



## San Francisco Ethics Commission

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### **April 11, 2025, Enforcement Update: Ethics Commission Approves Settlements in Two Separate Cases: Open the Great Highway and Ovava Afuhaamango.**

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At its regular monthly meeting on Friday, April 11, 2025, the San Francisco Ethics Commission approved two separate settlement agreements that levied a total of \$3,400 in penalties against two respondents for unrelated violations of campaign finance and conflict of interest laws.

***In the Matter of Open the Great Highway*** – The Commission unanimously approved \$2,400 in penalties through a stipulated agreement with community group Open the Great Highway for one count of violating City and State campaign finance laws.

The law requires multi-purpose organizations, such as community groups, to register as a political committee under several circumstances, including when they accept payments from donors with an understanding that the money will be used for making political expenditures. Registering and reporting as a political committee gives the public important information about individuals and organizations spending money to influence elections.

The violations occurred when the Open the Great Highway solicited political contributions from its members to oppose Proposition K on the November 5, 2024 General Election ballot and subsequently made political expenditures for the same purposes while failing to timely register and report as a political committee. Because Open the Great Highway did not timely comply with registration and reporting requirements that apply to political committees, the public was deprived of transparency into when and how money is raised and spent to influence the outcome of political contests in the City. Campaign finance disclosure laws exist to ensure that this transparency exists.

***In the Matter of Ovava Afuhaamango*** – The Commission unanimously approved \$1,000 in penalties through a settlement agreement with a Member of the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board for one count for failure to file an annual Certificate of Ethics Training and Sunshine Ordinance Declaration, and one count for participating in and voting on matters listed on the agendas of six meetings of the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board while disqualified from doing so for failing to complete the trainings and file the relevant forms.

It is essential that public employees and officials complete the annual Ethics and Sunshine Training to ensure that they are consistently reminded of the requirements of the ethics rules and the Sunshine Ordinance, as well as to help enhance their understanding of these rules. Additionally, failing to complete the trainings and file the relevant forms disqualifies a Commissioner or Board Member from participating in and voting on matters agendized before their Commission or Board. This rule exists to ensure that if an official has not undergone training in ethics rules and the Sunshine Ordinance as



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required, they will not participate in government decisions during the time that their trainings remain outstanding.

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*The San Francisco Ethics Commission was created directly by the City's voters with the passage of Proposition K in November 1993 and is responsible for the independent and impartial administration and enforcement of laws related to campaign finance, public financing of candidates, governmental ethics, conflicts of interests, and registration and reporting by lobbyists, campaign consultants, permit consultants, and major developers. Our mission is to practice and promote the highest standards of integrity in government. We achieve that by delivering impactful programs that promote fair, transparent, and accountable governmental decision making for the benefit of all San Franciscans. Public service is a public trust, and our aim is to ensure that San Franciscans can have confidence that the operations of the City and County and the decisions made by its officials and employees are fair, just, and made without any regard to private or personal gain.*