

## BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust  
1717 K Street NW, Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20006

v.

MUR No. \_\_\_\_\_

Andrea Salinas  
Andrea Salinas for Oregon  
PO Box 230985  
Tigard, OR 97281

Salinas Victory Fund  
122 C Street NW, Suite 360  
Washington, DC 20001

La Mota  
4999 NE 99th Ave  
Portland, OR, 97220

### **COMPLAINT**

The Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust (FACT) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting accountability, ethics, and transparency in government and civic arenas. We request the Federal Election Commission (FEC) investigate and take appropriate enforcement actions to address apparent violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act by Andrea Salinas; Salinas’s campaign committee, Andrea Salinas for Oregon; the joint fundraising committee, Salinas Victory Fund; and a contributor described in Salinas’s campaign and joint fundraising committee’s FEC filings as “La Mota.”<sup>1</sup> Salinas’s campaign committee and her joint fundraising committee both reported in FEC filings that they accepted a contribution from “La Mota,” which appears to be either an illegal prohibited contribution or an inadequately disclosed contribution hiding the individuals responsible for making the contribution. We request the Commission investigate and immediately take enforcement actions to address these apparent violations.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Salina for Oregon, FEC Committee ID #: C00793703; Salinas Victory Fund, FEC Committee ID #: C00820902 and C00865410. The only information known about La Mota is it’s name and address.

## FACTS

Andrea Salinas's campaign committee (Andrea Salinas for Oregon) and her joint fundraising committee (Salinas Victory Fund) both reported that they accepted contributions in the amount of \$1,000 from La Mota, 4999 NE 99th Ave, Portland, OR, 97220.<sup>2</sup> It appears from the filings alone that the contributions from La Mota were either prohibited contributions or were inadequately reported to obscure the person ultimately responsible for the contributions. Andrea Salinas for Oregon and Salinas Victory Fund's FEC filings can be seen below:

NAME OF COMMITTEE (In Full) Andrea Salinas for Oregon			
<b>A.</b> Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) Newstat, Joyce, . . .		Date of Receipt M M / D D / Y Y Y Y 10 / 23 / 2022	
Mailing Address 1170 Sacramento St Apt 15D		<b>Transaction ID : 6024602</b>	
City San Francisco	State CA	Zip Code 94108-1953	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Amount of Each Receipt this Period 62.50	
Name of Employer Policy Consultant		Occupation Self Employed	
Receipt For: 2022 <input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) ▼		Election Cycle-to-Date ▼ 262.50	
<b>B.</b> Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) La Mota		Date of Receipt M M / D D / Y Y Y Y 08 / 25 / 2022	
Mailing Address 4999 NE 99Th Ave		<b>Transaction ID : 5821652</b>	
City Portland	State OR	Zip Code 97220-3377	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Amount of Each Receipt this Period 1000.00	
Name of Employer		Occupation	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo Item	

<sup>2</sup> FEC Form 3, Andrea Salinas for Oregon, Filed 1/25/23, available at: <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/fecimg/?202301259574968610>; FEC Form 3, Salinas Victory Fund, Filed 10/14/22, available at: <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/fecimg/?202210159533140709>.

NAME OF COMMITTEE (In Full) Salinas Victory Fund	
Full Name of Individual (Last, First, Middle Initial) or Full Organization Name <b>A. ActBlue</b>	
Mailing Address 14 Arrow St Ste 11	
City Cambridge	State MA
Zip Code 02138-5106	
Date of Receipt M = M / D = D / Y = Y Y Y Y 09 / 25 / 2022	
Transaction ID : 5510459E	
Amount of Each Receipt this Period 1037.50	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo Item	
Note: Above Contribution earmarked through this organization.	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. <b>C</b>	
Name of Employer (for Individual) Occupation (for Individual) Conduit total listed in Agg. field	
Receipt For: <input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) ▼	
Aggregate Year-to-Date ▼ 31500.00	
Full Name of Individual (Last, First, Middle Initial) or Full Organization Name <b>B. La Mota</b>	
Mailing Address 4999 NE 99Th Ave	
City Portland	State OR
Zip Code 97220-3377	
Date of Receipt M = M / D = D / Y = Y Y Y Y 08 / 25 / 2022	
Transaction ID : 5510462	
Amount of Each Receipt this Period 1000.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Memo Item	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. <b>C</b>	
Name of Employer (for Individual) Occupation (for Individual)	

“La Mota” was founded by Aaron Mitchell and Rosa Cazares and is the second largest cannabis dispensary chain in Oregon with 37 retail licenses.<sup>3</sup> “Cazares and Mitchell are listed in business filings as manager, registrant or member of 72 limited liability companies, or LLCs, many bearing the La Mota name. Each dispensary operates under its own LLC.”<sup>4</sup> The La Mota founders and their wide related network of LLCs have been the subject of numerous scandals and lawsuits, including being the subject of federal investigations, up to \$7 million of state and federal tax liens, and lawsuits by numerous former business partners and vendors in civil lawsuits alleging up to \$1.7 million in unpaid bills.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, La Mota’s political contributions and influence on state government came to light in 2023.<sup>6</sup> “Cazares and Mitchell had become leading campaign contributors to some of Oregon’s top elected officials, including Gov. Tina Kotek and then-Secretary of State Shemia Fagan.”<sup>7</sup> Then it was

<sup>3</sup> Sophie Peel, *The Power Couple of Oregon Cannabis Bankrolled Top Democrats Even as Their Companies’ Taxes and Bills Went Unpaid*, Willamette Week, March 29, 2023, available at: <https://www.wweek.com/news/2023/03/29/the-power-couple-of-oregon-cannabis-bankrolled-top-democrats-even-as-their-companies-taxes-and-bills-went-unpaid/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Sophie Peel, *La Mota Is Crumbling, the Feds Are Circling, and CEO Rosa Cazares Appears to Be Out*, Willamette Week, December 20, 2023, available at: <https://www.wweek.com/news/2023/12/20/la-mota-is-crumbling-the-feds-are-circling-and-ceo-rosa-cazares-appears-to-be-out/>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

also revealed that, through one of the La Mota related LLCs named Veriede Holding LLC, Cazares and Mitchell entered into a consulting contract with Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan paying her \$10,000 per month.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, it was reported that Fagan apparently attempted to influence the auditors responsible for overseeing La Mota and was forced to resign as Secretary of State.<sup>9</sup> News stories were also published listing the elected officials who had accepted contributions from Cazares and Mitchell and their PAC.<sup>10</sup> In December 2023, it was reported that federal investigators had been active in an investigation into La Mota, and although it was unclear whether it was related, Cazares claimed to have left the company.<sup>11</sup>

The La Mota address reported on both the campaign and joint fundraising committee's FEC filings corresponds to a La Mota store in Portland, Oregon.<sup>12</sup> According to the Oregon Secretary of State, the only La Mota related business at that address is an LLC named AMJWAF, LLC, which has disclosed it used the trade name "La Mota" in paperwork filed with the City of Portland's Marijuana Control Plan.<sup>13</sup> AMJWAF, LLC lists Aaron Mitchell as a Member and Rosa Cazares as a Manager.<sup>14</sup> Although it was an active LLC at the time the contributions were made, the AMJWAF, LLC is currently listed as inactive.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Id.*; Amanda Arden, *Here are the Oregon local, county and state candidates and PACs owners of La Mota have donated to*, CBS KOIN, May 3, 2023, available at: <https://www.koin.com/news/politics/here-are-all-the-candidates-and-pacs-owners-of-la-mota-have-donated-to/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Amanda Arden, *Here are the Oregon local, county and state candidates and PACs owners of La Mota have donated to*, CBS KOIN, May 3, 2023, available at: <https://www.koin.com/news/politics/here-are-all-the-candidates-and-pacs-owners-of-la-mota-have-donated-to/>.

<sup>11</sup> Sophie Peel, *La Mota Is Crumbling, the Feds Are Circling, and CEO Rosa Cazares Appears to Be Out*, Willamette Week, December 20, 2023, available at: <https://www.wweek.com/news/2023/12/20/la-mota-is-crumbling-the-feds-are-circling-and-ceo-rosa-cazares-appears-to-be-out/>.

<sup>12</sup> La Mota Store Locations, [La Mota](#), Accessed 1/11/24; FEC Form 3, Andrea Salinas for Oregon, Filed 1/25/23, available at: <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/fecimg/?202301259574968610>; FEC Form 3, Salinas Victory Fund, Filed 10/14/22, available at: <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/fecimg/?202210159533140709>. Note: La Mota refers to the specific store as it's "NE Portland" location.

<sup>13</sup> AMJWAF, LLC, [Oregon Secretary Of State](#), Accessed 1/23/24; "City Of Portland Marijuana Control Plan," [Portland Office Of Community & Civic Life](#), Accessed 1/23/24.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

## II. Law

Under federal law, candidates for federal office are subject to regulations that limit or prohibit contributions from and interactions with individuals, groups, and organizations. Federal candidates are prohibited from soliciting or accepting contributions (1) from an individual or a non-multicandidate PAC in excess of \$2,900, (2) from a multicandidate PAC in excess of \$5,000, or (3) from any corporation or labor organization in any amount.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, corporations (and those treated as corporations) are also prohibited from making contributions to federal candidates.<sup>17</sup> A contribution is broadly defined to include any services or things of value, including a money donation given to a campaign.<sup>18</sup>

With respect to a Limited Liability Company (LLC), it may either be treated as (1) a corporation that is prohibited from making contributions or (2) a partnership that may make a contribution, but that contribution must be attributed to the “partners” and it is subject to the individual contribution limit.<sup>19</sup> An LLC is treated as a corporation if it has publicly traded shares or has chosen to file as a corporation under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules, and is generally prohibited from making political contributions.<sup>20</sup> An LLC is treated as a partnership if it has chosen to file as a partnership or has made no choice as to whether it is a corporation or partnership under IRS rules.<sup>21</sup> If treated as a partnership, the LLC may make a political contribution so long as it notifies the recipient that (1) the LLC is eligible to make a contribution, and (2) how the contribution should be attributed among its individual members—this required disclosure can prevent campaigns from inadvertently accepting an illegal contribution.<sup>22</sup> On its FEC filing, the campaign accepting the contribution from the LLC must report both (1) the source of the funds, i.e. the LLC, and (2) the individual who is essentially the true source of the funds, i.e. the

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<sup>16</sup> 52 U.S.C. §§ 30101, 30118.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(7)(B). The contribution limits for 2021-2022 are available at: [https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/contribution\\_limits\\_chart\\_2021-2022.pdf](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/contribution_limits_chart_2021-2022.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Contributions are broadly defined as “(i) any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money or anything of value made by any person for the purpose of influencing any election for Federal office; or (ii) the payment by any person of compensation for the personal services of another person which are rendered to a political committee without charge for any purpose.” 11 C.F.R. § 100.52(d)(1).

<sup>19</sup> 11 C.F.R. sec. 110.1(g); Federal Election Commission, *Partnership and LLC Contributions*, available at: <https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/partnership-llc-contributions/#prohibited-partnershipllc-contributions>.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

Member of the LLC to whom the contribution is attributed.<sup>23</sup> The FEC provides the following example of how a campaign must report this type of contribution:<sup>24</sup>

SCHEDULE A (FEC Form 3) ITEMIZED RECEIPTS		FOR LINE NUMBER: (check only one)	PAGE OF
Use separate schedule(s) for each category of the Detailed Summary Page		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11a	<input type="checkbox"/> 11b
		<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 13a
		<input type="checkbox"/> 11c	<input type="checkbox"/> 11d
		<input type="checkbox"/> 13b	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
Any information copied from such Reports and Statements may not be sold or used by any person for the purpose of soliciting contributions or for commercial purposes, other than using the name and address of any political committee to solicit contributions from such committee.			
NAME OF COMMITTEE (In Full) Martha Washington for Congress			
Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) A. <b>First Ladies Partnership</b>		Date of Receipt 01 20 2018	
Mailing Address 1915 Edith Galt Way		Amount of Each Receipt this Period \$2,000.00	
City Princeton	State NJ	Zip Code 08540	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Memo Item <input type="checkbox"/>	
Name of Employer First Ladies Partnership		Election Cycle-to-Date 2018	
Occupation Partner		Amount of Each Receipt this Period \$2,000.00	
Receipt For: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) 2018		Memo Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See partnership attribution below	
Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) B. <b>Abigail Adams</b>		Date of Receipt 01 20 2018	
Mailing Address 1797 Framingham Road		Amount of Each Receipt this Period \$1,000.00	
City Braintree	State MA	Zip Code 02169	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Memo Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Name of Employer First Ladies Partnership		Election Cycle-to-Date 2018	
Occupation Partner		Amount of Each Receipt this Period \$1,000.00	
Receipt For: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) 2018		Memo Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership attribution	
Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) C. <b>Dolley Madison</b>		Date of Receipt 01 20 2018	
Mailing Address 1809 Montpelier Blvd		Amount of Each Receipt this Period \$1,000.00	
City Orange	State VA	Zip Code 22957	
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Memo Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Name of Employer First Ladies Partnership		Election Cycle-to-Date 2018	
Occupation Partner		Amount of Each Receipt this Period \$1,000.00	
Receipt For: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) 2018		Memo Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership attribution	
SUBTOTAL of Receipts This Page (optional)		\$2,000.00	
TOTAL This Period (last page this line number only)			

### III. Cause of Action

Based upon their own filings, it appears that Andrea Salinas’s campaign committee (Andrea Salinas for Oregon) and her joint fundraising campaign (Salinas Victory Fund) both either accepted a prohibited contribution from an LLC or inadequately disclosed a contribution from an LLC that hid its true attribution. The first issue is evident from the face of the campaign and the joint fundraising committee’s filings—the source of these contributions is not clear. The LLC was described as "La

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> Federal Election Commission, *How to Report Partnership Contributions*, available at: <https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/filing-reports/partnership-contributions/>.

Mota,” but the only LLC registered at the address provided is AMJWAF, LLC. If the source of the disclosed contributions was any of the La Mota related LLCs, the name and address of the LLC that was actually the source of funds making the contribution must be disclosed, which does not appear to be the case here.

Additionally, because there is only an LLC listed as the source of the contribution, it is not clear whether this is an illegal contribution or if the actual individual responsible for the contribution was improperly omitted from FEC filings. These contributions are illegal if the LLC making the contribution is treated as a corporation. If the LLC making the contribution is treated as a partnership, then Salinas’s campaign and joint fundraising committee did not adequately report the member of the LLC that the contribution should be attributed to, thus hiding the true funding source. While the inadequate reporting by the campaign and the joint fundraising committee may be inadvertent, two separate facts point to it being intentional: (1) both the campaign **and** the joint fundraising committee happened to suspiciously report it incorrectly in the exact same manner; and (2) both clearly had motive to obscure the individuals that were the source of the funds—the true source of the funds having been involved in numerous legal proceedings and investigations.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The Salinas campaign committee and her joint fundraising committee both reported in FEC filings that they accepted a contribution from “La Mota,” which appears to be either a prohibited contribution or one that they did not fully and accurately disclose, which led to the hiding of the true individuals responsible for making the contribution. FACT respectfully requests the Commission immediately investigate and hold the Respondents accountable.

Respectfully submitted,

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Foundation for Accountability & Civic Trust  
By, Kendra Arnold, Executive Director  
1717 K Street NW, Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20006

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_                 )  
   ) ss.  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_                 )

Subscribed and sworn to before me on January \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

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Notary Public in and for the State of \_\_\_\_\_