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July 20, 2016

Dear Station Manager:

This firm represents the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the parent organization of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI).

It has come to my attention that in the primary election for the Republican nomination to be Attorney General of Missouri, Senator Kurt Schaefer has been promulgating statements about the PMOI that are false, defamatory, and scandalous. These advertisements have been broadcast on your station, among others. Josh Hawley, his opponent, played a role as one of the many co-counsel who represented the PMOI in a successful effort to have the group removed from the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Sen. Schaefer apparently considers that work to disqualify Mr. Hawley from elective office.

Among other things, Senator Schaefer alleges that the PMOI "killed U.S. soldiers, assassinated civilians, and bombed the U.S. Embassy." These statements are completely false (it is even unclear what U.S. Embassy Sen. Schaefer believes was "bombed"). Indeed, the PMOI was placed on the FTO list in 1997 in a failed effort to curry favor with the Iranian regime. There is no evidence that the group has ever had "the capability and intent" (the statutory standard) to engage in terrorism.

Sen. Schaefer's ad notes that "Secretary [Condoleezza] Rice called them terrorists." It is true that, a few days before leaving office in 2009, Secretary Rice rejected a petition to remove the PMOI from the FTO list. It is also true that, in so doing, she invited her successor to revisit her decision, and she presented no evidence that would have justified leaving the organization on the list. That decision was overturned by the Courts. Ultimately, in 2011, the effort to have the designation removed was successful.

The implications of the advertisement are especially insidious. Sen. Schaefer suggests that Josh Hawley somehow promotes terrorism, as is shown by his work for the MEK. As of today, however, the only government in the world that considers the PMOI to be terrorist is the Iranian regime. In providing a platform for that view, Sen. Schaefer is actually supporting the most prominent state sponsor of terrorism, the mullahs in Teheran.

The PMOI is dedicated to peaceful efforts to replace the theocratic regime with a democratic, non-Islamist, non-nuclear government that honors human rights and the rights of women. Those efforts have won the passionate support of such notable American political figures as Newt Gingrich, Rudy Giuliani, Michael Mukasey, Gov. Howard Dean, and dozens of others. The PMOI counts among its friends and advocates numerous retired U.S. military officers, including four-star generals and former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Two weeks ago, I attended a rally for the PMOI outside Paris, attended also by tens of thousands of Iranian expatriates and hundreds of past and present elected officials (including the American notables I just named) from countries on every continent.



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Station Manager

July 20, 2016

Page | 2

The PMOI is no “terrorist” organization. The charge leveled by Sen. Schaefer, in apparently complete ignorance of the facts, is both grossly inaccurate and deeply offensive. It is he who has shown himself willing to keep company with supporters of terrorism, not Josh Hawley, who played a role in righting a wrong and restoring the good name of an organization committed to bringing about change in Iran.

On behalf of the PMOI, and its many supporters around the United States and around the world, I demand that this cheap political trick be withdrawn from public view, and that Senator Schaefer apologize for his gratuitous maligning of an organization committed not to terrorism, but to the overthrow and replacement of a regime that openly sponsors murders, assassinations, and bombings. If the statements are not withdrawn, it is our view that a legal action would lie for defamation, and you are so advised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven M. Schneebaum'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Steven M. Schneebaum