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Mormons to pay fine over support for Prop. 8

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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will pay a $5,000 fine for not reporting non-monetary contributions in support of Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in California.

The California Fair Political Practices Commission concluded the church "failed to timely report making late non-monetary contributions totaling $36,928" during the November 2008 election. It assessed a penalty of $5,539.

In a Tuesday (June 8) statement, the church acknowledged a reporting error.
"In the last two weeks leading up to the election, the Church mistakenly overlooked the daily reporting requirement for non-monetary contributions and instead reported those contributions together in a later filing," it said.

"The Church appreciates the fairness and consideration with which the Fair Political Practices Commission has addressed this oversight."

The church said the money related to staff time used by church employees to support the Protect Marriage coalition's "Yes on 8" initiative during the last two weeks before the election.

The Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights organization, hailed the penalty, which was scheduled to be finalized at a commission meeting on Thursday (June 10).

"While the recommended fine of just more than $5,500 for the unreported late contributions of $36,968 to the Yes on 8 campaign may seem inconsequential, it represents a pattern of blatant disregard for California election laws and provides ongoing evidence that the Mormon Church was a significant leader in the campaign to repeal marriage equality, even while it evaded standard reporting requirements and denied its involvement," the group said.

The LDS church denied any intentional wrongdoing.

"Claims that the Church misrepresented its contributions to the Protect Marriage Coalition are false," it said.

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