

The Daily Tar Heel

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Serving the students and the University community since 1893
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Tuesday, November 18, 1975

Weather: cloudy and warm

Bates denies violating laws



Student Body President Bill Bates (right) denied that he had violated campaign spending laws in the spring 1975 election. He accused the former student body treasurer of supplying false information to reporters.

Accuses Mike O'Neal of supplying misinformation to campus publications

by Vernon Loeb
Staff Writer

Student Body President Bill Bates accused former Student Body Treasurer Mike O'Neal Monday of supplying false information to *Carolina* magazine and the *Daily Tar Heel*, which stated that Bates violated campaign spending laws during last spring's run-off election.

Both publications received an unsigned statement last week alleging that Bates willfully omitted expenditures from his campaign spending report, and that "these unreported expenditures placed Mr. Bates in violation of the Student General Election Laws."

However, O'Neal said Monday, he had not seen the statement, which according to *Carolina* co-editor Elliott Warnock, was the basis of a *Carolina* story Thursday which said Bates "may have violated campaign spending laws."

The unsigned statement alleged that Bates overspent the \$125 run-off election spending limit by \$45.30 for two unreported campaign expenses.

First, it alleged that, although Bates reported a \$122.94 expenditure to Chase Printers, he did not report an additional \$18 also paid to the printers. Included with the statement sent to both publications were photocopies of Bates' campaign spending report and a Chase Printers receipt for the additional \$18 payment.

The statement also contended that Bates failed to report expenses for eight endorsement letters which it said were distributed in residence areas the night prior to the run-off election. A conservative estimate of the cost of these letters would be \$27.36, the statement said.

Bates said if he could prove O'Neal wrote the statement, he would consider taking him to court for libel.

Carolina reported that Bates' failure to report the additional expenditure to Chase Printers and his failure to report the endorsement letters' expense "may" have constituted violations of campaign spending laws and "if" this is true, "the implications could be serious."

Bates said the additional \$18 payment to Chase Printers might have been a campaign expenditure and, if so, he would have exceeded the \$125 run-off spending limit.

He added, however, that he deliberately did not use approximately \$27 worth of printed materials in the campaign and that not using those materials kept him within the spending limit.

Elections Board Chairperson Brooke

Bynum said Monday a precedent has been established whereby candidates are not required to report the expenditures for materials not used in a campaign.

Ricky Bryant, Elections Board chairperson during last spring's election, said he agreed with Bynum's interpretation and added that the election laws leave much to individual interpretation.

As for the unreported expenditures for the endorsement letters, Bates said they were distributed prior to the regular election and not the run-off election as the unsigned statement and *Carolina* magazine reported. Expenditures for the letters were reported as regular election expenses, Bates said. The spending limit for the regular election was \$250.

He noted that each letter urged students to vote on Wednesday while the run-off election was held on a Monday.

While photocopies of the endorsement letters were sent with the statement apparently to prove that Bates violated election law spending limits during the run-off election, the letters' reference to a Wednesday as the election day disproves the allegation.

Bates said the unsigned statement, which he attributed to O'Neal, was libelous and part of a slur campaign. "What bothers me is that O'Neal didn't go through the Elections Board or the Supreme Court, but through the press."

Dean of the journalism school John B. Adams, an expert in libel law, said he thinks the unsigned statement is libelous. But he added that even if Bates knew who wrote the statement, it would be difficult to win a libel suit in state court.

After denying Bates charges, O'Neal said all documents that accompanied the unsigned statement were part of the public record and not documents that only O'Neal would have access to.

O'Neal helped direct Bates' campaign last spring. He also set up Bates' account with Chase Printers during the election.

The anonymous statement was received first by *Carolina* magazine late last Wednesday, Warnock said, after he was told by an unidentified phone caller that information for an article could be found in the *Dialectic Chambers* on the third floor of New West.

There, Warnock said, the unsigned statement was found with its accompanying documents. *Carolina's* article on possible spending law violations ran Thursday after reporter Dave Duckett wrote the story early Thursday morning.

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tonight is a bill to repeal the *Daily Tar Heel* Emergency Loan Fund. If passed, the bill would absolve a \$10,000 fund used to extend loans to the *DTH* in times of financial difficulties.

Lassiter, who is the CGC representative to the Media Board's committee investigating the *DTH*, said he does not think the loan fund should be eliminated. Although he does not foresee the *DTH* asking for more money, he said the money should be available in case a real crisis should arise.

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