

POLITICS



Election Board says Foxx campaign violated finance laws

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The Illinois State Board of Elections ruled Wednesday that Kim Foxx's campaign for Cook County state's attorney violated campaign finance laws by not disclosing a \$25,000 poll that County Board President Toni Preckwinkle paid for last year to help nudge her into the race.

The board ordered the Friends for Foxx campaign committee to amend its disclosure filings to reflect the "in kind" contribution from Preckwinkle's political fund and gave Foxx until 5 p.m. on Feb. 29 to do so.

Shortly after the board ruling, the Foxx campaign amended its reports.

Foxx's campaign committee could also face fines for three violations of state laws governing transparency in political donations and spending.

Foxx campaign spokesman Robert Foley emailed the following statement Wednesday afternoon: "We disagree with the ruling because it is clear Kim Foxx was not a candidate at the time of the poll. This is an attempt by Anita Alvarez to distract from her record of failure."

Mike Carson, spokesman for state's attorney Anita Alvarez, issued a statement Wednesday that read, in part: "Cook County political insider Kim Foxx simply cannot be trusted to uphold the laws of the State of Illinois because she has demonstrated that she cannot follow them. She has refused to accept responsibility after being found to have broken the law and refused to tell the voters the simple truth about her campaign and her record."



Toni Preckwinkle



Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez (right) and Kim Foxx (left) speak before the Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board last week.

ASHLEE REZIN/FOR THE SUN-TIMES

Chicago Sun-Times columnist Dan Mihalopoulos first questioned whether Foxx should have disclosed the poll as a contribution in November, prompting the state inquiry.

Foxx was Preckwinkle's chief of staff in county government when Preckwinkle's political fund commissioned and paid for the poll in February of last year. The poll gauged Foxx's viability as a challenger to embattled State's Attorney Anita Alvarez.

Foxx's lawyer, Michael Kreloff, unsuccessfully argued to state election officials that the campaign should not have to disclose the poll since she had not yet decided to run at the time of the poll, according to case records obtained by the Sun-Times.

But the elections board official who reviewed the case found that the campaign should have reported the help from Preckwinkle because Foxx "was aware of the poll" and she "participated by providing information and

reviewing the questions."

In an affidavit submitted to the state, Foxx said she did not decide to run against Alvarez until May 2015 but agreed to review the poll questions "at the request of President Preckwinkle."

Foxx created her campaign committee on June 3.

According to Wednesday's ruling, Foxx's campaign had effectively begun in February because of her involvement in the poll, and her campaign filings must be modified to reflect that.

Her original filings with state elections officials make no mention of the poll.

The only reference was in a disclosure filed by the Preckwinkle for President committee. In that report, Preckwinkle's political fund reported paying \$25,000 to Tulchin Research on Feb. 8 for "strategic consulting" but made no reference to the poll being done for Foxx.

Besides the poll, Preckwinkle's fund also wrote a \$25,000 check to Foxx's campaign in September.

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