

April 3, 2026

Office of Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose
Public Integrity Unit / Ohio Election Integrity Commission
c/o Brian Katz, Director
180 S. Civic Center Drive.
Columbus, Ohio 43215
bkatz@ohiosos.gov

Joint Legislative Ethics Committee
c/o Tony Bledsoe, Legislative Inspector General
100 E. Broad St., Suite 1910
Columbus, OH 43215
Tony.bledsoe@jlec.state.oh.us

RE: Ethics & Elections complaints regarding Ronald L. Ferguson

To Whom It May Concern:

We are concerned Ohio citizens and voters who wish to make the officials responsible for upholding Ohio's ethics and elections laws aware of allegations of ethics and elections law violations by Ronald L. Ferguson, made known to us by witnesses to the alleged activity and through review of publicly available documents.

Ronald L. Ferguson is the sitting State Representative for the 96th House District and a Republican candidate for the same office in the May 5, 2026 Primary Election. "Supporters and Friends of Ron Ferguson" is Ferguson's authorized campaign committee. The address of both Ferguson and his authorized campaign committee is 229 Cara Place, Wintersville Ohio 43953-3424.

Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a true and accurate copy of fundraiser invitation for Ferguson for March 21, 2026. The fundraiser invitation depicted in Exhibit A invites the recipient to "Please join us for a special evening of celebration" ... [at] a campaign fundraising event in support of Ron's re-election as State Representative." The invitation depicts various levels of sponsorship up to \$5000 for a "Host Sponsor" and asks recipients to "kindly RSVP by sending your check payable to Supporters and Friends of Ron Ferguson."

Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a true and accurate copy of a guest column written by Ronald Ferguson in the Steubenville Herald-Star on February 28, 2026 entitled "God bless America: A clean, unmistakable message." In the guest column depicted in Exhibit B, Ferguson states: "We must take every reasonable measure to safeguard the integrity of our elections so that every legal vote carries the full weight it deserves."

Several witnesses observed that on March 4, 2026, Ferguson was observed to be handing out the fundraiser invitation depicted in Exhibit A to individuals on the floor of the Ohio House of Representatives and in the House Energy Committee Room 313 in view of members, lobbyists, and the general public, shortly before action on legislative items was to take place.

R.C. 102.03(E) states: “No public official or employee shall solicit or accept anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties.”

By openly and unabashedly distributing a campaign fundraiser invitation and solicitation in full view of the public in areas of the Statehouse dedicated solely to conducting legislative activity, Respondent Ron Ferguson created an appearance of impropriety and violated R.C. 102.03(E).

This act was even more egregious given Respondent’s own, very recent public call in Exhibit B to “safeguard the integrity of our elections.” The integrity of the elections process is wholly diminished when an elected official and candidate flagrantly engaged in campaign solicitation, in public view, in areas where policy and law-making were commencing and could be filmed.

We urge that Ronald L. Ferguson and his authorized campaign committee be appropriately investigated and sanctioned by the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee, the Secretary of State’s Public Integrity Unit, and the Ohio Elections Integrity Commission for violating R.C. 102.03(E) and any other applicable ethics and elections laws.

Sincerely,

Concerns Citizens and Voters of Ohio