



FACT

FOUNDATION FOR
ACCOUNTABILITY
AND CIVIC TRUST

October 8, 2019

Omar Ashmawy
Chief Counsel
Office of Congressional Ethics
U.S. House of Representatives
425 3rd Street, S.W., Suite 1110
Washington, DC 20024
Email: oce@mail.house.gov

Dear Mr. Ashmawy,

The Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust submitted a Complaint to your office dated September 23, 2019, seeking an investigation into Representative Matthew Cartwright. We write today to supplement that complaint with additional information: (1) evidence of an apparent violation of the law and regulations governing annual public financial disclosure reports, and (2) further evidence that he has sponsored legislation that would provide a significant financial benefit to himself and his spouse in violation of the House Ethics Rules.

For two consecutive years, in apparent direct violation of the Ethics in Government Act and its implementing regulations, Representative Cartwright's annual public financial disclosure ("PFD") failed to disclose his wife's income from Munley Law P.C., where she continues to work as a partner specializing in commercial truck accident cases. As described in greater detail in our September 23, 2019 Complaint, both Rep. Cartwright and his spouse, as well as his family law firm, Munley Law P.C., stand to benefit financially from two truck insurance bills he introduced "that would require commercial truck drivers to purchase insurance liability coverage at a minimum of \$4.5 million, a 600% hike from the current \$750,000 minimum. . . . Higher insurance liability coverage can allow law firms representing a victim suing truckers to collect greater sums."¹

Both the Ethics in Government Act and the House Committee on Ethics' instructions for public financial disclosure reports clearly state that Members of Congress such as Rep. Cartwright "must disclose the source and type, but not the amount, of your spouse's earned income that totaled \$1,000 or more from a single source."² In spite of this requirement, Rep. Cartwright failed to disclose his spouse's income from Munley Law P.C. on his 2017 and 2018

¹ Alana Goodman, *Democratic Congressman Introduced Truck Crash Legislation Benefiting His Family Law Firm*, Washington Examiner, Sept. 16, 2019, available at <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/politics/democraticcongressman-introduced-truck-crash-legislation-benefiting-his-family-law-firm>.

² See 5 U.S.C. app. 4 §102(e)(1)(A) and House Ethics Committee Instruction Guide, Financial Disclosure Statements and Periodic Transaction Reports Calendar Year 2018, p. 30, available here: <https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/CY%202018%20Instruction%20Guide%20for%20Financial%20Disclosure%20Statements%20and%20PTRs.pdf>.

public financial disclosure reports.³ Rep. Cartwright is apparently aware of the requirement to disclose the source and type of spouse salary on Schedule C of his annual PFD, as his disclosures from five prior years (2012-2016) reported that his spouse earned “salary” from “Munley Law P.C.” or “Munley, Munley & Cartwright, P.C.”⁴ Indeed, in 2016, his report initially failed to include the entry, but Rep. Cartwright amended the report on October 5, 2017 to include an entry for his spouse’s Munley Law P.C. salary.⁵

Public information clearly demonstrates that Rep. Cartwright’s spouse, Marion Munley, continues to work as a partner at Munley Law P.C. and did so during the calendar years 2017 and 2018. She is listed on the firm’s website as a partner at the firm who has practiced in personal injury litigation for more than 30 years.⁶ Moreover, Munley’s LinkedIn profile lists her position as a “Truck Accident Lawyer, Trial Injury Attorney and Partner at Munley Law” from 1986-Present.⁷ In August 2019, Marion Munley of Munley Law was recognized by Best Lawyers as the 2020 “Lawyer of the Year” for personal injury litigation.⁸ Moreover, in 2018, Marion Munley won a \$26 million settlement in a truck accident case, which her firm touts on its website as “the highest settlement for a single plaintiff in [the] region.”⁹

In light of these facts, the Office of Congressional Ethics needs to investigate whether Rep. Cartwright deliberately omitted his wife’s income from Munley Law P.C. on Schedule C of his 2017 and 2018 PFDs in order to hide from scrutiny his financial ties to a law firm that stands to gain from the trucking liability insurance legislation he recently introduced. As the Ethics Committee’s instruction and PFD forms make clear, “Any individual who knowingly and willfully falsifies ... a required FD Statement may be subject to incarceration and/or a fine pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. § 104, and criminal sanctions under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.”¹⁰

Should the OCE conclude that Rep. Cartwright has violated these rules, we respectfully request that he be sanctioned appropriately and that he immediately correct the public record by amending his 2017 and 2018 PFD reports to include the required information regarding his spouse’s salary.

³ See 2017 and 2018 Public Financial Disclosure Reports of Rep. Cartwright available at: http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2017/9113665.pdf and http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2018/9115269.pdf.

⁴ See 2012-2016 Public Financial Disclosure Reports of Rep. Cartwright available at: http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2013/8211999.pdf, http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2013/8215478.pdf, http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2014/9107280.pdf, http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2015/9109673.pdf, http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2016/9111867.pdf.

⁵ See amendment available here: http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-pdfs/2016/9111867.pdf.

⁶ See professional biography of Marion Munley, Munley Law, available here: <https://munley.com/our-attorneys/marion-munley/>.

⁷ See LinkedIn Profile of Marion Munley available here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/marionmunley/>.

⁸ *Seven Munley Law Lawyers included in 2020 edition of Best Lawyers*, Times Leader, 8/30/19 available here: <https://www.timesleader.com/features/754121/seven-munley-law-lawyers-included-in-2020-edition-of-best-lawyers>.

⁹ See Truck Accident Lawyer, Munley Law, available here: <https://munley.com/truck-accident-lawyer/>.

¹⁰ House Ethics Committee Instruction Guide, Financial Disclosure Statements and Periodic Transaction Reports Calendar Year 2018, p. 11, available here: <https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/CY%202018%20Instruction%20Guide%20for%20Financial%20Disclosure%20Statements%20and%20PTRs.pdf>

To the best of my knowledge and ability, all evidence submitted was not obtained in violation of any law, rule, or regulation. Further, I am aware that the False Statements Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1001, applies to information submitted to the Office of Congressional Ethics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karnold". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Kendra Arnold
Executive Director, Foundation for Accountability & Civic Trust