



Missouri Ethics Commission

Stacey Heislen
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 23, 2026

Eric Zahnd, Platte County Prosecutor
Platte County Courthouse
415 Third Street, Suite 60-CH
Platte City, MO 64079

Re: File No. 26-0008-I

Dear Mr. Zahnd:

The Missouri Ethics Commission received the enclosed complaint filed against you. Missouri law states that within five days after the Commission receives the complaint, a copy of the complaint must be delivered to you.

Commission staff will begin an investigation into the allegations in the near future. A Commission investigator may contact you to obtain any facts and information you have about the complaint. If you wish to provide additional written information about the complaint before you are contacted, you may mail the information to the Commission. Please include the file number listed above. If you choose to have an attorney represent you, it will be necessary for the attorney to notify the Commission in writing. Commission staff will then communicate with your attorney.

Missouri law requires that the investigation remain confidential until the Commission takes a final action. If the Commission finds that no violation occurred, the complaint will generally be dismissed within 90 days of its receipt and the dismissal will become public. Both you and the Complainant will be notified of the dismissal at that time.

If the Commission makes an initial determination that a violation may have occurred, the Commission will refer the complaint to its Commission counsel for the filing of an administrative legal case.

Enclosed is a *Complaint Fact Sheet* providing an overview of the complaint process. You can find additional information on the Commission's website at www.mec.mo.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stacey Heislen".

Stacey Heislen
Executive Director

Enclosures

PO Box 1370
Jefferson City, MO 65102
www.mec.mo.gov
(573) 751-2020 / (800) 392-8660



Missouri Ethics Commission (MEC)
 PO Box 1370, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (800) 392-8660 www.mec.mo.gov
Official Complaint Form (Sections 105.957 & 130.054, RSMo, & MO Const.)

Missouri Ethics Commission

Office Use:

JAN 20 2026

Received by Mail

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY MAIL OR HAND-DELIVERED
 FAXED COPIES OR EMAILS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

INDIVIDUAL BRINGING COMPLAINT: (must be a natural person)			
DATE OF COMPLAINT: 1/12/2026	NAME: (First & Last) Scott Fricker	TITLE OF OFFICE HELD OR SOUGHT (if applicable): Platte County Presiding Commissioner	
ADDRESS: (required) 13510 NW 76th Street		EMAIL: sfricker22@gmail.com	
CITY, STATE & ZIP: (required) Parkville, MO 64152			COUNTY: Platte
WORK PHONE: () 816-533-5808	HOME PHONE: ()	CELL PHONE: () 816-456-1656	

The Commission will send a copy of this complaint, which includes the name of the person bringing the complaint, to the organization(s), committee(s), or individual(s) against whom the complaint is brought.

INDIVIDUAL(S) AND/OR ORGANIZATION(S) OR COMMITTEE(S) AGAINST WHOM COMPLAINT BROUGHT: <small>(Please limit filing to those individuals and/or entities against whom the specific complaint is alleged. File separate complaints if alleging violations of a similar nature against separate and distinct individuals/organizations/committees/entities. Use additional pages if necessary.)</small>			
NAME: Eric Zahnd	TITLE OF OFFICE HELD OR SOUGHT (if applicable): Platte County Prosecutor		
ADDRESS: (required) 415 Third St., Suite 60-CH	EMAIL: ezahnd@co.platte.mo.us		
CITY, STATE & ZIP: (required) Platte City, MO 64079	COUNTY: Platte	DATE OF ELECTION: (if applicable)	
WORK PHONE: () (816) 858-3476	HOME PHONE: ()	CELL PHONE: () 816-665-9858	

NAME:	TITLE OF OFFICE HELD OR SOUGHT (if applicable):		
ADDRESS: (required)	EMAIL:		
CITY, STATE & ZIP: (required)	COUNTY:	DATE OF ELECTION: (if applicable)	
WORK PHONE: ()	HOME PHONE: ()	CELL PHONE: ()	

VERIFICATION BY OATH OR AFFIRMATION
 This complaint shall be sworn to under penalty of perjury.

STATE OF MISSOURI
 COUNTY OF Platte

I, Scott Fricker being duly sworn upon oath and affirmation legally administered,
 (Complainant Name)
 certify under penalty of perjury that the information contained in this complaint is complete, true, and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Complainant Signature

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 13th day of Jan, 2026

My Commission Expires: 6/24/2026

JENNIFER WYMORE
 NOTARY PUBLIC - NOTARY SEAL/P
 STATE OF MISSOURI
 MY COMMISSION EXPIRES JUNE 24, 2026
 PLATTE COUNTY
 COMMISSION #14628614

Notary Public Signature

Please check one or more boxes next to the area(s) which you believe this complaint concerns:

- 1) The requirements imposed on lobbyists contained in Sections 105.470 to 105.478, RSMo;
- 2) The financial interest disclosure requirements contained in Sections 105.483 to 105.492, RSMo;
- 3) The campaign finance disclosure requirements contained in Chapter 130, RSMo and the Missouri Constitution;
- 4) Article VIII, Section 23, of the Missouri Constitution (complaints relating to campaign finance can only be filed against a candidate within 60 days prior to the primary election until after the general election in which the candidate is running but not within the 15 days prior to the election);
- 5) The conflict of interest laws contained in Sections 105.450 to 105.467, RSMo, and Section 171.181, RSMo;
- 6) Any code of conduct promulgated by any department, division or agency of state government, or by state institutions of higher education, or by executive order;
- 7) The provisions of the Constitution or state statute or order, ordinance or resolution of any political subdivision relating to the official conduct of officials or employees of the state and political subdivisions.

State in your own words the facts and actions which prompted you to make this complaint.
Attach any documents that support this complaint. Include relevant dates, times, and the names and contact information of other persons whom you believe have knowledge of the facts.

- NO Are any of the matters alleged by you the subject of civil or criminal litigation?
- YES If yes, please provide the county, _____ and case number, _____ if known.

The space provided below is not intended to limit your statement of facts. Please use additional pages if necessary.

I have declared publicly that I'm running for reelection as Presiding Commissioner, and Platte County Prosecutor Eric Zahnd is using public resources available to the Prosecutor in an attempt to interfere with my political campaign. RSMo 115.646 states that "No ... expenditure of funds shall be made directly by any officer, employee or agent of any political subdivision ... to advocate, support, or oppose the ... defeat of ... the nomination or election of any candidate for public office ..." Attached is a copy of a press release emailed from Mr. Zahnd's county-maintained email to the press dated January 5, 2026. The highlighted sentences make it clear that Mr. Zahnd is trying to undermine my campaign, thereby destroying my chances for reelection. Public resources used in his efforts to interfere with my campaign include his county-maintained email (zahnd@co.platte.mo.us), county stationary, and staff time ("If you need additional information, please contact Tanya Faherty, media liasion"). Also attached is a document that was attached to the email. This document was also emailed using a county-maintained email server, is highlighted to show instances where Mr. Zahnd is using county resources to interfere with my campaign.

Sheriff, Prosecutor blast law enforcement budget cuts

ezahnd@co.platte.mo.us Eric Zahnd

Monday, January 5, 2026 at 1:19:29 PM Central Standard Time

To: ezahnd@co.platte.mo.us Eric Zahnd

Bcc: prosecutor@co.platte.mo.us Prosecutor, policereports@kcstar.com Star, spectrumnewskansascity@charter.com, jess.dehaven@newspressnow.com, andrew.gaug@newspressnow.com Andrew Gaug, fox4kc.news@gmail.com WDAFTV-FOX4 News, newsdesk@kshb.com KSHB News Desk Email, apkansascity@ap.org AP Kansas City, kcur@umkc.edu KCUR, newsdesk@kctv5.com KCTV5 News Desk, ivan@plattecountylandmark.com Ivan Foley, clinton.thomas@newspressnow.com Clinton Thomas, grice@kcstar.com Glenn Rice, news@kmbc.com KMBC, news@wdaftv4.com Wdaf, editor@plattecountycitizen.com Ross Martin, wcnews@embarqmail.com Weston Chronicle, news@kq2.com KQ2 News, bcronkleton@kcstar.com Bob Cronkleton, news@kmzu.com KMZU, cindy@plattecountylandmark.com Cindy Rinehart, news@kmbz.com KMBZ, RadioDanaKC@gmail.com Dana Wright, dwright@entercom.com Dana Wright

Platte County Sheriff Erik Holland and Prosecuting Attorney Eric Zahnd took the stage at Monday's County Commission meeting to sharply criticize the Commission's budget cuts to Platte County law enforcement.

Zahnd concluded his 10 minutes of remarks saying, "Make no mistake . . . due to the lack of funding from this Commission, Platte County will become a more dangerous place to raise a family, own a business, and go to school or work. I will not stand silent as this Commission makes that fateful decision."

Under Missouri law, the county auditor recommends a budget, but a county commission is free to revise that budget as it sees fit as long as the budget remains balanced.

The Commission reduced expenditures by approximately \$600,000 from Platte County Auditor Kevin Robinson's recommended budget through a variety of changes to the General Fund. A significant portion of the \$600,000 is the reduction of the Auditor's recommended 5.0% cost of living increase for employees and related expenses to the Commission's proposed COLA of 2.5%. That change significantly impacted law enforcement.

As a result, Zahnd publicly revoked his endorsement of Presiding Commissioner Scott Fricker's reelection bid and asked Fricker to return his multiple campaign contributions.

"I feel like I've been scammed," Zahnd said, "and I fear Presiding Commissioner Fricker will try to hoodwink the voters in a bid to stay in power." Zahnd said he was asking for a refund of his campaign contributions like he "would ask for a refund for a car that turned out to be a lemon."

Zahnd also said he would "no longer attend Presiding Commissioner Fricker's campaign events to be trotted out like a show pony when [Fricker] falsely claims to support law enforcement."

Zahnd began his comments by reading a series of texts between Fricker and Zahnd on a thread that also included Holland. The texts were exchanged on January 2, three days before the Commission budget meeting.

At 10:04 a.m., Zahnd sent Presiding Commissioner Fricker a text stating:

Scott, are you available to meet with [Platte County Sheriff] Erik [Holland] and me about the Commission's 2026 budget? I propose coffee at Fitti's[] at 10:00 [a.m.].

Fricker responded:

No sorry. And besides, the 2026 budget is done.

Zahnd replied:

Okay. I'll make my comments publicly Monday. I wanted to give you a chance first, but I understand you're not interested in that.

Fricker then said:

I had a long conversation with Erik [Holland] last week and I suspect your concerns are similar. Everyone wants more money, not just the two of you. We will spend \$3 million more on building improvements than we had in ARPA funds, a big chunk of which went into your space so that you could have a professional space for your attorneys. Same thing for the Sheriff's office. We are burning money faster than we're making it, and something had to be done.

I would appreciate it if you wouldn't ask me for money that we don't have.

Zahnd replied:

That's fine, I'm just going to tell the public the truth about your supposed support for law enforcement. Hope you have a good weekend.

Fricker stated:

I gave you everything you asked for over the last 3 budgets, and because your staff didn't get bigger raises than everyone else, you're going to do this? You do what you have to do.

Zahnd said he did not reply. "Instead, sadly, given that Presiding Commissioner Fricker refused to meet with Sheriff Holland and me privately," Zahnd said, "I am here to do what I have to do publicly."

Following Zahnd, Holland took the podium. Holland asserted that retaining current employees and being able to attract and hire qualified applicants is essential to maintaining safety in Platte County.

"The Commission's proposed budget does not even keep up with the cost of living increase employees' have experienced over the last year and effectively takes us a step backwards," Holland said. "We all also know that at some point in the future the County will be faced with having to give large increases in order to make up lost ground. In the past we have experienced the compression and staffing shortages that were caused, at least in part, by not maintaining a competitive compensation position."

Holland concluded his remarks by asking the Commission table the budget and reconsider its position, given that Missouri law provides the Commission more time to finalize the budget.

"The Auditor presented a balanced budget to the Commission," Holland said. "While it didn't fund salaries at the level we requested, it would put us in a better position than the Commissions' proposed budget and shows that a more competitive salary position is possible within a balanced budget for the County."

Supporting documents are attached. If you need additional information, please contact Tanya Faherty, media liaison for the prosecuting attorney's office.



Eric G. Zahnd

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

(816)858-3476

415 THIRD STREET, STE 60
PLATTE CITY, MO 64079

PLATTE COUNTY
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
ERIC G. ZAHND

Attachments:

3030_001.pdf 899k

**Platte County Prosecuting Attorney Eric Zahnd
2026 Budget Remarks to County Commission
January 5, 2026**

I will begin today by reading a series of texts between Presiding Commissioner Fricker and me on a thread that also included Sheriff Erik Holland. The texts were exchanged three days ago. Copies of these texts as well as other documents will be available to the media following my remarks.

At 10:04 a.m. on Friday, January 2, I sent Presiding Commissioner Fricker this text:

Scott, are you available to meet with [Platte County Sheriff] Erik [Holland] and me about the Commission's 2026 budget? I propose coffee at Fitti's[] at 10:00 [a.m.].

Presiding Commissioner Fricker immediately responded:

No sorry. And besides, the 2026 budget is done.

I immediately replied:

Okay. I'll make my comments publicly Monday. I wanted to give you a chance first, but I understand you're not interested in that.

Presiding Commissioner Fricker then said:

I had a long conversation with [Sheriff] Erik [Holland] last week and I suspect your concerns are similar. Everyone wants more money, not just the two of you. We will spend \$3 million more on building improvements than we had in ARPA funds, a big chunk of which went into your space so that you could have a professional space for your attorneys. Same thing for the Sheriff's office. We are burning money faster than we're making it, and something had to be done.

I would appreciate it if you wouldn't ask me for money that we don't have.

I replied:

That's fine, I'm just going to tell the public the truth about your supposed support for law enforcement. Hope you have a good weekend.

Presiding Commissioner Fricker stated:

I gave you everything you asked for over the last 3 budgets, and because your staff didn't get bigger raises than everyone else, you're going to do this? You do what you have to do.

I did not reply. Instead, sadly—given that Presiding Commissioner Fricker refused to meet with Sheriff Holland and me privately—I am here to, in Presiding Commissioner Fricker's words, "do what I have to do" publicly.

Frankly, I do not expect my words to have any impact because, according to Presiding Commissioner Fricker, the budget is already done. I am nevertheless compelled to speak. I have the great honor and solemn responsibility to speak on behalf of the people of Platte County and the State of Missouri in the people's courts. Today, I do so in the County Commission's chambers.

I am deeply worried about the decision the Commission is about to make *not* to fully fund law enforcement, contrary to Presiding Commissioner Fricker's repeated campaign pledges and public pronouncements.

Presiding Commissioner Fricker has told the media—and the public—that Platte County "just has excess cash." About a year ago, he told public radio station KCUR that "sales tax revenues will be \$2 million over projections, which should cover any budget shortfalls." He continued by saying, "[t]here's really no chance that we're going to have to cut services or any of that."

Similarly, on his campaign website, Presiding Commissioner Fricker tells voters that "This commission is as fiscally conservative as we can be *without cutting critical services.*"

Then he speaks to public safety. His website says this:

Public safety was my number one priority in my previous campaign. And since being elected, I've participated in three budgets, this year will be my fourth, and we have fully funded the Sheriff's Office, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Courts all three years. And though I haven't seen the budget requests yet for 2026, I suspect we'll fully fund these important agencies once again.

It is true that Presiding Commissioner Fricker fully funded law enforcement the first three years he was in office. Suddenly, he has now had a change of heart. Despite telling voters that Platte County has excess cash, he is now unwilling to fully fund law enforcement. He tells the Sheriff and me in a text message that Platte County is "burning money faster than we are making it" and "I would appreciate it if you would not ask me for money we do not have."

You may wonder what has changed. Well, let me tell you the sad story of what changed.

Two weeks ago, nearly every officeholder sat with this entire Commission as we poured over the budget, almost line-by-line. When we discussed the budget for the prosecuting attorney's office, the Commission not only left that budget intact, it committed to adding some funding. I appreciated that decision and believed that Presiding Commissioner Fricker's commitment to fully fund law enforcement was intact.

Unfortunately, the meeting did not end there. I made what now appears to have been a serious mistake. I inquired of this Commission whether it intended to fund a study of our criminal justice system to help us expedite case resolution.

We do a lot of things right in Platte County, but it takes us too long to resolve criminal cases. The fact that too many people are in jail for too long awaiting resolution of their charges is making our jail overcrowding problem worse. Our county is projected to spend \$1.2 million this year simply to incarcerate prisoners in other counties because we've run out of room for lawbreakers in our own jail. I proposed we spend a small fraction of that money—\$25,000 to \$75,00—to see if we could reduce the jail population by processing cases more quickly. I told this Commission that, while I was uncertain how much money we would actually save from the study and how much it would reduce our jail population, I was confident we would easily save more than the study would cost by decreasing the average length of stay in our jail for at least some inmates.

I naively thought my request was a no-brainer. And I'll admit that I lost my cool when the Commission appeared unwilling to spend a relatively small amount of money to potentially save hundreds of thousands of dollars. I just couldn't understand why this Commission was unwilling to fund a partial solution for the jail overcrowding problem it had created by failing on two occasions to effectively communicate to the voters why we needed more jail space.

I used strong language to make my point. When Presiding Commissioner Fricker loudly declared that my part of the meeting was over, I left, only to return minutes later to apologize for my over-heated word choices. I admitted that my word choice was strong, but I told everyone present that I stood by my sentiments.

Each of the Commissioners said they accepted my apology. I followed up with another apology by email the next day, again stating my regret for using charged language, but nevertheless attempting to persuade the Commission to fund this important study intended to improve the county's ability to effectively enforce the law. I continue to believe that trying to reduce our jail population so we have enough room to incarcerate dangerous offenders is the right thing to do. This Commission has an obligation to provide sufficient jail space so we can put violent criminals behind bars to prevent them from preying on vulnerable and law-abiding Platte Countians.

I thought the matter was settled, and I would simply await the Commission's decision on what seemed like an easy and uncontroversial decision. I never expected in my wildest dreams that this Commission would cut law enforcement funding after Presiding Commissioner Fricker had repeatedly told Platte County citizens that we had plenty of cash and law enforcement was his number one priority.

Unfortunately, my trust in Presiding Commissioner Fricker's public pronouncements about fully funding law enforcement was misplaced. That's the trouble with words: It's far too easy for a politician to say one thing but do the entirely opposite thing.

I now feel like I've been scammed, and I fear Presiding Commissioner Fricker will try to hoodwink the voters in a bid to stay in power. I will repeat for the last time what Presiding Commissioner Fricker repeatedly tells voters: Law enforcement is his number one priority. I actually used to believe that. Presiding Commissioner Fricker *did* fully fund law enforcement until today. The only conclusion I can draw from his sudden about-face is that Presiding Commissioner Fricker has new priorities—and law enforcement is not chief among them. Today's budget cuts, made at the 11th hour with no notice to those affected and no willingness to discuss them, appear to be rash and ill-considered.

Here's the thing. Presiding Commissioner Fricker can only claim that we have "excess cash" and he won't "cut critical services" and then slash \$600,000 from the law enforcement budget if one other thing is true: Presiding Commissioner Fricker no longer believes that law enforcement is a critical government service.

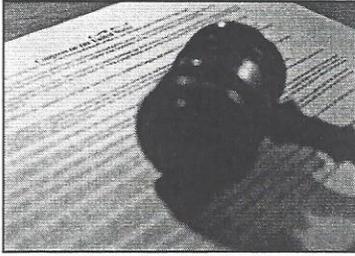
For that reason, I am publicly withdrawing my endorsement of Scott Fricker for reelection. I am also publicly asking for a refund of my multiple campaign contributions, just like I would ask for a refund for a car that turned out to be a lemon. And I will no longer attend Presiding Commissioner Fricker's campaign events to be trotted out like a show pony when he falsely claims to support law enforcement.

Presiding Commissioner Fricker, you can choose to dislike me because I committed what you see as my mortal sin of not submitting to your authority. Trust me, you will join a long line of political opponents, media commentators, and criminals who dislike me. I'm used to people not liking me. But I'm asking you not to make the people of Platte County pay the price for your dislike of me.

In the end, these are budget decisions the Commission has all the power and authority to make. The law requires this Commission to balance the budget. If we are to believe Presiding Commissioner Fricker's recent statements to the media and on his campaign website, Platte County has all the tax money needed to fully fund law enforcement and keep Platte County safe. You are simply deciding today not to do so. Presiding Commissioner Fricker is correct when he writes on his campaign website that "[w]ithout strong law enforcement, everything else in our society collapses."

Make no mistake, today's decision by this Commission to *not* fully fund law enforcement will make Platte County less safe. Due to the lack of funding from this Commission, Platte County will become a more dangerous place to raise a family, own a business, and go to school or work. I will not stand silent as this Commission makes that fateful decision. I urge this Commission to reconsider its decision, which will have lasting and negative consequences to our great County.

Thank you.



Complaints

Fact Sheet

Section 105.957 RSMo.

Filing a Complaint with the Missouri Ethics Commission

The Missouri Ethics Commission's jurisdiction includes investigating complaints of reporting and filing (disclosure) violations for campaign finance, financial interest, and lobbyists. In addition, the Missouri Ethics Commission investigates complaints about:

- ✓ Codes of Conduct adopted by a department, division, state agency, and state institutions of higher learning
- ✓ Conflict of Interest laws
- ✓ Order, ordinance or resolution of any political subdivision relating to the official conduct of officials or employees, including constitutional provisions or state statutes

To file a complaint, complete the *Official Complaint Form*. This form should contain all known facts, must be filed by a natural person, notarized, and mailed or delivered in person to the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Complaints Not Investigated by the Missouri Ethics Commission

The Missouri Ethics Commission may refuse to investigate any conduct that is the subject of civil or criminal litigation. The Missouri Ethics Commission cannot investigate complaints that:

- ✓ Refer to conduct occurring prior to the expiration of the statute of limitations for criminal conduct
- ✓ Are related to conduct occurring more than two years prior to the complaint date and are not criminal violations
- ✓ Alleges conduct by a candidate for public office, other than failure to timely or accurately file a personal financial disclosure statement or campaign finance disclosure report, or any other violation of the campaign finance law (Ch. 130 RSMo), from 60 days prior to the primary until after the general election
- ✓ Provides any allegation against a candidate or a candidate committee, within 15 days prior to the primary or general election in which the candidate is running for office

Complaint Notification

Within five days of receipt of a complaint, the Missouri Ethics Commission sends a copy of the complaint and the complainant's name to the person/entity that the complaint is brought against (respondent).

Complaint Process

The Missouri Ethics Commission, after notification to the person(s) being investigated and the complainant, assigns an investigator to the case, conducts an investigation, and provides a detailed report of the investigation to the commission.

Upon receipt of the report, the Commission may:

- ✓ Close the investigation if reasonable grounds are not found that a violation occurred
- ✓ Refer the case to the Missouri Ethics Commission's counsel in preparation of a hearing, when reasonable grounds are found that a violation occurred
- ✓ Refer the case to a prosecuting attorney for violations of criminal law

The Missouri Ethics Commission conducts hearings for cases referred to the Commission's counsel or enters into a joint stipulation with the parties involved. The hearings are required, by Missouri law, to be closed.

Complaint Confidentiality

Missouri law provides that investigations are strictly confidential and that the Missouri Ethics Commission cannot confirm whether an investigation is being conducted. The Missouri Ethics Commission's final action regarding an investigation is made public on their website, www.mec.mo.gov, Commission Actions. The final action provides the case #, name of the respondent (person(s) investigated), county respondent resides in, Missouri state statute reference, and the final action. The Missouri Ethics Commission's final order regarding an investigation can also be made available to the public, upon written request.

Frivolous Complaints

The Missouri Ethics Commission must dismiss any complaint which it finds to be frivolous in nature, which is lacking basis in fact or law. Any person submitting a frivolous complaint shall be held liable for actual and compensatory damages to the alleged violator. A finding by the Missouri Ethics Commission that a complaint is frivolous becomes public record.

