



ANOTHER DECEPTIVE INSURANCE COMPANY TRICK

Monday, November 5, 2012

Dean Singleton
Chairman, Media News Group
101 West Colfax Ave., Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202
Via email

Mr. Singleton,

We are writing to alert you to an abuse of the Mercury News' masthead and editorial credentials by the Proposition 33 campaign yesterday.

A very deceptive "e-newsletter" was received by Mercury News subscribers that appears to be an official editorial position of the newspaper endorsing Prop 33, when the newspaper editorial board has in fact staunchly opposed Prop 33. The mysterious "e-newsletter" is attached. The email advertisement was not clearly marked as a Paid Advertisement and appears to have violated FPPC disclosure rules about such paid advertisements.

The email is either a fraud, which we suspect, or the newspaper has allowed a political campaign to inappropriately use its masthead in a mass email effort before a close election in a way that will clearly deceive subscribers.

We urge you to clarify as early as possible today how the MercuryNews.com masthead was used in this way and ask that a clarifying email be sent to your email subscribers pointing out that the Mercury News opposes Prop 33 and that any other email received was in fact a paid advertisement.

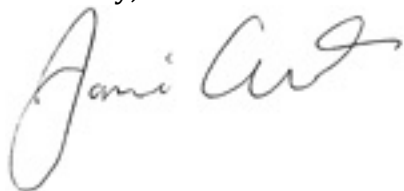
If the newspaper sanctioned this email it would be an unprecedented breach of the firewall between editorial and business operations. The graphic and headline fail to identify that it is a paid advertisement and would no doubt violate your own newspaper's guidelines for such commercial emails.

For political emails, in a close election, the stakes are even higher. The votes of your email subscribers could turn the election and they should not be misled. Yet the deceptive email notes only in tiny print at the very end that it is a "Political advertisement paid for by George Joseph." This fails to meet FPPC requirements for electronic advertisements which must disclose who is paying for the ad in a font that is the same size as the majority of the surrounding text.

If the email was in fact sent by the Mercury News, it likely constitutes an unfair business practice under various California statutes. We urge you to respond immediately as time is of the essence with the election upon us.

Thanks for your prompt consideration and response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Court". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Court
310-392-0522 x327