

September 2, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC— U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today announced that the House Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards dismissed the Lane County Republican Party (LCRP) complaint about his congressional mailings. The bi-partisan Commission notified the LCRP in a letter stating the Commission found no violation of the franking law occurred and, therefore, dismissed the complaint.

On August 16th, the LCRP filed a complaint with the House Franking Commission alleging DeFazio had violated House rules by sending out mass communications within 90 days of an election, while seeking the endorsement of the Independent Party of Oregon (IPO). For the first time this year, Oregon became one of several states to permit “cross-nomination.” This process allows a candidate to appear on the general election ballot as the nominee of more than one political party. In July, the Independent Party conducted an internal on-line party nomination process to select general election nominees. The LCRP complaint alleged that the on-line selection process constituted an official election under state law.

However, according to the Franking Commission, it has consistently treated only official State-conducted elections and State-issued ballots as triggering the application of the 90-day cut-off rule. DeFazio’s response to the complaint included a letter from the Director of Elections in the Oregon Secretary of State’s office who stated, “This election was not administrated by the Oregon Secretary of State, and was not in any way an official election. These are not considered elections under Oregon election law, as the state only conducts primary elections for the two major parties.”

Under Oregon state law and House rules, the Independent Party’s on-line nominating process is a purely internal party nominating process and is not subject to the 90-day cut-off.

“The IPO process was unique and unprecedented. As a result, there was a lot of confusion around it,” DeFazio said. “I have always strived to live up to the highest ethical standards and I appreciate the Commission’s quick dispatch addressing the concerns raised by the Lane County Republicans.”

A copy of the letter can be found at: <http://www.defazio.house.gov/images/stories/FINAL -- Commission letter dismissing complaint against DeFazio.pdf>