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[Nikki Fried lobbying, GOP donations questioned by activists in Agriculture Commission primary](#)

Nikki Fried has racked up dozens of endorsements from prominent [Democrats](#) in her race for Agriculture Commissioner, including Orlando Mayor [Buddy Dyer](#) and former gubernatorial candidate [Alex Sink](#). But some Democratic activists upset at her history of lobbying for corporate interests and donating to Republican candidates are challenging the party establishment's embrace of her candidacy.

At various points from 2012 to 2016, Fried was registered to lobby for [HCA](#), the hospital chain formerly run by [GOP Gov. Rick Scott](#) that paid a \$1.7 billion fine to settle Medicaid fraud allegations under his watch. She also was registered for Walt Disney Co., which liberal activists have bashed for paying low wages to employees; Dosal Tobacco, Duke Energy and other companies.

"They say you're defined by the company you keep, and Nikki Fried has long chosen to keep company with the rich and powerful over workers," said Fred Frost, Florida campaign lead for the Communications Workers of America. "As someone running in a Democratic primary at a moment when we need real Democrats now more than ever, she has some real explaining to do about her past choices and what they say about her values in a year where we need a blue wave in deeds and not just words."

Fried, 40, is a Broward County resident who lobbied for the Colodny and Fass law firm, which has dozens of clients in the corporate world. She says she was a junior lobbyist at the firm, which registers all of its lobbyists for all its clients, and didn't actively work for clients like HCA and Disney.

She said the three clients she's still registered to represent, Broward County Public Schools, the child advocacy nonprofit Florida's Children First and San Felasco Nurseries, were the ones she was actively involved with and took with her when she started her own firm.

"I wasn't on point on any of them, I didn't handle any of them," Fried said. "I've been a lifelong Democrat ever since I was eligible to register. My beliefs and my values are strongly aligned with the Democratic Party."

Meanwhile, Fried has donated more than \$6,800 to Republican candidates in the last 14 years, the majority coming in the past three years.

She gave a total of \$4,865 to GOP Attorney General candidate Ashley Moody in 2017 – a personal \$2,000 donation, \$1,000 from her firm, Igniting Florida, and \$1,865 as an in-kind food and beverage donation.

Other Republicans receiving donations from Fried include former state Sen. [Miguel Diaz de la Portilla](#) of Miami, who received \$1,000 in 2016; Sheri Treadwell, a candidate who lost a GOP primary for a state House seat in North Florida in 2016; and former Gov. Jeb Bush, who got \$250 from Fried during his 2016 presidential run.

Fried also gave \$250 to Adam Putnam, the man she's trying to replace as agriculture commissioner, during his re-election campaign in 2014. Putnam is term-limited and running for governor. The GOP donations were [first reported by Politico](#).

"These candidates have a history of voting against disability issues and against health care," said Tiffany Namey, president of the Orange County Disability Caucus. "And for so many people, including myself, those are life and death issues, those aren't political issues. That's not my values as a Democrat and it's not any Democratic values that I know of."

Fried says she only gave to Moody because she's known her for decades, as they attended the University of Florida together. She gave the donation before Democrat Sean Shaw, a state representative from Tampa, entered the attorney general race. She will vote for Shaw, she said. She had similar reasons for the other donations, as well.

"The only Republicans that I've ever given to, which is a very small amount of Republicans in my 40 years, are people that I've known for decades," Fried said.

Roy David Walker, Fried's opponent in the Democratic primary, doesn't think her explanation is persuasive.

"When you're living in a world of 'what will [Donald Trump](#) do next,' it's more important than ever to have all Democrats pulling in the same direction, not providing support for candidates and corporations at the heart of the Trump agenda," Walker said.

Fried has also given \$500 to Margaret Good, a Democrat who won a special election for a Sarasota state House seat earlier this year, as well as more than \$7,700 to her own campaign.

[In Missouri, group wants to bar lawmakers from fundraising in Capitol](#)

As a newly minted state lawmaker from St. Louis in 1993, Joan Bray was in Missouri's House of Representatives when an envelope containing a \$1,000 campaign contribution landed on her desk.

It was an eye-opening moment.

"I was so stunned. I didn't know what to do," said Bray, a Democrat who would go on to serve in the Missouri House and Senate for 16 years.

The man who distributed the campaign contribution to her and other lawmakers was House Speaker Bob Griffin, who, in the era before Missouri imposed term limits on lawmakers, became the longest-serving speaker of the House.

Just three years after serving as the conduit for onsite campaign contributions in the Capitol, Griffin, a Democrat, would be found guilty in federal court of taking kickbacks from an associate in exchange for using his influence to get her lobbying contracts.

For Bray, the episode was an example of how money aimed at influencing votes can flow through the Missouri Capitol when lawmakers are in town.

The practice of spreading cash to the policy makers where they work is one piece of an ethics proposal that will be decided by voters in November.

Under a far-reaching [ballot initiative known as Clean Missouri](#), political fundraising on state property would be banned.

“To me that’s a no-brainer,” Bray told the Post-Dispatch.

The Clean Missouri initiative would tighten campaign contribution limits, ban lobbyist gifts over \$5, require politicians to wait two years before becoming lobbyists, and it would dramatically alter the way Missouri draws its legislative districts.

The provision that would change how Missouri draws its legislative maps has drawn the most scrutiny. In a lawsuit filed by an attorney who successfully defended the state’s legislative maps when they were challenged in 2011, a Cole County judge is being [asked to toss the initiative off the ballot](#).

In a second lawsuit, filed by the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the prohibition on fundraising on state property is among a litany of provisions being questioned.

In the business group’s lawsuit, attorneys say the proposal violates the First Amendment because it would include a ban on fundraising at any state property.

“The ban would include, at a minimum every conservation area, state park, state building, state monument, piece of state university property, state owned or controlled road, state parking lots, and countless other areas that have nothing to do with the legislature,” the lawsuit says.

State ethics laws bar elected officials from receiving a contribution in exchange for their vote on an issue. And state law bars the use of state resources for political purposes.

But there is no law that specifically says that a lawmaker cannot accept a campaign contribution while in the Capitol. Nonetheless, lawmakers are given guidance on the practice through a policy drafted by the speaker’s office. It specifically addresses legislative staffers.

“House employees are prohibited from participating in campaign or fundraising activities during work hours or from using House property and resources (computer, copier, fax machine, office supplies, etc.) for political purposes,” the policy says.

With the chamber’s court case expected to be on a fast track in order to determine whether the proposition should stay on the November ballot, Clean Missouri officials are ready to defend it.

“The text of the measure is very clear. When our legislators are in the Capitol, they should be worried about their constituents, not how they’re going to score their next campaign check,” Clean Missouri spokesman Benjamin Singer said.

For Bray, the experience of being given money while she was in the Capitol to deliberate on laws affecting millions of Missourians was unsettling.

“Lobbyists would come by the office and try to give my staff a check. To me, it was just so inappropriate,” she said.

[Atlanta City Council members say crackdown on lobbyists needed](#)

As part effort of an ongoing effort to reform how business is conducted at City Hall, four Atlanta City Council members announced legislation on Monday intended to force lobbyists to clearly identify themselves and the companies they represent.

The council members are concerned about people who appear before City Council to push for action on certain issues but fail to mention they are paid representatives of special interest groups.

“It needs to be clear when someone is actively representing a private interest,” said council member Amir Farokhi, who cosponsored the legislation. “This has been a particular point of frustration for me. I’ve watched lobbyists come before council on multiple occasions on behalf of various interests without properly identifying themselves.”

Without lobbyists’ identification the council has no way of knowing what might be motivating their remarks.

The legislation was described as just one step in a comprehensive process of strengthening ethics and promoting transparency. Council members say the need for reform has been highlighted during an ongoing federal corruption probe at City Hall.

But that process also become part of a political a tug-of-war between Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, who campaigned last year on reform, and a city council struggling to reclaim its role of the overseer.

“During the course of last year’s mayoral campaign, Mayor Bottoms publicly spoke of creating lobbyist registration and disclosure as a key plank of her ethics reform platform,” said a spokesperson for the administration. “Mayor Bottoms is thankful that the City Council is now joining in this effort as she remains committed to this pledge and looks forward to strengthening the city’s policy regarding ethics and transparency.”

The city council has passed legislation establishing independent procurement officers to spot potential problems in large contracts and proposed an ordinance that gave the council more control over lawsuits filed by the city.

Bottoms in June vetoed the outside counsel ordinance, citing concerns that it might hinder the city’s legal strategy.

Bottoms successfully [pushed legislation](#) that will allow the public to review the city’s expenditures online.

Her administration also pushed for the hiring of [a transparency officer](#) to ensure compliance with state [open records laws](#) and a chief integrity officer, whose role would be to “to ensure honesty, integrity and transparency.”

Both efforts stalled in the council’s Finance/Executive Committee, partly because both new officers would be under the mayor’s office and possibly subject to political influence.

The relationship between the administration and council has shifted profoundly from what it was during the previous eight years under former Mayor Kasim Reed — a politician known for keeping a tight lid on information and bending the city’s legislative branch to fit his will.

But Reed’s brash, steamrolling style has lost admirers as the federal investigation has progressed, leading to four guilty pleas and one indictment.

[Katrina Taylor Parks](#), deputy chief of staff under Reed and for the first eight months Bottoms’ administration, is also expected to plead guilty to conspiring to accepting bribes.

Parks’ retirement from the city became effective Monday.

[Cannabis industry grows as source of campaign funds](#)

If you’re running for public office in New Mexico and need to raise money, there are traditional sources of campaign funds from the business world. Oil and gas is the main one, but there are

plenty of others: the real estate sector, banking and finance interests, the liquor industry, pharmaceutical companies and auto dealers.

But look ahead a few years.

Though it's currently nowhere near the level of more established businesses, a rising source of campaign contributions is marijuana — the people and companies that grow, package and sell the drug for the state's medical marijuana program.

With public attitudes becoming more favorable — and the number of medical marijuana patients exploding in this state — contributions from the industry are rising. Though dwarfed by the nearly \$1.4 million contributed by oil-related entities to political campaigns in 2018, those in the marijuana industry say their cash — and thus, their muscle — is growing.

“This year, revenue [for medical marijuana producers] topped \$100 million in New Mexico,” said Duke Rodriguez, a former state health secretary who now owns UltraHealth — a nonprofit that operates dispensaries in Arizona and New Mexico. “But in the next five years, it's going to grow even more.”

According to statistics compiled from the state's Campaign Finance Information System and the National Institute on Money in Politics, the legal cannabis industry has spent more than \$49,000 on state candidates and a handful of political action committees so far this election cycle. That's nearly double the \$25,150 the industry spent on campaign contributions in the entire 2016 election cycle.

Since 2012, cannabis-related businesses and the people who run them have contributed more than \$110,000 to New Mexico politicians.

Rodriguez predicted last week that marijuana industry contributions to New Mexico politicians could begin to rival those from traditional campaign funding sources. “With legalization [of recreational marijuana] on the horizon, you'll see that number rise to \$600 million,” he said.

The market for medical marijuana in recent years has multiplied. When Gov. Susana Martinez took office, there were only about 3,000 patients in the state's “compassionate cannabis” program. According to the state Department of Health, there were nearly 55,000 patients enrolled in the Medical Cannabis Program at the end of May — more than 6,300 in Santa Fe County alone.

Rodriguez headed the state Department of Health during Gov. Gary Johnson's administration. His companies have been the biggest cannabis donors in New Mexico since 2012, giving a combined \$38,700 since that year — a total that includes a \$5,000 contribution this year to Democratic gubernatorial candidate Michelle Lujan Grisham from Cumbre Investments, a firm Rodriguez runs.

Rodriguez and his companies have given New Mexico politicians \$24,200 this year, including a total of \$10,000 to Lujan Grisham; \$5,000 to Jeff Apodaca, who ran against Lujan Grisham in the Democratic primary; and \$2,500 to Attorney General Hector Balderas. Rodriguez also contributed \$5,000 to state House Republican leader Nate Gentry, who decided against seeking re-election early this year.

Lujan Grisham has taken in more than \$29,000 from the marijuana industry this year, making her the biggest recipient of cannabis contributions. In second place this year is Apodaca, who drew at least \$11,610.

Lujan Grisham also received the most money from a single marijuana source — PurLife, an Albuquerque company headed by Darren White, another former Johnson Cabinet secretary and a onetime anti-drug warrior.

White, a former Bernalillo County sheriff and state public safety chief, is a staunch Republican and longtime high-profile supporter of Martinez. He only recently did a 180-degree shift from his previous views against medical cannabis. His company contributed \$11,000 to the Democratic standard-bearer.

“Our company got behind Michelle pretty early and we maxed out [its allowable contributions] quickly,” White said.

White noted Lujan Grisham’s long support for the state’s medical marijuana program, which she implemented while serving as secretary of the state Department of Health.

Though PurLife is “maxed out” in its contributions to Lujan Grisham, White said he soon will give her a contribution from his own pocket.

White surprised the New Mexico political world two years ago when he applied for a medical marijuana producer’s license. He resigned from his job as secretary of the state Department of Public Safety in 1999 after Johnson came out in favor of legalizing marijuana. Not long after he’d quit, White worked as a lobbyist in the Legislature working against Johnson’s drug-reform bills — including bills to legalize marijuana as a treatment for certain medical conditions.

He said the fact that medical marijuana is a growing factor in political campaigns doesn’t surprise him — and he expects even more campaign contributions from the industry in the future.

“It’s no different than the liquor industry or oil and gas,” he said. “When you’ve got a \$100 million industry, you’re going to see a lot of political contributions.”

Besides UltraHealth and PurLife, another medical marijuana company making major donations to campaigns is Natural Rx and its president, Trevor Reed; together, they have contributed \$21,100 since 2012. In 2016, Placitas resident Reed was New Mexico’s biggest donor to Johnson’s run for president as the Libertarian Party nominee.

However, only about half the state’s 35 licensed producers have contributed to political campaigns. Rodriguez said he’s talked with other marijuana producers to try to convince them to get politically active.

If there’s a template for what the future might bring, it’s in Colorado, where voters in 2012 passed a constitutional amendment legalizing the recreational use of marijuana for adults 21 or older. That state also has seen an uptick in campaign contributions from the cannabis industry.

“It’s a maturing, evolving industry that’s interested in responsible regulation,” said Peter Marcus, a spokesman for Terrapin Care Station, a Boulder, Colo.-based marijuana producer, which has been growing and selling marijuana for medical patients for nearly a decade.

The publication *Colorado Politics* reported in June that the marijuana industry has contributed \$223,000 to candidates for statewide offices as well as to political parties. That figure does not include money contributed to marijuana ballot initiatives.

While political money from legal marijuana is growing in Colorado, the raw numbers aren’t significantly more than New Mexico’s cannabis contributions. Marianne Goodland, who wrote

the article in *Colorado Politics*, pointed out in an interview last week that Colorado has lower campaign contribution limits — about 10 percent of New Mexico’s limit.

Also, Goodland said, one of the biggest supporters of legal marijuana in Colorado — U.S. Rep. Jared Polis, a Democrat running for governor — has a self-imposed \$100 limit on contributions.

“What we’re seeing here is more money being spent on lobbyists than campaign contributions,” Goodland said. “They spent between \$600,000 to \$700,000 on lobbyists in this year’s session.”

New Mexico has yet to see much in the way of lobbying by marijuana producers. UltraHealth had four registered lobbyists here in 2017 and two at this year’s legislative session. Companies in this state are not required to report how much they pay lobbyists.

Another difference between New Mexico and Colorado: While nearly 75 percent of the cannabis cash goes to Democrats here, producers in Colorado give a significant amount to Republicans, Marcus said.

Goodland said both campaign contributions and lobbying by marijuana producers intensified after her state — which has had a medical marijuana program for 18 years — legalized recreational use of the drug. She said she’d expect the same thing to happen in New Mexico if the state legalized marijuana for other than medical use.

Rodriguez agrees. And he said he believes marijuana will become legal in the state.

“It’s not a question of if,” he said. “It’s a question of when.”

He said he was heartened by a recent meeting of the legislative Revenue Stabilization and Tax Policy Committee at which legalization was discussed.

“That was the first meeting in the Legislature I’ve been to in which the conversation didn’t degenerate into talk about ‘gateway drugs’ and social ills,” he said. “That’s a tremendous step forward.”

Growing contributions

The people and companies that grow, package and sell marijuana for the state’s Medical Cannabis Program have become a rising source of campaign contributions.

2018 campaign cycle: \$49,165

2016 campaign cycle: \$25,150

2014 campaign cycle: \$19,000

2012 campaign cycle: \$4,054

2010 campaign cycle: \$100

Major donors since 2012

Ultra Health/Duke Rodriguez/Cumbre Investments: \$39,000

Natural RX/Trevor Reed: \$21,100

Verdes Foundation: \$15,100

PurLife: \$11,000

R.L. Greenleaf: \$3,000

Major donors for 2018

Ultra Health/Duke Rodriguez/Cumbre: \$24,200

The Verdes Foundation: \$14,500

PurLife: \$11,000

Natural Rx/Trevor Reed: \$8,100

Major recipients of cannabis cash for 2018

Michelle Lujan Grisham: \$29,205

Jeff Apodaca: \$11,610

Nate Gentry: \$7,700

Bill McCamley: \$2,700

Major recipients of cannabis cash 2012-18

Michelle Lujan Grisham: \$29,205

Nate Gentry: \$20,700

Jeff Apodaca: \$11,610

Cisco McSorley: \$6,000

Daniel Ivey-Soto: \$4,000

By party 2012-18

Democrat: \$79,869

Republican: \$22,800

[FDLE closed Jack Latvala case without gathering new info](#)

Leon County State Attorney Jack Campbell chose not to file corruption charges against the former Clearwater Republican state senator on July 26. "Being a leech is not a crime," Campbell said Thursday.

Documents released this week in the now-closed investigation into the sexual harassment and corruption claims against former state Sen. Jack Latvala show that state investigators did not expand their review beyond the information provided to them by the Senate, stopping short of interviewing new witnesses or soliciting additional documents before they cleared the veteran lawmaker of wrongdoing.

Leon County State Attorney Jack Campbell chose not to file corruption charges against Latvala, 66, on July 26, after receiving the Florida Department of Law Enforcement report that concluded the former Clearwater senator had not "exerted his influence" over former lobbyist Laura McLeod "in exchange for a continuing sexual relationship."

"Being a leech is not a crime," Campbell said Thursday. "Being a cad or being promiscuous is not a crime....There are lots of things that are wrong that are not illegal. I have to decide if there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction."

McLeod told investigators that she had a "three-year" consensual, intimate relationship with Latvala during his first tenure in office in the late 1990s but, when he returned to the Senate in 2010, she did not want to resume the relationship.

As Latvala hounded her with pleas of "one more time for the good times," McLeod testified that she felt obligated due to his power and persistence. She said she tolerated unwanted touching in his office between 2015 and 2017, saying "I felt it was something he felt entitled to" but, faced

with physical and emotional stress, she chose to leave lobbying rather than continue to endure what she later realized was emotional and physical harassment.

Latvala denied allegations that he forced himself on McLeod and testified that he had a "very casual relationship" with her that "had gone on for the last 20 years." He said he considered the sex and touching consensual.

The veteran lawmaker was at the pinnacle of his power as Senate budget chairman when Senate aide Rachel Perrin Rogers accused him of sexual harassment in an article in *Politico*. Five other women had made accusations anonymously in the *Politico* story but none of them ever came forward.

McLeod, who had not spoken to *Politico*, first disclosed her allegations under oath to former Judge Ronald V. Swanson and then detailed them for the *Times/Herald*. Latvala denied Perrin Rogers' assertions, but when Swanson's report came out, Latvala resigned. He continues to use his clout by spending the nearly \$4 million in his political committee on political races.

Because the case is closed, the Senate on Wednesday released all the documents involved in the internal investigation into Latvala over sexual harassment charges made by Perrin Rogers, which led to the revelations by McLeod about Latvala.

The Senate probe was conducted by Swanson, hired to be the special master to make recommendations.

Swanson concluded on Dec. 19 there was probable cause to believe that the Clearwater Republican may have sexually harassed Perrin Rogers, but Swanson surprised many by also concluding that Latvala may have violated public corruption laws by seeking "quid pro quo" physical contact or sexual intimacy "in exchange for support of legislative initiatives."

Swanson referred the case for criminal investigation, and the Senate presented the case to the Tallahassee Police Department, which referred it to FDLE. The state agency spent six months reviewing the evidence, questioning Latvala and McLeod under oath, and delaying release of its findings to address last-minute questions by Campbell's office.

"This office has reviewed the Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigative reports and exhibits concerning allegations against former Senator Jack Latvala," Campbell wrote in a July 26 letter closing the case.

"We agree with FDLE's conclusion that there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Latvala was unlawfully compensated or rewarded for his official behavior as a Florida senator."

The FDLE report focused on criminal allegations of quid pro quo, a crime under state bribery statutes, but Campbell said he also looked into whether the allegations also fit into battery and sexual battery charges.

"There was nothing to support that the touching and sex was conditioned upon actions taken in the legislative process," Campbell told the *Times/Herald*. "So I'm talking to both sides of it and they're both consistent that everything is consensual — albeit you get into the middle road which is commonly referred to as sexual harassment, which is not a crime."

He said he also could find no evidence of sexual battery.

The report noted that no other witnesses came forward voluntarily to corroborate McLeod's allegations but, the documents show, FDLE also did not subpoena witnesses and did not obtain additional text and voice messages from McLeod, who referred to them in her sworn testimony. While FDLE asked McLeod to type up the journal entries that described her emotional torment from Latvala over these years, the agency was selective in what it chose to include in its report to Campbell.

For example, Latvala told investigators he considered the relationship consensual and testified McLeod never told him that they "shouldn't do this."

But the FDLE report excluded several text messages McLeod provided to Swanson and investigators, including when she told Latvala: "You told me to tell you if I can't handle it. Sadly, I can't. I truly want the best for you."

While Swanson's report made a distinction between McLeod and Latvala's relationship in his first term in office and his second term, which began in 2010 — noting that the degree of consent during each period was distinctly different — FDLE and Campbell merged the events, referring to it as a "20-year consensual relationship" — the same way Latvala referred to it.

"My understanding is they had ... over a period of 20 years, they had consensual sex over multiple occasions," Campbell said Thursday.

"Whether it was continuous or not is a semantics game and not germane."

The FDLE report also included some inconsistencies. For example, it twice noted that Latvala "denied having sexual intercourse in his Senate office."

Neither McLeod, nor any of the other Senate witnesses interviewed by Swanson, ever accused Latvala of having sex in his office.

The FDLE report also referred to Senate attorney George Meros as McLeod's attorney, when her attorney was lobbyist Ron Book.

Campbell defended his decision not to subpoena other witnesses, including two mentioned by McLeod, who would not come forward.

"We could have talked to other people, that's true, but there was nobody we needed to talk to to further clarify the issue," he said. "I was very comfortable with the information."

Campbell said he did not consider whether Latvala abused his power over McLeod by threatening to harm her client's projects in the budget because he didn't think the evidence was there.

"To be able to get to the point of criminal liability, I have got to show they are using that power to show a benefit which is going into a specific example," he said.

Rick Johnson, a Tallahassee-based employment lawyer, said that if prosecutors wanted to make a case, they "go at it with greater enthusiasm and diligence in searching for a crime."

For example, he said, "when you turn bribery on its head, you've got blackmail and that's a crime. So, if he [Latvala] is going to reward her [McLeod], that's bribery and if he's going to punish her, that's extortion," he said.

But, Campbell said, he was limited by the narrowly drawn state law which, unlike the federal corruption statutes for crimes like honest services, requires specific examples. "That's why there are not that many cases on it."

"I leave it to the Legislature whether they want to make sexual harassment a crime," he said. "Right now, the only thing we've got is bribery."

Johnson said that Florida's law should be changed to at least update the state's sexual harassment laws to apply to contract workers, like lobbyists, so that they are protected from abuse like employees under the Civil Rights Act.

Incoming Senate President Bill Galvano said Thursday that he expects an update to the sexual harassment law "will be pursued next session," although he has not indicated what changes he will support.

Galvano, R-Bradenton, said he also supports the FDLE's approach to the corruption probe.

"I respect the expertise of FDLE's professional investigators and trust in their ability to conduct a fair and independent investigation," he said.

Lawsuit challenges proposed Clean Missouri amendment

The proposed Clean Missouri amendment to Missouri's Constitution should be removed from the November ballot, a lawsuit filed last week argued, because it violates state law and the Constitution's requirements in numerous ways.

Jefferson City lawyer Chuck Hatfield, representing the Clean Missouri campaign organization and Sean Soendker Nicholson, its deputy treasurer, this week asked Cole County Circuit Judge Pat Joyce to let his clients intervene in the case, saying they "have a substantial interest in the subject of this case and those interests are consistent with the required interests to permit intervention as a matter of right."

On Aug. 2, Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft certified the Clean Missouri petition, and four others, as meeting the legal and constitutional requirements for being placed on the Nov. 6 ballot.

But the 21-page lawsuit — filed a few hours after Ashcroft's certification, by Eddie Greim of the Graves Garrett law firm in Kansas City — asked the Cole County Circuit Court to order Ashcroft to keep the proposal off the ballot, because the proposed amendment violates the constitutional requirement that it change only one section of the Constitution.

Greim argued the Clean Missouri proposal "makes at least 21 different amendments to the Constitution."

The lawsuit noted Nicholson — whom Greim described as a "Democratic operative" — in November 2016 submitted 16 different initiative petition proposals that "contained various provisions but (had) a common thread."

And, the lawsuit said, that common point in the various amendment proposals was to "radically change how Missouri redraws state legislative districts during reapportionment," by requiring an unelected state demographer to draw districts instead of following the current constitutional and statutory procedures.

But, Greim wrote: "Unwilling to present this redistricting proposal to Missouri voters on its own merits, Nicholson surrounded it with numerous other proposed changes to Missouri's Constitution, including but not limited to" creating:

New campaign finance regulations;

A repeal and replacement of certain campaign contribution limits;

Limits on lobbyist gifts;

"A so-called 'revolving door' ban on legislators" and their legislative staff from lobbying at the state or local level for two years after the expiration of their term of office;

A ban on political fundraising on any state property by candidates for, or members of, the state Legislature; and

A requirement that legislative records be subject to Missouri's Sunshine Law.

The lawsuit asked the court to keep the Clean Missouri proposal off of November's ballot, because "Missouri's Constitution and statutes contain longstanding and commonsense mandates against an initiative petition that concerns multiple subjects, amends multiple articles, or fails to set forth the full and correct text of the amendment."

The lawsuit continued: "Nicholson's quest to redraw Missouri's legislative districts violates each of these mandates (and) must be rejected as an unconstitutional abuse of the initiative."

Most of the suit cited details of where the petition proposal ignored, or failed to observe, those legal requirements.

The lawsuit also argued parts of the Clean Missouri proposal violate existing provisions of the Missouri and U.S. Constitutions, including the federal First Amendment right to free speech "by banning political fundraising by members of or candidates for legislative office" on any property owned or controlled by the state or its agencies, and "making any purposeful violation of such ban a crime subject to imprisonment and a fine."

No hearings have been scheduled yet in the case.