

Session title: Ten Things You Wish You'd Known Before Starting the Investigation: Red Flags for Potential Campaign Finance, Lobby and Ethics Violations

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Session Summary

A number of clues can help spot problematic situations that may result in violations of laws concerning campaign financing, lobbying and ethics. The ten most important warning signs of possible infractions are described below:

Top Ten Red Flags for spotting potential political law violations

1. Extraordinary Ineptness, Particularly at Recordkeeping: People who claim they haven't been able to keep up with transactions they are responsible for, keep track of finances in their care, or produce clear records documenting what they have been doing are in some cases just covering up misdeeds.
2. Keeping up with the Kardashians: Individual appears to live beyond his or her means, where may not have a job or has a low paying job, while financial disclosure shows no real of income.
3. It just Doesn't Make Sense: People engaging in fraudulent activity often engage in scheme that appears out of the norm or cover up their misdeeds with a cover story that contains factual inaccuracies or gaps in logic.
4. The Robert Syndrome – Bullying or Intimidation: Official or employee bullies or intimidates staff; attitude of invincibility, superiority.
5. All in the Family: Family members are employed by or paid by Vendors/Contractors and/or Developers, family members are employed by or paid by the state/county/city.
6. Every Day if Friday the 13th: People who frequently explain promises not being kept, money disappearing or property getting lost at being the result of extraordinary misfortune are sometimes covering up their own misdeeds.

7. Married to the mob: Official or employee has close relationships with Contractors and/or Developers.

8. Asking for Trouble: Any enterprise lacking reasonable controls to ensure honesty will be defrauded sooner or later.

9. Too Good to be true: Those who produce independent campaign materials that are strikingly similar to candidate materials, those who amaze by claiming to get things done at superhuman speed, obtaining investment returns well above the norm, or achieve great success where others have failed in some cases lying.

10. Possessive and overly controlling of Work: Official or employee seems possessive and overly controlling of his or her work and related issues.

In a number of cases, a lack of appropriate oversight, especially at the level of operational and approval procedures, makes it easier for violations to occur. In addition, the cozy relationship between some business representatives and public office holders, or members of their family, are aspects to consider during any eventual investigation.