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Michigan Freedom Fund Demands Benson, Bureau of Elections Release Records, End Delay

Assessing Fine, Penalties for Whitmer-Allied Group

FOIA Request Filed Today Seeking Transparency, As Democrat Secretary of State Drags Feet Enforcing Campaign Finance Law

LANSING, MI, January 14, 2019 – The Michigan Freedom Fund today filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking transparency from Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson behind her department’s apparent delay or refusal to enforce campaign finance law, after the state determined in December that a political group allied with Governor Gretchen Whitmer illegally engaged in “express advocacy” advertisements and illegally coordinated with the Whitmer campaign.

Late last year, the Secretary of State found the committee – Build a Better Michigan – violated campaign finance law, and asked for more information to determine whether potentially millions of dollars in television advertisement spending should have been disclosed as “in-kind” contributions to the Whitmer campaign. Such contributions wildly exceed donation limits, and violate the state’s prohibition on funding from corporate sources.

Build a Better Michigan was run last year by lobbyist Mark Burton, who was subsequently appointed Governor Whitmer’s Chief Strategist.

“As a candidate, Jocelyn Benson promised transparency, and to rigorously enforce Michigan campaign finance laws, but she’s thus far failed on both counts,” said Terri Reid, President of the Michigan Freedom Fund.

“Voters already know the Whitmer campaign illegally coordinated with Build a Better Michigan, and that the committee’s leader has been rewarded with a cushy government appointment. What they’re waiting to learn, is whether or not Benson has the courage to hold members of her own party accountable when they break the law or if she’s only interested in using her position to drive opposing voices out of the public square.”

Under Michigan campaign finance law and based on past enforcement decisions of the Secretary of State, Build a Better Michigan and the Whitmer campaign should pay millions of dollars in penalties for illegal coordination and exceeding spending limits.

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Paid for by Michigan Freedom Fund. PO Box 14162, Lansing, MI 48901