

STATEMENT FROM COUNCILWOMAN BETH MASON

May 5, 2010

Yesterday, Councilman Ravi Bhalla accused me of committing criminal offenses and “felonies.” These outrageous accusations are totally false and nothing more than vicious lies told by Bhalla to deflect attention from his own illegal actions.

- No one was paid in cash. Not one penny.
- Every campaign worker was paid through a check issued by the campaign.
- Every check was reported on our team’s ELEC reports.
- No checks were written made payable to “cash.”

It is true that our ELEC reports mistakenly identified some checks that were paid to campaign workers as being written to “cash.” This was a clerical error made by the person completing the report, and the report will be amended.

Now, let’s take a closer look at Mr. Bhalla.

He admits that he repeatedly broke state law by failing to disclose that his law firm received hundreds of thousands of dollars in public contracts – and that he also failed to disclose thousands of dollars in political contributions he made that were related to those contracts. That’s called “pay-to-play” and Bhalla is a big time player in this corrosive system. Yet he masquerades as a reformer.

For three years in a row, Bhalla failed to comply with this fundamental pay-to-play reform law. When a reporter from the Jersey Journal called him on Friday, Bhalla first said that the law didn’t apply to him. Then he changed his story and said that he was unaware of the law. Bhalla said he never heard of it!

How can anyone believe Bhalla is telling the truth? How could he be unaware of this basic fundamental reform law that is so widely publicized? How can an attorney with so many public contracts who is also an elected official possibly be so incompetent?

This is just the latest in a series of ethical problems and conflict of interest charges that have surfaced in recent weeks. Whenever Ravi Bhalla makes any accusations against anyone, people should, “consider the source.”