

August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Dear Secretary Kander,

I am writing this on behalf of a small group of Missouri citizens who wish to be involved in reforming our political process. We seek an independent platform based upon individual initiative, involvement and choice. The horrific decline in voter turnout - particularly in last November's midterm elections - as well as a general popular withdrawal from the 'dirty business' of politics, has prompted our resolve to form a political alliance we are calling "The Volunteer Movement".

The problem we are facing, however, is a question of bureaucracy.

Our initial plan was to visit various college campuses for the Fall semester with the goal of forming groups of students who would be willing to set up and man "election booths" which would offer students who are away from home a convenient way of registering to vote, applying for absentee ballots, and getting informed (in a non-partisan fashion) about the issues and candidates in upcoming elections. I can remember from my own college experience how very inconvenient it was to vote, as I was at Rolla (not a place where you can take a day off from classes to go home and vote) and would have needed to get an absentee ballot- something that required a bit more planning than a college student wrapped up in schoolwork had in himself at the time. However, if there had been a place on campus where I could have gotten information relatively easily, I most likely would have voted. That's the goal of our election booths.

As you no doubt are aware, 18 to 21-year-olds are very underrepresented in the electorate. Our goal is to get them more involved in the process by removing certain common barriers to voting, and informing them about all parties, candidates and both sides of ballot issues.

Early next year, we planned to ask these "Volunteer" groups to help circulate petitions to form a separate political party - the Volunteer Party, whose goal would be, among other things, creating an official state holiday for election days. It seems ridiculous that our holidays allow time off from work to celebrate the cause of labor, but not the cause of democracy. I looked into the law regarding "three hours off of work to vote", and the statute is so permissive to employers (at least for those who require only 8-hour days) as to be almost meaningless.

To accomplish our goals, however, we need the money to pay for our travel, lodging and food. That's where the troubling bureaucracy comes into play.

One of our number approached the Missouri Ethics Commission, and Ms. Betsy Byers told us that if we were planning to circulate petitions, we should form a continuing committee. We looked into the information on their website on forming a continuing committee (aka a political action committee). We talked to a bank about opening an account, and they told us that we needed a federal tax ID number, articles of incorporation and a copy of our bylaws. None of this was mentioned on the MEC website, so we talked to them again; and were promptly told (by a different person, Glenda) that an EIN (employer id number) should be all we need to get a bank account set up, and to go to a different bank if we still had problems.

We went onto the IRS website, consulted their literature, and then applied for an EIN online which we got at once. We noticed that there was a form 8871 (initial notice) that might apply to us, but we exempted ourselves because we did not expect to receive (or need) more than \$25,000 per year.

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We consulted the MEC again about the IRS filings, and were told (by a third person, Cheryl) that she had no knowledge of IRS rules.

We presented the EIN to the bank, but they told us that we still needed the bylaws and articles of incorporation, and that we should talk to a lawyer (as if we had one on retainer!). We went to a different bank, and they told us that we needed the following for a \*non-profit organization\*:

- (1) Certified Articles of Incorporation
  - (2) Certificate of Corporation
  - (3) Certificate of Good Standing
  - (4) a copy of IRS Form 1023
  - (5) Personal ID for signers
  - (6) Business address
  - (7) Business phone number
  - (8) Bank Organization Resolution
- .... etc.

As a former attorney, I'm sure that you can appreciate the enormous barrier to entry that conflicting, imprecise and mostly piecemeal legal information can be. Good heavens! It seems little wonder if Missourians (and Americans at large) are disenchanted with any personal involvement in their governance, since there are so many legal roadblocks telling them to go away.

We only wish to open a bank account and ask for donations so that a young 20-year old woman, working two part-time jobs, can \*donate\* her time to try and improve our political society. All she needs is compensation for living expenses.

I am sorry to express such frustration, but the delay so far has been unfortunate to our cause, having devoured nearly three weeks. Fall semester is just around the corner, and we simply need to know what needs to happen so that we may ask for monetary support from the public.

Sir, as our activities seem to fall directly under the auspices of your office, we would like to know the following:

(1) Do we have to organize as both a PAC and a non-profit organization? (the former would seem to imply the latter) If so, are there parallel chains of forms/paperwork that must be filled out?

(2) What are ALL the steps that need to take place before we can solicit funds for our political goals? I would \*greatly\* appreciate any details that you can provide, so that a clear, straightforward process can be followed. I realize that this doesn't always (perhaps rarely) happen in legal matters. But we are simply asking what will satisfy you, as Secretary of State, to receive official sanction.

We are not wealthy, nor are we blessed with an abundance of idle time. But we do feel that we have the right - indeed the duty - to work for the improvement of our political process. Whatever speed you can muster to answer our questions will be most appreciated.

We thank you for your time, Mr. Kander, and wish you all the best in your own endeavors on behalf of the Missouri people.

Sincerely,

August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Jon Schuessler  
Volunteer Movement co-founder