



PRESS RELEASE

August 19, 2026

ATTORNEY CORNELIUS MCCARTHY APPOINTED AS NEW SEEC COMMISSIONER

HARTFORD, CT – August 19, 2026. The State Elections Enforcement Commission is pleased to announce that Attorney Cornelius P. McCarthy has been appointed to serve on the State Elections Enforcement Commission (“SEEC”). Senate President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney made the appointment by letter on August 17, 2026. Mr. McCarthy’s term will run through June 30, 2028. Mr. McCarthy succeeds current SEEC Chair, Stephen T. Penny.

Mr. McCarthy is a trial and appellate litigator, admitted to the bar in California, New York, and Connecticut, and is currently counsel at Chehebar Deveney & Phillips LLP. An attorney since 1983, Mr. McCarthy has successfully tried cases in state and federal courts in areas including contract, securities, partnership, commercial, entertainment, telecommunications, and constitutional law. A former Assistant United States Attorney and clerk to the Honorable Ralph K. Winter of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, Attorney McCarthy brings extensive private practice and public service experience to his work on the Commission. Mr. McCarthy has also been a frequent commentator on public policy issues, including campaign finance. “We are pleased to welcome Attorney McCarthy to the Commission,” said Ryan Burns, Executive Director and General Counsel of the SEEC. “His deep understanding of constitutional law and decades of courtroom experience will be invaluable as we work to uphold the integrity of Connecticut’s elections and continue providing reliable guidance to campaigns and the public.”

Commissioner Stephen T. Penny, whom Mr. McCarthy will be replacing, has served on the State Elections Enforcement Commission for thirteen years, including seven years as Chair. During his tenure, Commissioner Penny has overseen numerous complex enforcement matters and guided the agency through significant developments in campaign finance law. Executive Director Ryan Burns noted, “Few individuals have done more to advance the Commission’s work than Commissioner Penny. For thirteen years, Commissioner Penny has been a pillar of integrity and a driving force behind our efforts to ensure honest and transparent elections. His contributions have immeasurably improved this agency and the public it serves, and we owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude.” Commissioner Penny is currently a law partner at Penny, Botticello & O’Brien, P.C., in Manchester.

Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7a provides that the Commission shall have five members, all appointed by different public officials. The watchdog agency is responsible for ensuring independent, non-partisan enforcement of all election law in Connecticut, as well as providing campaign finance advice and serving as the repository for all statewide campaign finance reports and committee registrations. It was created in the wake of years of scandal in Connecticut politics. Since 2005, the Commission also has been home to the Citizens’ Election Program, a groundbreaking effort to publicly finance Connecticut campaigns and restore trust in the electoral process.