



CONTACT: Tony Daunt
PHONE: (517) 812-4134
E: Tony@MichiganFreedomFund.com

Michigan Freedom Fund Calls for Investigation into Gretchen Whitmer's Campaign for Governor

Freedom Fund accuses Whitmer of illegally coordinating with political non-profit organization

LANSING, MI, July 24, 2018 – The Michigan Freedom Fund today called for immediate action on a formal campaign finance complaint filed against Gretchen Whitmer and her campaign for governor, along with a non-profit group called Build a Better Michigan, which is run by her former chief of staff during her time as Senate Minority Leader.

The violation stems from Whitmer's coordination with Build a Better Michigan – a 527 non-profit organization primarily funded by union and liberal groups that has been running political ads across the state with the sole intention of supporting Gretchen Whitmer's candidacy for governor.

"Gretchen Whitmer, her campaign team, and her former chief of staff are engaged in a deliberate scheme to flout our campaign finance laws and the Secretary of State should take these allegations seriously and move quickly to resolve this matter," said Tony Daunt, Executive Director of the Michigan Freedom Fund.

The most severe of the alleged infractions include:

- Illegal coordination between the Gretchen Whitmer for Governor campaign and Build a Better Michigan: Michigan law expressly prohibits gubernatorial campaigns from coordinating express advocacy political activity with a group like Build a Better Michigan. By appearing in the ads produced by Build a Better Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer and her campaign have clearly coordinated their activities.
- Illegally accepting in-kind contributions that far surpass the \$68,000 limit for gubernatorial candidates: Michigan law expressly prohibits gubernatorial candidate committees from accepting more than \$68,000 from a single source. Based on publicly available documentation, Build a Better Michigan has spent more than \$2 MILLION, significantly more than the \$68,000 limit.
- Illegal engagement in direct support of a candidate by Build a Better Michigan: Despite the fact that corporations and labor unions are forbidden from making in-kind contributions to candidates, Build a Better Michigan's advertisement features Whitmer speaking directly into the camera, superimposed

with the graphic “Gretchen Whitmer Candidate for Governor.” The ad is in direct violation of campaign finance law.

Despite an earlier complaint filed against Whitmer’s allies at Build a Better Michigan by the Michigan Republican Party, it has made no effort to either cease the more than \$2 million ad-buy or re-edit the 30 second ad to bring it in compliance with campaign finance law.

Michigan Freedom Fund is a nonprofit organization run by Michiganders for Michiganders, working to advance, promote, and protect Michigan workers’ Constitutional rights. For more information on the Freedom Fund, please visit www.MichiganFreedomFund.com.

A copy of the complaint is attached for review.

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