

A Lack of Kander

by Jon Schuessler

“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...”

This was the closing of a long, heartfelt email that I sent to the Missouri Secretary of State, Jason Kander, asking for information on how to proceed in forming a political committee. You can read the full email by visiting the link [here](#). As I explained in the email, our group was getting different information from different folks, especially the banks, and we needed clear answers, *fast*. Since the Secretary of State is in charge of elections, we thought that by going straight to the top, we would get what we needed.

We couldn't have been more wrong.

I was hopeful at first, because I got a reply the very next day. It had the look of an automated response, but it was still nice to have confirmation that my message was received. It told me that my request had been shuffled off to a different department:

“Your message has been sent to the Corporations Division of the Missouri Office of Secretary of State. You should receive a reply from them shortly.

If you'd like to contact the Corporations Division directly, you may do so by calling (573) 751-4153 or toll-free (866) 223-6535. You may also email this division at corporations@sos.mo.gov.”

Fingers crossed, I waited.

And waited.

Seven weeks later, I'm still waiting. So much for the speed of the Internet.

And so much for the illusion that elected officials care about keeping their constituents informed. Only one person working for the state – Glenda – actually proved useful. Everyone else either ignored us, or told us that our questions were outside their area of expertise.

I could have (and probably would have) sent a follow-up message to Secretary Kander, but our questions were luckily answered through a connection we made to a bank officer who happened to be a friend of a friend. His advice was extremely helpful, and we got an account set up within two days of our conversation. In the end, it took an “inside connection” – not in government – to get the answers we needed.

As for our email to the Secretary of State, I’ve got a small pool going on when (or if) it will get answered. (Feel free to hazard your own online guess by clicking [here](#).) I don’t know exactly why it was ignored – was it too much trouble to read? Did it get lost in a spam folder? Or were we too small – too “ordinary” – to matter?

Whatever the case, clearly the assurance that we “should receive a reply shortly” proved less than accurate. I would even go so far as to say that it was disingenuous, that it showed a contemptuous lack of care, and a certain lack of honesty. Most of all, however, it displayed a distinct lack of... Kander.