

STUDENT GOVERNMENT SUPREME COURT
THE UNIVERSITY TEXAS AT AUSTIN

**In Re: 2019 First Year Elections in the Case Bhosale v.
Puranik**

JUSTICE JAMES delivers the opinion. CHIEF JUSTICE
DODSON and JUSTICE PETON join.

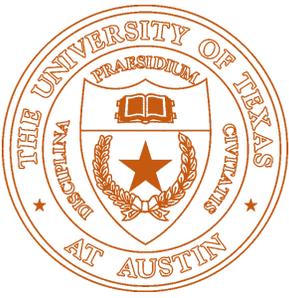
**SUPREME COURT OF THE STUDENT
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

No. Fall 2019 – 001

Delivered September 23, 2019

Background: In the case *Bhosale v. Puranik* the Court heard argument regarding alleged violations of the election code governing first-year elections by respondent Sid Puranik. Complainant Roosh Bhosale alleges that Respondent failed to submit a timely financial disclosure and that Respondent failed to list expenditures for certain advertised materials.

Facts: The Complainant alleges that the Respondent failed to submit the first financial disclosure in a timely manner. The time stamp of the Respondent's submittal, 4:55 PM, September 20, can be identified through the publicly-available page on the Dean of Students' Legislative Student Organization website. This time clearly falls after the 4:30 PM deadline, an observation corroborated by the Respondent during the hearing.



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The deadlines for the financial disclosures were clearly outlined in the Court's opinion in Fall 2019 - 004 and presented to the candidates at the candidate seminar. The candidates, by agreeing to run as candidates in the first-year elections, also agreed to adhere to the election code and the associated deadlines.

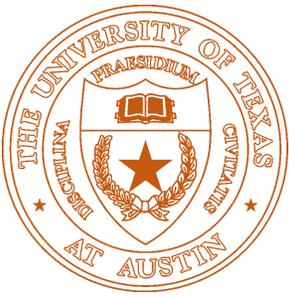
The Complainant also alleges that the Respondent failed to list expenditures of mint candies and Tiff's Treats. As explained during the hearing, the Tiff's Treats have not been purchased and thus cannot be placed on a financial disclosure. However, the mint candies were utilized by the Respondent's campaign and not listed on any of the Respondent's two financial disclosure statements, the details of which can also be found on the Dean of Students' Legislative Student Organizations website. This fact was corroborated by the Respondent during the hearing.

The necessity of submitting an up-to-date financial disclosure statement was outlined in the Court's opinion in Fall 2019 - 002 and presented to the candidates at the candidate seminar. The candidates, by agreeing to run as candidates in the first-year elections, also agreed to adhere to the election code and the associated requirements.

Decision: The Court finds that Respondent has violated the following provisions of the Student Government Election Code:

Sec. 3.21(c) - "All expenses must be included in the financial disclosure report."

Sec. 3.27 - "Failure to file accurate financial disclosure statements by the deadlines listed in this section, or



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falsification of financial statements, shall allow for disqualification of the candidate(s) or executive alliance(s) by the Election Supervisory Board.”

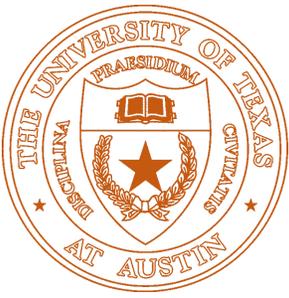
The Court would like to call attention to the Respondent’s use of the mint candies, as clearly identified in the evidence presented by the Complainant. Regardless of whether the Respondent purchased the mint candies with the intent to use the product for their campaign, correct composition of the financial disclosure form necessitates listing of the candies *only if* the product is utilized for campaign purposes.

For example: If a candidate purchased a poster board with the intent to use the poster while tabling, but used the poster board for a class project instead, the candidate would not have to list the poster board as a campaign expenditure on a financial disclosure form.

Remedy: The Court finds that, after considering the severity and intent of the Respondent’s infractions, Respondent has committed a Class B violation as outlined in Sec. 4.12(b) of the Campus-Wide Election Code. The Court has chosen this remedy due to the unique combination of violations committed by the Respondent.

This Court has previously levied Class A violations against candidates who submit late financial disclosures. These violations resulted in a 10% reduction in spending limit.¹ Further, the failure to accurately submit a financial disclosure statement, in this case the failure to report \$8.00 worth of mints, similarly equates to a Class A violation. The combination of these Class A violations calls the Court to

¹ *In Re: 2018 First-Year Election Late Financial Disclosure 1 Submission, In Re: 2017 First-Year Election Late Financial Disclosure 1 Submission*



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classify the collective actions of the Respondent as a singular Class B violation.

Rather than issue a considerable reduction in spending limit two days before the election, this Court sees fit to instead impose a 12-hour campaign moratorium on the Respondent. This moratorium shall take effect at 12:01 AM on September 24th and last until 12:01 PM of the same day.

The moratorium extends to all forms of campaigning - including but not limited to social media activity - but does not require that Respondent deactivate or suspend said accounts, merely that Respondent refrain from actively posting on these accounts or engaging in other forms of campaigning.

It is so ordered.