

October 11, 2021

Omar Ashmawy
Chief Counsel and Staff Director
Office of Congressional Ethics
U.S. House of Representatives
P.O. Box 895
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Request for Investigation into Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks (IA-02)

Dear Mr. Ashmawy:

I am writing to request that you investigate Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks for her ongoing violation of federal law in failing to file complete and accurate financial disclosure statements, as required by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, amended (the “Act”).¹

Rep. Miller-Meeks’ failure to disclose relevant information regarding her finances is a breach of public trust and a violation of the law. As a Member of the House of Representatives, it is critical that Rep. Miller-Meeks make the disclosures necessary to comply with the requirements of the Act, so that the public is granted full disclosure of her finances. I respectfully request that you promptly investigate this matter.

I. Factual Background

Rep. Miller-Meeks has represented Iowa’s 2nd Congressional District since 2021.² She qualified as a federal candidate, and filed her Statement of Candidacy, on October 28, 2019.³ In her capacity as a candidate and Member of Congress, she has filed three financial disclosure reports.

On December 1, 2019, Rep. Miller-Meeks – at the time a candidate – filed a personal financial disclosure report for the period from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019 (“2019 Candidate Report”).⁴ She filed her second report, for the period from January 1, 2019 through May 15, 2020, (“2020 Candidate Report”) on May 27, 2020.⁵ Then, on August 13, 2021, Rep. Miller-Meeks - at the time a New Member - filed a financial disclosure report for the period covering calendar year 2020 (“2020 Annual Report”).⁶

¹ 5a U.S.C. §§ 101-111.

² See Congresswoman Mariannette Miller-Meeks, About Mariannette Miller-Meeks, <https://millermeeks.house.gov/about>.

³ Mariannette Miller-Meeks, FEC Form 2, <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/H01A02180/1361038/> (Oct. 28, 2019).

⁴ U.S. House of Representatives, Mariannette Miller-Meeks – Financial Disclosure Statement (Dec. 1, 2019), https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2019/10029840.pdf.

⁵ U.S. House of Representatives, Mariannette Miller-Meeks - Financial Disclosure Statement (May 27, 2020), https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2019/10036219.pdf.

⁶ U.S. House of Representatives, Mariannette Miller-Meeks - Financial Disclosure Statement (Aug. 13, 2021), https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2020/10043392.pdf.

II. Legal Background and Analysis

Federal candidates and officeholders are required by the Ethics in Government Act to file financial disclosure reports.⁷ Pursuant to the Act, filers are required to disclose the “source, type, and amount or value of income... aggregating \$200 or more in value.”⁸ Earned income “such as pensions from prior employers or deferred compensation for services rendered prior to current legislative employment” should be reported on Schedule C of the personal financial disclosure statement.⁹ In addition to disclosing earned income on Schedule C, filers must disclose their investments, including bank accounts, brokerage accounts, retirement accounts, and investment properties, on Schedule A. For each account, filers must disclose the range of value of each of the accounts’ underlying assets (e.g., individual stocks or mutual funds) that has a value of at least \$1,000 at the end of the reporting period and the range of value of any income (in excess of \$200) derived from each of the accounts’ underlying assets during the reporting period.¹⁰

The Act also requires filers to disclose “a description of the date, parties to, and terms of any agreement or arrangement with respect to... continuation of payments by a former employer other than the United States Government.”¹¹ The House Ethics Manual advises that any “continuation of payments from a private source [or] deferred compensation plans” such as “an arrangement for the delayed payment of amounts due for services rendered by a reporting individual” or “interest in or contributions to a pension fund” must be disclosed as an agreement on Schedule F of the financial disclosure report.¹²

As detailed below, Rep. Miller-Meeks has failed to comply with multiple requirements for disclosing information on her personal financial disclosure statements.

First, Rep. Miller-Meeks failed to properly disclose all of her earned income on Schedule C of her 2019 Candidate Report, 2020 Candidate Report, and 2020 Annual Report. The law requires Rep. Miller-Meeks to disclose all earned income aggregating more than \$200 in value, yet she has failed to do so. Specifically, Rep. Miller-Meeks appears to have made the following errors:

- On her 2020 Annual Report, Rep. Miller-Meeks failed to disclose the \$34,646 income earned in 2020 from her state pension and Great River Health Systems. Despite disclosing \$34,646 in income for 2020 on her 2020 Candidate Report, Rep. Miller-Meeks failed to include that 2020 income on her 2020 Annual Report. The 2020 Annual Report should have included *all* of the earned income she received in calendar year 2020.

⁷ 5a U.S.C. § 101(a).

⁸ *Id.* § 102(a)(1)(A).

⁹ U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ethics, Instruction Guide - Financial Disclosure Statements and Periodic Transaction Reports at 31 (2020), <https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/documents/CY%202020%20Instruction%20Guide%20for%20Financial%20Disclosure%20Statements%20and%20PTRs.pdf> [hereinafter the “House Ethics Instruction Guide”].

¹⁰ 5a U.S.C. § 102(a)(1)(B).

¹¹ *Id.* § 102(a)(7).

¹² U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, House Ethics Manual at 261 (2008), https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/documents/2008_House_Ethics_Manual.pdf.

- Rep. Miller-Meeks failed to disclose her salary from her position as an Iowa state senator on each of her three reports. Rep. Miller-Meeks served in the Iowa State Senate from 2019 to 2021. According to public records, her annual salary in both 2019 and 2020 was at least \$25,000.¹³
- The only earned income Rep. Miller-Meeks disclosed on her 2020 Annual Report was her 2021 congressional salary. However, this income was reported erroneously because Rep. Miller-Meeks did not earn a congressional salary during the 2020 calendar year.

Second, Rep. Miller-Meeks incorrectly disclosed a “deferred compensation payout” on Schedule J of her 2020 Annual Report. It is unclear why this was reported on Schedule J, unless she has an ownership interest in her former employer Great River Health Systems. The law and guidance are clear that only fees generated by individuals with an ownership interest in their employer should be included on Schedule J.¹⁴ If Rep. Miller-Meeks has an ownership interest in Great River Health Systems, she must disclose that interest immediately. Furthermore, regardless of her ownership interest in Great River Health Systems, Rep. Miller-Meeks should have reported the “deferred compensation payout” as earned income on Schedule C.¹⁵ In addition, her agreement with Great River Health Systems for the deferred compensation should have been reported as an agreement on Schedule F.¹⁶

Third, Rep. Miller-Meeks failed to disclose assets on Schedule A of the 2020 Annual Report that she previously disclosed as owning earlier in 2020. None of the three assets she listed on her 2020 Candidate Report are listed on the 2020 Annual Report. If any of these assets were still held on December 31, 2020, they should have been disclosed on Schedule A of the 2020 Annual Report.

Finally, Rep. Miller-Meeks improperly disclosed at least two of the three assets listed on Schedule A of her 2019 and 2020 Candidate Reports by failing to identify the actual asset – or assets – held in her retirement accounts. Specifically, the line item for “Vanguard Roth IRA” does not identify the assets held in her Roth IRA account. Similarly, the line item for “Voya Financial: Stocks” (which appears to be incorrectly coded as “mutual fund” and is separately identified as a 401K plan) does not identify the specific stocks (or mutual funds) held in the Voya Financial account. Without identifying the actual assets held in these accounts, the public has no knowledge of her actual holdings and no ability to assess any potential conflicts of interest.

As the House Ethics Manual notes, “[t]he private financial interests and investments of Members and employees, as well as those of candidates who are seeking election to the House of Representatives, may present potential conflicts of interest with official duties...public

¹³ The Iowa Legislature, State Employee Salary Book for State Senate Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020, <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/fiscal/salaryBook?aid=595&cFY=true>.

¹⁴ See House Ethics Instruction Guide at 39.

¹⁵ See *id.* at 31.

¹⁶ See *id.* at 35.

financial disclosure provides a means of monitoring and deterring conflicts.”¹⁷ Thus, it is vital for the public to know Rep. Miller-Meeks’ financial background to protect against conflicts. By failing to fully disclose her income and assets during the 2019 and 2020 calendar years, Rep. Miller-Meeks is both violating federal law and denying the American public the disclosure and transparency to which they have a right under the Act.

III. Request for Action

I respectfully request that you commence an immediate investigation into this matter. Prompt action is necessary to ensure that Rep. Miller-Meeks complies with federal law and that the public is granted full disclosure of Rep. Miller-Meeks’ finances as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. I understand that 18 U.S.C. § 1001 applies to the information I am providing. To the best of my knowledge and ability all evidence submitted was not obtained in violation of any law, rule or regulation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Davison-Rippey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erin" being the most prominent.

Erin Davison-Rippey
Executive Director
Iowa Democratic Party

¹⁷ U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, House Ethics Manual at 247 (2008), https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/documents/2008_House_Ethics_Manual.pdf.