



Louisiana Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee

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PUBLIC STATEMENT

Every candidate for judicial office in Louisiana must campaign in accordance with the precepts contained in Canon 7 of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. The Louisiana Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee is authorized by the Louisiana Supreme Court to review and investigate complaints which allege violations of certain provisions of Canon 7. Although Committee deliberations are and remain confidential, once a public statement has been issued or a complaint has been dismissed, the complaint and response are matters of public record and may be requested through the Court's Community Relations division.

The Committee has received a complaint against "Trae" Welch, a candidate for Division L of the 19th Judicial District Court, filed by Michael Beychock. The complaint concerns a mailer distributed by Welch's campaign. The mailer displays excerpts from three different court orders which appear to be signed by Welch's opponent, the incumbent Judge Michael R. "Mike" Erwin. Underneath the image of the orders is written "Liberal Judge Mike Erwin: Time and Again He's Allowed Sexual Offenders to Go Unregistered." All three orders provide for the waiver of registration fees but also indicate clearly that the defendants are "required to register" as sex offenders. On one of the orders, the phrases "pled guilty to sexual battery" and "fees associated with registration are waived" are underlined in red. Deliberately blurred out by Welch's campaign is that portion of the order which states "Pursuant to La. R.S. 15:542, defendant is required to register as a sex offender." The Committee believes such an alteration of the order constitutes a blatant attempt to misrepresent Judge Erwin's rulings on these matters. In their original form, these orders do not permit sex offenders to go unregistered.

The Committee therefore finds that the distribution of this campaign mailer by Welch violates Canon 7A(9), which provides that a judge or judicial candidate shall not “knowingly make, or cause to be made, a false statement concerning the identity, qualifications, present position, or other fact concerning the candidate or an opponent.”



Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee
Marta-Ann Schnabel, Chair