fair Market Value \$17,386.94	5. Address PO BOX 3078
Electioneering Comm? <b>No</b>	6. City/State/Zip DENVER CO 80201
	7. Purpose Travel & Lodging
	8. Coordinated? No
	REIMBURSEMENT-Q2 TRAVEL ITEMIZED BY VENDOR AND DATE

20. On November 4, 2025, Ms. Holladay filed a second campaign finance complaint with the Division, alleging similar violations of state campaign finance law by Respondents during the third quarter of 2025.

21. The Division consolidated the campaign finance complaints and, based on its initial review, determined that the complaints sufficiently alleged one or more potential violations of campaign finance law. At the same time, the Division determined that one or more

of the alleged violations was potentially curable and gave Respondents an opportunity to cure any deficiencies or provide additional information relevant to the campaign finance complaints and the allegations therein.

22. On October 22, 2025, Respondents submitted a Notice of Intent to Cure, noting the above-referenced reimbursements issued to the Senate Committee. Then, on January 15, 2026, they reported the expenditures on their reports of contributions and expenditures.

23. Given the extent of their noncompliance and their delay in filing amended reports, however, the Division determined that Respondents failed to substantially comply with their legal obligations under Colorado campaign finance law.

**CLAIM ONE**  
**Prohibited Contribution**  
**(Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 3(6))**

24. The Division realleges and incorporates by reference all allegations set forth above.

25. A “contribution” includes “[a]ny payment made to a third party for the benefit of any candidate committee, issue committee, political committee, small donor committee or political party.” Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(5)(a)(II); *see also* C.R.S. § 1-45-103(6)(a).

26. Under article XXVIII, section 3(6) of the Colorado Constitution, “[n]o candidate’s committee shall accept contributions from, or make contributions to, another candidate committee, including any candidate committee, or equivalent entity, established under federal law.”

27. During the second and third quarters of 2025, the Senate Committee, a candidate committee established under federal law, made 39 separate payments to third parties for travel-related expenses incurred by Respondents for the benefit of Respondent Bennet’s gubernatorial campaign.

28. Such payments constitute prohibited contributions under article XXVIII, section 3(6) of the Colorado Constitution.

29. Although Respondents technically cured their violations by reimbursing the Senate Committee by two checks dated September 30, 2025, Respondents failed to achieve substantial compliance with their legal obligations under Colorado campaign finance law due to the extent of their noncompliance and their failure to achieve the underlying purpose of prohibitions on accepting contributions from another candidate committee. § 1-45-111.7(4), C.R.S.

30. The Division is entitled to relief under article XXVIII of the Colorado Constitution and the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act, §§ 1-45-101 to -118, C.R.S.

**CLAIM TWO**  
**Failure to Report Expenditures**  
**(C.R.S. § 1-45-108)**

31. The Division realleges and incorporates by reference all allegations set forth above.

32. An “expenditure” is “any purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money by any person for the purpose of expressly advocating the election or defeat of a candidate or supporting or opposing a ballot issue or ballot question.” Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(8)(a); *see also* C.R.S. § 1-45-103(10)(a). “An expenditure is made when the actual spending occurs or when there is a contractual agreement requiring such spending and the amount is determined.” Colo. Const. art. XXVIII, § 2(8)(a).

33. Respondents incurred 39 expenses for gubernatorial campaign-related travel: 26 separate expenses totaling \$17,386.94 in the second quarter of 2025; and 13 separate expenses totaling \$7,053.65 in the third quarter of 2025.

34. These expenses were purchases or payments made in furtherance of Respondent Bennet’s gubernatorial campaign.

35. Under § 1-45-108(1)(a)(I), C.R.S., “all candidate committees . . . shall report to the appropriate officer their . . . expenditures made, and obligations entered into by the committee.” This reporting requirement “require[s] full disclosure of *all* campaign spending” by

candidates and candidate committees. *Williams v. Teck*, 113 P.3d 1255, 1259 (Colo. App. 2005) (emphasis added).

36. Reports of expenditures must be filed “quarterly in off-election years no later than the fifteenth calendar day following the end of the applicable quarter.” C.R.S. § 1-45-108(2)(a)(I)(A). Accordingly, Respondents were required to report their second quarter expenditures on or before July 15, 2025, and their third quarter expenditures on or before October 15, 2025. *Id.*; see also 8 CCR 1506-6, Rule 17.3.

37. Yet Respondents did not report as expenditures the 39 expenses for gubernatorial campaign-related travel until January 15, 2026, in connection with their efforts to cure the violations alleged in the campaign finance complaints.

38. Although Respondents effectively cured their violations by reporting the expenditures in their January 15, 2026 Report of Contributions and Expenditures, Respondents failed to achieve substantial compliance with their legal obligations due to the extent of their noncompliance and their failure to achieve the underlying purpose of expenditure reporting requirements—to provide the electorate with complete and accurate expenditure reporting in a timely manner. C.R.S. § 1-45-111.7(4).

39. The Division is entitled to relief under article XXVIII of the Colorado Constitution and the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act, §§ 1-45-101 to -118.

#### **CLAIMS NOT PURSUED BY THE DIVISION**

40. Ms. Holladay’s campaign finance complaints also alleged that Respondents received prohibited contributions through payments by the Senate Committee to various consultants engaged both by Respondent Bennet for Governor and by the Senate Committee.

41. Based on its investigation, the Division did not find sufficient evidence of any violations of campaign finance laws with respect to the payments made to the consultants.

42. The consultants issued invoices to each committee separately and identified the committee on each invoice. Moreover, both committees represented under penalty of perjury that

they did not share expenses incurred as a result of any consulting services, and that the Senate Committee did not pay for any consulting services provided to Respondent Bennet for Colorado.

43. Accordingly, the Division does not pursue claims against Respondents related to payments made by the Senate Committee to various consultants at this time.

Dated: April 30, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

*s/ William D. Hauptman*

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Attorneys for Complainant the Elections Division  
of the Secretary of State

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing **COMPLAINT** was served via email this 30th day of April, 2026, to the following:

Michael Bennet & Bennet for Governor  
c/o Tracie Moore, Registered Agent  
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*Respondents*

*s/ William D. Hauptman*

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