

PRE-COMPLAINT DISPOSITION AGREEMENT

This Agreement, made this 2nd day of October, 2007, by and between Elizabeth Ramsey, Director of Marketing, Division of State Documents, Office of the Secretary of State, and William J. Colquhoun, Esq., Staff Counsel to the State Ethics Commission (hereinafter "Staff Counsel").

The State Ethics Commission ("the Commission") is the executive agency of the State of Maryland established by Chapter 513, Acts 1979 for the purpose of enforcing the Maryland Public Ethics Law (State of Government Article, Title 15, Annotated Code of Maryland, (hereinafter "the Ethics Law")) including the provisions of Subtitle 5, Conflicts of Interest.

AGREED STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. Elizabeth Ramsey was, at all times relevant to this matter, Director of Marketing, Division of State Documents, Office of the Secretary of State, an executive agency of the State of Maryland; and she was defined as a public official of the State subject to the conflict of interest provisions of the Ethics Law.

2. The Office of Legislative Audits conducted an audit of the Office of the Secretary of State and in its February 2006 Audit Report indicated that it believed Elizabeth Ramsey had violated the Ethics Law. Thereafter, the Secretary of State made a referral of this matter to the Commission. The Audit Report, in relevant part, indicated that Ms. Ramsey had participated in the procurement of a computer based presentation program from Cyntric Solutions, LLC, a company owned by her husband. The Commission staff conducted a Preliminary Inquiry Investigation pursuant to COMAR 19A.01.03.02, by interviewing Mrs. Ramsey and other individuals in the Office of the Secretary of State, and reviewing relevant documents, which revealed that:

a. In the Spring of 2004, the former Secretary of State, R. Karl Aumann, discussed with Mrs. Ramsey his desire for the office to have a multimedia flash presentation that provided information about the office and its duties to be displayed in reception areas and at various events.

b. Elizabeth Ramsey's spouse is the owner of Cyntric Solutions, LLC, a company he began in April, 2004. Cyntric Solutions, LLC, was primarily in the business of creating and maintaining web sites. Ms. Ramsey was listed as the Resident Agent in the Articles of Incorporation filed with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. Mrs. Ramsey informed her spouse that the Office of the Secretary of State was seeking a multimedia flash presentation, something which he stated he could develop. Mrs. Ramsey informed Secretary

Aumann that her husband's company could develop the program he was seeking. Secretary Aumann advised her that the project should go out for bid and she agreed with him.

c. The Public Information Officer of the Office of the Secretary of State with the assistance of Mrs. Ramsey drafted a description of the project, which was subsequently used as the specifications for the project. Four (4) vendors submitted bids for the project: Vendor A bid \$9,900 – \$13,200; Vendor B bid - \$6,500-\$11,900; Vendor C bid - \$4,800; Cyntric Solutions LLC bid \$1,500. Cyntric Solutions, LLC, was awarded the project on the basis of cost. Senior staff of the Office of Secretary of State interviewed by the Commission staff stated that they did not recognize it was an ethical problem, because it had been competitively bid and that they were unaware of the non-participation provisions of the Ethics Law. Mrs. Ramsey's spouse and her daughter, who was an employee at the time of Cyntric Solutions, LLC, met with the Secretary of State and his Public Information Officer during completion of the project. Mrs. Ramsey did not participate in any of those meetings or further issues related to the development of the program.

3. Section 15-501 of the Ethics Law prohibits a State employee or official from participating in any matter in which the employer of a qualifying relative has a specific interest. Section 102(n) of the Ethics Law defines a "qualifying relative" as a spouse, parent, child or sibling. Through its published opinions, the Commission has defined a "matter" as "any proceeding, application, submission, request for ruling, or other determination, contract, claim case or other particular matter." (Opinion No. 80-17) Mrs. Ramsey participated in the development of the specifications for the multimedia flash program, which was eventually awarded to her spouses' company, Cyntric Solutions, LLC, and whom employed her daughter. Further, she discussed the possibility of Cyntric Solutions, LLC, providing services to the agency.

4. Section 15-502 of the Ethics Law prohibits a State employee from holding a financial interest in any entity that does business with or is regulated by their State agency. "Financial interest" is defined in Section 15-102(n) to include any interest worth more than \$1,000.00 or ownership of more than 3 % interest in an entity. Moreover; a spouses' ownership interest is attributable to a State employee. Elizabeth Ramsey's spouse was the sole owner of Cyntric Solutions, LLC. Moreover; she was listed as the Resident Agent for her spouse's company within the Articles of Incorporation at the time the matter was bid upon. Mrs. Ramsey resigned as Resident Agent in July, 2006. Mrs. Ramsey had an attributable financial interest at the time the \$1,500 contract was awarded to Cyntric Solutions, LLC.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the agreed facts contained herein, and effective on the date of the Commission's acceptance of the terms of this Agreement, Elizabeth Ramsey, and William J. Colquhoun, Staff Counsel, agree as follows:

A. Elizabeth Ramsey violated Sections 15-501 and 15-502 of the Ethics Law.

B. Elizabeth Ramsey will not participate in any matter in the future in which she, her spouse or Cyntric Solutions, LLC have an interest.

C. Elizabeth Ramsey will no longer be the Resident Agent for Cyntric Solutions, LLC.

D. Cyntric Solutions, LLC, will not conduct any future business with the Office of the Secretary of State or its divisions.

E. The Commission will issue an official reprimand to Elizabeth Ramsey effective the date of the Commission's acceptance of the Agreement.

F. The Commission will transmit a copy of the reprimand and the Agreement to the Secretary of State.

G. Elizabeth Ramsey waives any formal proceedings and hearing in this matter if the Commission accepts the Agreement. The Agreement is not subject to the confidentiality provisions of the Ethics Law.

H. Upon execution of this Agreement, by Elizabeth Ramsey, Staff Counsel will recommend that the Commission conduct no further proceedings against Ms. Ramsey regarding this matter. Should Ms. Ramsey fail to comply with the terms of the Agreement, and after written notice to Ms. Ramsey, the Commission reserves the right to open another investigation and issue a Complaint for violation of Sections 15-501 and 15-502 of the Ethics Law.

I. In the event that the Commission declines to accept the Agreement, both Ms. Ramsey and Staff Counsel are relieved of their respective obligations hereunder; and neither this Agreement, nor any admission it may contain shall be admissible in any subsequent proceeding by the Commission.

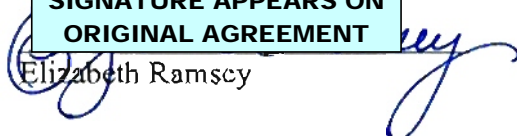
J. Elizabeth Ramsey and Staff Counsel are entering into this agreement for the sole purpose of resolving the matters involved in the Commission's Preliminary Inquiry Investigation and other matters currently known to the Commission and for no other purpose.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Elizabeth Ramsey and William J. Colquhoun, Staff Counsel, State Ethics Commission, have hereunto set their hands.

SIGNATURE APPEARS ON ORIGINAL AGREEMENT

William J. Colquhoun, Staff Counsel
State Ethics Commission
45 Calvert Street, 3rd Floor
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SIGNATURE APPEARS ON ORIGINAL AGREEMENT


Elizabeth Ramsey

State of Maryland
County of: Anne Arundel, to wit:

Before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Elizabeth Ramsey who made oath on this 2nd day of October, 2007 in due form of law that the matters and facts hereinabove set forth are true to the best of her knowledge, information and belief, and are her voluntary act and that she executed this document for the purpose set forth herein.

SIGNATURE APPEARS ON
ORIGINAL AGREEMENT

Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 2/1/2008

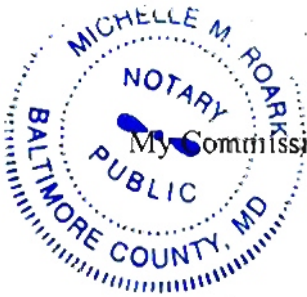
State of Maryland,
County of: Baltimore, to wit:

Before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared William J. Colquhoun, Staff Counsel to the State Ethics Commission, who made oath on this 2nd day of October, 2007 in due form of law that he executed this agreement for the purposes set forth herein.

SIGNATURE APPEARS ON
ORIGINAL AGREEMENT

Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 8-01-10



Accepted by the Commission

SIGNATURE APPEARS ON
ORIGINAL AGREEMENT

Robert F. Scholz, Chairman
for the Commission

Date: 10 / 11, 2007