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Active MSU Candidate Files Zeroed Out Campaign Finance Report

A Michigan State University (MSU) Board of Trustee candidate reported to the Secretary of State he spent nothing last year for his campaign, despite having sponsored a joint event on Mackinac Island during the GOP's leadership conference this fall.

Jeff **SAKWA**, a Republican, said he is looking into the matter and is in the process of fixing his 2013 annual report, which was filed with the Bureau of Elections nearly four weeks late.

Sakwa's required annual filing shows him neither spending nor raising any money in 2013, but he conceded today in speaking with *MIRS* that that information is not accurate.

"I'm not trying to deceive anyone nor would I," he said. "If it was filed inappropriately, I'll take care of it. I'm just going to run my campaign the best I can. If I hurt somebody by doing that, that's not my intention."

Sakwa, the president and CEO of Noble Realty, said he had a volunteer with the campaign take care of the report and there was an issue in getting the correct information together. He said he didn't raise any money in 2013, but did spend a portion of the \$3,349 balance from the prior campaign cycle.

The West Bloomfield resident won the Republican nomination in 2012 for MSU Trustee, but, like every other Republican running for a statewide education post, he was knocked off in the General Election by the Democratic slate.

Outside of a joint event he held on Mackinac Island with fellow MSU Trustee candidate **Melanie FOSTER**, Sakwa has attended a few other Michigan Republican Party (MRP) events, including a Pizza and Politics event in December, of which he was a sponsor.

The palm cards and banners he used at any MRP event are left over from his 2012 campaign, he said.

As far as the tardy filing, Sakwa said his volunteer initially filed the necessary paperwork five days late. The filing was returned because one of the lines was not filled out. The miscommunication that followed resulted in the final report, due Jan. 31, to not be filed until Feb. 25.

The Bureau of Elections has not written the candidate as to whether there will be a fine associated with the late filing, but if there is, Sakwa said he would pay it.

"If I did something wrong, I'm a man and I'll own up to it."

Sakwa is preparing his campaign for a MRP convention vote this August. Two MSU slots are open this year. Outside of Foster, Scott **SCHULTZ**, of Williamston, is running for the GOP nomination.

Meridian Township Republican Tom **KLUNZINGER**, who is also the treasurer of Schultz's campaign, said he's considering filing a complaint with the Secretary of State over the matter. He said he's waiting to see the types of changes, if any, are made to the report.

"It raises troubling questions," Klunzinger said. "If you can't handle a simple campaign committee, how can you handle a multi-million budget at MSU?"

Schultz was unavailable for comment.