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Hensley Answers

1. **Are you familiar with restrictions Montana law imposes upon the activities of an individual holding the office of COPP?**

Yes. Restrictions upon individuals holding the office of COPP are delineated in MCA §13-37-108. I have reviewed them several times and am ready and willing to comply with the restrictions.

2. **What is your legal writing experience?**

For five years I served as a head paralegal in a very busy law office. Under the supervision of a practicing attorney, I wrote, edited, and revised hundreds of legal documents to further the representation of our clients. In this position and in subsequent work with the Montana Public Defenders Commission, I have read legal decision and briefs extensively.

3. **Have you ever been party to a complaint filed with the COPP?**

No.

4. **What is your current or past involvement with either the campaign of a candidate or a ballot initiative?**

In 2000, I was a candidate for the office of Montana House of Representatives. My husband, Steve Gallus, has served in elected office since 1998 – six years in the Montana House of Representatives and currently in the Montana Senate. I have helped with his campaigns (Steve is facing term limits and is not eligible to run for another term in the Senate). I have worked on ballot initiative campaigns (I-155 in 2008, CI-102 in 2010, I-154 in 2010), and volunteered both time and expertise on several candidate campaigns in Montana. In 2010, I served as the Field Director for a congressional campaign in Louisiana (LA-03).

5. **Have you been affiliated with a political party or political action committee? If yes, how will this affiliation affect your ability to render impartial decisions on complaints filed against candidates, PACs, and ballot initiatives?**

Yes, and I believe my past involvement with the inner workings of a political party and campaigns would benefit the Office of Political Practices. Because of my history, I am less susceptible to artifice and guile from either side of a complaint, as I understand the inner workings and motivations of a campaign structure, the initiative process, and political parties.

Regardless of my past involvement, or how I personally choose to cast my ballot in the privacy of the ballot booth, the rules exist for a reason. The people of Montana deserve a fair political process, and for their laws to be enforced and interpreted even-handedly. The office needs an individual comfortable with enforcing both the letter and the intent of the law impartially, and that individual must be willing and able to put aside personal history and emotion to reach that impartiality. I am able and ready to fill that role.

Hensley Answers

6. What is your opinion of the current candidate contribution limits?

Relative to many other states, Montana's limits are quite low. In my opinion, they are responsible for the true "Citizen's Legislature" of our great state – the fact that high-dollar campaigns for legislature are the exception rather than the rule ensures that all walks of citizenry can aspire to serve in public office. One does not need to be independently wealthy or fully backed by millionaires to successfully run for office in Montana, and for that reason I am a proponent of keeping the contribution limits low enough that a candidate needs to raise their money from a diverse cross-section of constituents.

At the same time, contribution limits should be periodically reviewed and adjusted to reflect expenditure price increases, ensuring a level playing field between wealthy self-funding candidates and those who seek to oppose them.

7. Have you or a family member been involved in the legislative process as a lobbyist?

Yes. One of my brothers-in-law, Chris Gallus, is a registered lobbyist. I have appeared on behalf of the Montana Public Defender's Commission in front of legislative committees, but have never participated in formal lobbying activities.

8. In your opinion, do further regulations or restrictions need to be placed on lobbyists' activities?

My opinion on lobbying legislation begins where my opinion on most legislation begins – thoroughly and fairly enforce existing legislation first; add regulations and restrictions if necessary. Many manipulations of the lobbying laws are as a result of unenforced existing laws rather than a need for further restrictions.

I often encourage those outside of the political realm to separate the very real high dollar business of national lobbyists from what happens on the ground in Montana. While it's true that a few causes and entities have access to huge amounts of money for lobbying activities, the majority of individuals registered as lobbyists in Montana are not backed by bottomless pockets ready to undercut the legislative process through undue influence.

That having been said, to ensure that small groups of citizens are afforded equal access to and attention from their elected officials, those with financial reserves must be required to fully disclose the source of those reserves, in order that both policy-makers and watchdogs alike can determine whose interests are being served.