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For Immediate Release in conjunction with The State of Maryland Office of The State Prosecutor



1776 PROJECT PAC FINED OVER \$20,000 FOR FAILURE TO INCLUDE AUTHORITY LINE IN CARROLL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD RACE

October 12, 2023 - Charlton T. Howard III, Maryland State Prosecutor, and Jared DeMarinis, State Administrator of Elections at the Maryland State Board of elections, announced today that the 1776 Project PAC has been fined \$20,250 dollars via civil citation for sending 13,879 text messages to Carroll County voters in the 2022 School Board Election.

The text message, sent on or about November 1, 2022, to Carroll County voters read “Stop indoctrination in our schools, early voting has started [sic] vote for the pro-parent ticket for school board Tara Battaglia, James Miller and Steve Whisler.” Maryland law requires campaign messages sent on behalf of candidates to record who paid for the information to be distributed, whether it is a yard sign, a pamphlet or a digital advertisement. There was no authority line or information stating that the text was paid for by the 1776 Project PAC.

Traditionally authority line violations have been sanctioned with minimal citations but the advent of advanced technology in campaigns, which allows candidates to access thousands of people with the press of the button requires more scrutiny on ensuring the public knows who paid for information they receive about candidates.

“Being able to identify the source of information for campaign material is essential to honesty and transparency in our electoral process,” said Howard. “I am proud of our team’s hard work to ensure that we protect that integrity in light of new technological advancements in communication.”

“The State Board of Elections is committed to continuing to ensure that there is no mystery about who is communicating with voters in Maryland Elections,” said DeMarinis. “We will be working hard with the State Prosecutor and other enforcement partners to keep Maryland elections honest and fair.”

Mr. Howard and Mr. DeMarinis thanked Deputy State Prosecutor Sarah R. David, and Special Agents Daniel Bralove and Cynthia Thomas at the Office of the State Prosecutor as well as Ebony Parran at the Maryland State Board of Elections for their collaboration and work on this case.