

October 7, 2026

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Shawn Towle
286 Thomas Ave W Unit 2
Saint Paul, MN 55103
s.towle@checksandbalances.com

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Mike Lindell
lorileebp@gmail.com

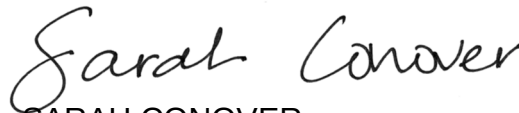
Re: *In the Matter of Shawn Towle (Mike Lindell)*
CAH 28-0320-42006

Dear Parties:

Enclosed and served upon you please find the **FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER** in the above-entitled matter. The Court of Administrative Hearings' file in this matter is now closed.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (651) 361-7890, sarah.conover@state.mn.us, or via facsimile at (651) 539-0310.

Sincerely,



SARAH CONOVER
Legal Assistant

Enclosure

cc: Docket Coordinator
William Moore

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COURT OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

Shawn Towle,

Complainant,

v.

Mike Lindell, Phillip C. Parrish, and Lorilee
Peterson,

Respondents.

**FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW,
AND ORDER**

This matter came before the following panel of Administrative Law Judges: Joseph C. Meyer (Presiding Judge), Barbara J. Case, and Nicholas Lienesch (Panel) for an evidentiary hearing on September 23, 2026. Shawn Towle (Complainant) appeared on his own behalf, without legal counsel. Mike Lindell (Respondent) appeared on his own behalf, without legal counsel.

The evidentiary hearing was convened to consider a Fair Campaign Practices Complaint (Complaint) filed on August 21, 2026.¹ The Complainant maintains that Respondent violated Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1 (2026) by distributing pillows with attached campaign material to potential voters at a parade.

The matter was submitted to the Panel based on the record created at the evidentiary hearing and the underlying record, including the Complaint, the Prima Facie Determination, and final oral arguments from the parties. The hearing record closed on September 23, 2026.

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

1. Did Respondent violate Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1, by distributing pillows to potential voters?
2. If so, what penalty is appropriate?

¹ The Complaint also named Phillip C. Parrish and Lorilee Peterson as respondents. Complaint at 3. Judge Meyer found that the Complaint did not allege a prima facie violation against Respondent Parrish or Respondent Peterson and dismissed both from this matter. Notice of Determination of Prima Facie Violation and Order for Prehearing Conference (Prima Facie Order) (August 26, 2026).

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Complainant established by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1. For this violation, a \$600 civil penalty is appropriate.

Based on the record and proceedings herein, the undersigned panel of Administrative Law Judges now hereby issues the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent was a candidate for Governor of Minnesota in the primary election held on August 11, 2026.²

2. On July 4, 2026, Complainant attended a parade in Delano, Minnesota.³ Respondent, and volunteers for his campaign, marched in the parade.⁴ While doing so, Respondent distributed pillows to attendees of the parade.⁵

3. Respondent distributed “Go Anywhere” model pillows from the company MyPillow, Inc. (MyPillow), which Respondent owns.⁶ MyPillow sells the Go Anywhere pillow at both wholesale and retail, including at events such as the Minnesota State Fair.⁷ At the most recent State Fair, MyPillow sold over 1,100 Go Anywhere pillows to consumers at approximately \$5 per pillow.⁸

4. Respondent’s campaign purchased the Go Anywhere pillows for \$4.90 per pillow, plus tax.⁹ Respondent spent a total of \$26,551.88 on pillows for the Delano parade.¹⁰ Before handing them out at the parade, Respondent packaged the pillows in a plastic bag along with a campaign flyer displaying the words “Mike Lindell for Governor.”¹¹ The pillows themselves were unmarked.¹² Respondent distributed approximately

² Complaint at 2.

³ Testimony (Test.) of Shawn Towle (Towle Test.); Test. of Mike Lindell (Lindell Test.).

⁴ Towle Test.

⁵ Lindell Test.

⁶ Lindell Test.

⁷ Lindell Test.

⁸ Exhibit (Ex. A).

⁹ Lindell Test, see also *Fiskum v. Lindell*, No. 50-0320-41898, RESPONDENT’S EVIDENCE SUBMISSION at Ex. 2 (*Fiskum* Ex. 2) (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings July 30, 2026) (invoice for pillows submitted in prior case regarding the same conduct). At the evidentiary hearing, the parties both sought to have the Panel consider evidence from the *Fiskum v. Lindell* proceeding and agreed that the Panel could take notice of the documents in the record from that proceeding. Also at the evidentiary hearing, Complainant argued that the purchase price of \$4.90 represented a discount only available to Respondent, which was effectively an undisclosed corporate contribution by MyPillow to Respondent. Towle Test. Respondent argued that \$4.90 was a wholesale price available to any purchaser. Lindell Test. However, the sole issue pled in the Complaint was whether distributing the pillows constituted a “thing of monetary value” in violation of Minn. Stat. § 211B.13. The Panel therefore declines to address violations not cited in the complaint.

¹⁰ *Fiskum* Ex. 2.

¹¹ Lindell Test.

¹² Lindell Test; Ex. B.

5,000 pillows to attendees of the Delano parade.¹³ Respondent gave the pillows to any attendee of the parade, including many to children who were evidently much too young to vote.¹⁴ Respondent did not require that any recipient promise to vote for him.¹⁵

5. Respondent distributed the pillows to parade attendees for “campaign advertising and brand recognition,” and intended them as “a vehicle for delivering campaign literature.”¹⁶

6. Respondent also distributed pillows to attendees of parades in Foley, Minnesota, and Redwood Falls, Minnesota.¹⁷ Across the three parades, Respondent distributed approximately 11,000 Go Anywhere pillows packaged with campaign material.¹⁸

7. Prior to distributing the pillows, Respondent consulted with an attorney.¹⁹ The attorney informed Respondent that distributing the pillows to potential voters was allowed under Minnesota law provided that the cost was under \$5 per pillow.²⁰ Respondent specifically chose the Go Anywhere pillows because they cost less than \$5 per pillow.²¹ Respondent also chose to distribute the pillows with a campaign flyer included, rather than embroidering or otherwise marking the pillows directly, because any such markings would have driven the price of the pillows higher than \$5 per pillow.²² Respondent also consulted in advance with the Minnesota Campaign Finance Board and believed that the information he received meant that giving away the pillows would not violate any provisions of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 10A.²³

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

8. On August 21, 2026, Complainant filed this Complaint against Respondent.²⁴ Complainant alleges Respondent violated Minn. Stat. § 211B.13 by distributing pillows to potential voters at three parades.²⁵

9. By Order dated August 26, 2026, Judge Meyer determined the Complaint set forth prima facie violations of Minn. Stat. § 211B.13 by Respondent.²⁶

¹³ Lindell Test.

¹⁴ Lindell Test.

¹⁵ Lindell Test.

¹⁶ Lindell Test.

¹⁷ Lindell Test.

¹⁸ Lindell Test.

¹⁹ Lindell Test.

²⁰ Lindell Test.

²¹ Lindell Test.

²² Lindell Test.

²³ Lindell Test.

²⁴ Complaint at 4–5.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Notice of Determination of Prima Facie Violation and Order for Prehearing Conference (Prima Facie Order) (August 26, 2026).

10. The Chief Administrative Law Judge assigned this matter to the Panel by Order dated September 10, 2026.²⁷

11. Any Conclusion of Law more properly designated as a Finding of Fact is incorporated herein.

12. Any portion of the accompanying Memorandum that is more properly considered a Finding of Fact is incorporated herein.

Based upon the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Panel now hereby issues the following:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Panel is authorized to consider this matter pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 211B.32, 211B.35.

2. Complainant bears the burden of proving the allegations in the Complaint. The standard of proof of a violation of Minn. Stat. § 211B.13 is a preponderance of the evidence.²⁸ The preponderance of the evidence standard requires that, to establish a fact, it must be more probable that the fact exists than that the contrary exists.²⁹ If the evidence of a fact or issue is equally balanced, that fact or issue has not been established by a preponderance of the evidence.³⁰

3. No person may, in order to induce a voter to vote in any particular way in an election, willfully and directly or indirectly give the voter any “thing of monetary value.”³¹

4. Whether an item is a “thing of monetary value” depends on the value of the item to the recipient, rather than the cost of the item to the provider.³²

5. “Refreshments of food or nonalcoholic beverages having a value up to \$5 consumed on the premises at a private gathering or public meeting are not prohibited under [section 211B.13].”³³ Pillows are not food or nonalcoholic beverages, and therefore this exemption does not apply to the pillows.

6. Complainant established by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent willfully and directly gave voters pillows having a monetary value. The purpose of giving the pillows was to promote Respondent’s campaign—i.e., to induce

²⁷ Notice of and Order Assigning Panel for Disposition of Complaint (September 10, 2026).

²⁸ Minn. Stat. § 211B.32, subd. 4.

²⁹ *City of Lake Elmo v. Metropolitan Council*, 685 N.W.2d 1, 4 (Minn. 2004).

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

³² *Brand v. Mollin*, No. 11-0325-21869, ORDER FINDING NO PRIMA FACIE VIOLATION AND DISMISSING COMPLAINT at 5 (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Feb. 25, 2011); see also *United States v. Garcia*, 719 F.2d 99, 102 (5th Cir. 1983) (holding that under federal election bribery statute, the assessment of monetary worth should be made from the perspective of a voter receiving the item).

³³ Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

voters to vote for Respondent. Respondent therefore violated Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

7. For this violation of Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1, it is appropriate to impose a civil penalty against Respondent in the amount of \$600.

8. Any Finding of Fact more properly considered to be a Conclusion of Law is incorporated herein.

9. Any portion of the accompanying Memorandum that is more properly considered to be a Conclusion of Law is incorporated herein.

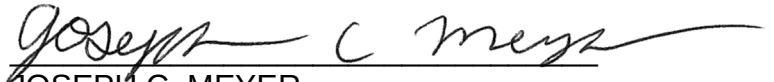
Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated in the Memorandum below, which is hereby incorporated, the Panel makes the following:

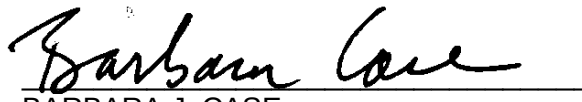
ORDER

1. By **4:30 p.m. on October 14, 2026**, Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of \$600 for violating Minn. Stat. § 211B.13.

2. The penalty shall be paid by check made payable to: "Court of Administrative Hearings," and remitted to the Court of Administrative Hearings, PO Box 64620, St. Paul, MN, 55164-0620. The docket number, 28-0320-42006, should be included on the check memo line.

Dated: October 7, 2026


JOSEPH C. MEYER
Administrative Law Judge, Presiding


BARBARA J. CASE
Administrative Law Judge


NICHOLAS LIENESCH
Administrative Law Judge

NOTICE

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 211B.36, subd. 5 (2026), this is the final decision in this case. Under Minn. Stat. § 211B.36, subd. 5, a party aggrieved by this decision may seek judicial review as provided in Minn. Stat. §§ 14.63-.69 (2026).

MEMORANDUM

I. Minn. Stat. § 211B.13—Bribery, Treating, and Solicitation

Minn. Stat. § 211B.13 prohibits any person from willfully, directly or indirectly, giving a voter any “thing of monetary value” if the gift is to induce the voter to vote a particular way in an election.³⁴ The statute exempts giving “refreshments of food or nonalcoholic beverages” that have a value of less than \$5 and that are consumed on the premises after receipt.³⁵ Even when not food, giving items of nominal value, such as notepads imprinted with the candidate’s name and office, does not violate Minn. Stat. § 211B.13.³⁶

Respondent denies that he intended to “induce” any voter to vote in a particular way, because he did not condition receipt of the pillow upon a promise to vote for him.³⁷ However, Respondent concedes that he distributed pillows specifically to promote his campaign for governor.³⁸ “Induce” means “to move by persuasion or influence,” and “[i]nducing is usually gentle persuasion.”³⁹ The admitted purpose of distributing the pillows was to promote Respondent’s campaign. In other words, although it was not a condition of receiving the pillow, Respondent distributed the pillows in the hopes that some voters who otherwise would not have voted for him would do so. Respondent’s distribution of the pillows was thus “to induce a voter...to vote in a particular way, at an election” within the meaning of Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

Respondent argued that his distribution of the pillows nevertheless does not violate Minn. Stat. § 211B.13 because the pillows are worth less than \$5.⁴⁰ However, the \$5 exemption in Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1, applies only to refreshments of food, or nonalcoholic beverages, intended to be consumed upon distribution. It does not apply to

³⁴ Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

³⁵ Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

³⁶ See, e.g., *Kalil v. Knutson*, No. 3-6302-16119, ORDER DENYING RECONSIDERATION (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Sept. 2, 2004); *Schauer v. Gillaspie*, No. 3-6371-17570, ORDER OF DISMISSAL (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Oct. 11, 2006); *Campbell v. Grant County Republican Party of Minnesota*, No. 12-0320-19820, ORDER OF DISMISSAL (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Aug. 4, 2008).

³⁷ Lindell Test.

³⁸ Lindell Test.

³⁹ *Induce*, MERRIAM-WEBSTER, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/induce> (last visited October 5, 2026).

⁴⁰ Lindell Test.

pillows. There is therefore no per se rule that any gift to a voter to influence their vote is permissible so long as it is below \$5 in value.

The question, rather, is whether the pillows constitute a “thing of monetary value.”⁴¹ The statute does not define “thing of monetary value.” However, MyPillow is a for-profit company that sells the Go Anywhere pillow as a wholesale and retail product.⁴² The fact that MyPillow sells the Go Anywhere pillow as a commercial product, and the fact that consumers spend their money to purchase the pillow at retail, including as an individual item, indicates that a Go Anywhere pillow is a “thing of monetary value.” While the value of the item may be relevant to assessing the severity of the violation, the mere fact that the pillows were inexpensive does not mean they had no monetary value.

It is true that campaigns may distribute some non-food items of nominal value without violating Minn. Stat. § 211B.13. For example, this Court has previously found that a campaign does not violate § 211B.13 by distributing campaign-branded tote bags, campaign-branded t-shirts, or notepads printed with a message of support for a candidate.⁴³ In those cases, the court found that the items had only nominal value to the voter.⁴⁴ However, none of those cases concerned an item commonly sold at retail. And the prior cases all concerned items that were printed with campaign logos or campaign messages. Although the items may have had “some incidental use” for the voter, the items were inherently tied to the campaign and themselves functioned essentially as campaign literature.⁴⁵ Here, although distributed with a campaign flyer in the packaging, the pillows Respondent distributed were otherwise unmarked and identical to the Go Anywhere pillows MyPillow sold at retail.

Respondent directly gave pillows, a thing of monetary value, to voters to induce them to vote in a particular way in an election. In doing so, Respondent violated Minn. Stat. § 211B.13.⁴⁶

II. Penalty Assessment

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 211B.35, subd. 2, the Panel may: (1) dismiss the complaint; (2) issue a reprimand; (3) impose a civil penalty of up to \$5,000; or (4) refer

⁴¹ Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

⁴² Lindell Test.

⁴³ See *Senn v. Laufenburger*, No. 80-0325-31936, PROBABLE CAUSE ORDER (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Nov. 12, 2014) (t-shirts); *Brand v. Mollin*, No. 11-0325-21869, ORDER FINDING NO PRIMA FACIE VIOLATION AND DISMISSING COMPLAINT (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Feb. 25, 2011) (tote bags); *Schauer v. Gillaspie*, No. 3-6371-17570, ORDER OF DISMISSAL (Minn. Ct. Admin. Hearings Oct. 11, 2006) (notepads).

⁴⁴ Additionally, past cases may be distinguished based on the recipients of the items. For example, in *Senn v. Laufenburger* the court found no evidence the providing the items was intended to induce any voter to vote in a particular way in part because the candidate gave the items in question, t-shirts with a campaign logo on them, to a local high school football team rather than to the population at large. No. 11-0325-21869, PROBABLE CAUSE ORDER at 7. Here, by contrast, Respondent distributed the pillows to any person attending the parade.

⁴⁵ *Schauer v. Gillaspie*, No. 3-6371-17570, ORDER OF DISMISSAL at 3.

⁴⁶ At the evidentiary hearing, Respondent argued that the Complaint was frivolous and he should be awarded costs. See Minn. Stat. § 211B.36, subd. 3 (“If the assigned administrative law judge or panel determines the complaint is frivolous, they may order the complainant to pay the respondent’s reasonable

the complaint to the appropriate county attorney. The Panel finds that a civil penalty is the proper disposition in this case.

To ensure consistency in the application of administrative penalties across types of violations of the Fair Campaign Practices Act and Campaign Finance Act, the Court of Administrative Hearings uses a “penalty matrix” to guide decision-making. The matrix categorizes violations based upon the willfulness of the misconduct and the impact of the violation upon voters and is set forth as follows:⁴⁷

Willfulness	Gravity of Violation		
	Minimal/no impact on voters, easily countered	Some impact on several voters, difficult to correct/counter	Many voters misled, process corrupted, unfair advantage created
Deliberate, multiple violations in complaint, history of violations, clear statute, unapologetic	\$600 - 1,200	\$1,200 – 2,400 and/or Refer to County Attorney	\$2,400 – 5,000 and/or Refer to County Attorney
Negligent, ill-advised, ill-considered	\$250 - 600	\$600 - 1,200	\$1,200 – 2,400 and/or Refer to County Attorney
Inadvertent, isolated, promptly corrected, vague statute, accepts responsibility	\$0 - 250	\$400-600	\$600 - 1,200

Because every case is unique, however, the Panel may depart from the presumptive penalty range listed in the matrix.⁴⁸

Respondent was credible. His violation of the Fair Campaign Practices Act was inadvertent, and it was based on both a technical misunderstanding of the statute and incorrect advice from counsel. Respondent took steps to comply with the law as he believed it required, including consulting with legal counsel and contacting a regulatory body in advance of distributing the pillows.⁴⁹ Respondent genuinely believed that he was not violating the law. The language of the statute, along with the longstanding practice of campaigns distributing items of nominal value, combined to create a vague statutory requirement. Further, while the \$5 limit for food and refreshments distributed to voters does not apply to the items distributed by Respondent, the statute provides no similar explicit threshold for non-food items, leaving candidates without clear guidance as to what constitutes a “thing of monetary value.” It was not entirely unreasonable for Respondent to use \$5 as the benchmark for what he sincerely believed to be a permissible item to distribute to voters.

attorney fees and to pay the costs of the office in the proceeding in which the complaint was dismissed.”). Since the Panel finds Complainant has established the violation, the Complaint was not dismissed and the matter is not frivolous. No costs shall be awarded under Minn. Stat. § 211B.36, subd. 3.

⁴⁷ See Penalty Matrix (<https://mn.gov/cah/self-help/administrative-law-overview/fair-campaign.jsp>); *Fine v. Bernstein*, 726 N.W.2d 137, 149-50 (Minn. Ct. App. 2007), *review denied* (Minn. 2007).

⁴⁸ *Fine v. Bernstein*, 726 N.W.2d 137, 149–50 (Minn. Ct. App. 2007), *rev. denied* (Minn. 2007).

⁴⁹ Lindell Test.

That said, a candidate for political office in Minnesota is responsible for knowing all legal requirements for a political campaign. And Respondent's actions were ill-advised and ill-considered. Despite taking technical steps to try to ensure compliance with Minnesota campaign statutes, at heart Respondent sought to distribute consumer items to the voting public to promote his campaign for elected office. Respondent was clear that he did not condition giving away the pillows on a promise to vote for him, but Respondent also admitted that the purpose of distributing the pillows was to promote his campaign. And Respondent's campaign spent over \$25,000 purchasing pillows to distribute at just one of the three parades.⁵⁰ Assuming Respondent paid the same per-pillow price for all three parades, his campaign spent over \$55,000 on pillows. Respondent would not have spent this money unless he believed the pillows were likely to sway voters in his favor. Although there are exceptions allowing candidates for office to give voters nominal items under limited circumstances, despite his care Respondent's distribution of commercial items to voters to increase his electoral support is exactly the behavior that Minn. Stat. § 211B.13 exists to discourage.

There was no direct evidence of impact on any individual voter. Many of the pillows went to children who could not vote, and Respondent did not condition receipt of a pillow on any promise to vote for him.⁵¹ Further, the decision to allow distribution of food and refreshments worth up to \$5 implies a legislative determination that a gift valued at \$5 is insufficient to sway a voter's decision. But again, Respondent admitted that the purpose of distributing the pillows was to promote his campaign, and Respondent gave away approximately 11,000 pillows at three parades across the state. Even if the impact on any individual voter was minimal, Respondent's conduct reached a large number of voters. The pillows have already been distributed to voters, so there is no way to undo the impact of the violation.

Accordingly, a penalty of \$600 is appropriate.

III. Conclusion

For these reasons, Respondent shall pay a penalty of \$600 for violating Minn. Stat. § 211B.13, subd. 1.

J. C. M., B. J. C, N. B. L.

⁵⁰ *Fiskum* Ex. 2.

⁵¹ Lindell Test.