

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION**

*In re. Audit Report for Committee to Elect Christina "Tita" Ayala*

File No. 2013-104

**AGREEMENT CONTAINING A CONSENT ORDER**

This Agreement by and between Lisa Quinones of the City of Bridgeport, State of Connecticut, hereinafter referred to as the Respondent, and the undersigned authorized representative of the State Elections Enforcement Commission, is entered into in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes § 4-177 (c) and Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies § 9-7b-54. In accordance herewith, the parties agree that:

1. The Commission initiated an investigation into whether Christina Ayala, a candidate for the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, or Respondent Quinones, the treasurer of Ayala's candidate committee, violated General Statutes §§ 9-606, 9-607, CEP program statutes, regulations or requirements based up on information discovered during the audit of the *Committee to Elect Christina "Tita" Ayala* candidate committee. Chief among the problems identified by the Commission's Campaign Disclosure & Audit Unit were a rent payment made with cash that should have been deposited into the candidate committee's bank account and failure of the treasurer to obtain pre-performance contracts from service vendors and to maintain the necessary documentation to support payments to campaign workers.
2. General Statutes § 9-604 requires a candidate to form a candidate committee upon becoming a candidate for office and to establish a bank account at a depository institution located within the State of Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> The committee's appointed treasurer has the obligation to deposit all contributions into the committee's bank account within 20 days of receiving them.<sup>2</sup> Payments from a committee governed by Chapter 155 must make payments to satisfy its obligations via a "check drawn by the treasurer, on the designated depository" or by a credit or debit card.<sup>3</sup> A candidate committee may use "petty cash" to satisfy small obligations, but such a petty cash fund may never exceed \$100 at any time.<sup>4</sup> In addition, a participating candidate committee may not make cash expenditures in excess of \$50.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See General Statutes § 9-604 (a) (mandating that candidate must form single candidate committee and must designate "a depository institution situated in this state as the depository for the committee's funds").

<sup>2</sup> See General Statutes § 9-606 (a) ("The treasurer of each committee shall deposit contributions in the committee's designated depository not later than twenty days after receiving them.")

<sup>3</sup> See General Statutes § 9-607 (e) (1) (requiring expenditures to be made using checks or a credit or debit card.)

<sup>4</sup> See General Statutes § 9-607 (e) (2) (limiting committees' "petty cash funds" to maximum of \$100 at any time).

<sup>5</sup> See Regulations, Connecticut State Agencies, § 9-706-2 (b) (5) (limiting individual cash expenditures to \$50).

3. General Statutes § 9-607 requires treasurers to retain all records of transactions related to expenditures for a minimum of four years from the date that the expenditure was reported.<sup>6</sup> The Commission's regulations also require that treasurers obtain contracts for any services that will cost more than \$100 and that treasurers keep contemporaneous, detailed documentation of the services performed, including invoices and records that reflect the work performed and services rendered.<sup>7</sup> The Commission may deem expenditures that lack the necessary documentation as impermissible.<sup>8</sup>
4. The Commission audited the *Committee to Elect Christina "Tita" Ayala* after the selection of the committees in the 128<sup>th</sup> General Assembly district in the random audit lottery conducted following the 2012 election cycle. Shortly after beginning the audit process, the accounts examiner noticed that the candidate committee had paid an expenditure for rent using cash. Based on the Commission's investigation, it appears that the rent payment of \$1,980 was proper, but the means by which it was paid – using cash contributions that should have been deposited into the committee's bank account first and then issuing a committee check to pay for the rent – violated the campaign finance statutes.
5. Further along in the audit process, the Commission identified several expenditures made by the candidate committee that lacked sufficient documentation as required under the Commission's regulations.
6. According to the audit findings, the candidate committee paid \$8,100 to Mercury Public Affairs for professional services. Although the candidate committee supplied an invoice for the payment, a pre-performance contract laying out the nature of goods or services that the vendor would provide as well as cost for those services was not provided.
7. The Commission's audit also found that the committee lacked the necessary documentation to support many individual service agreements that the committee entered with individual committee workers, including \$28,190 in payments to workers that lacked contracts to support the payments or timesheets showing the time worked to justify the payment.

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<sup>6</sup> See General Statutes § 9-607 (f) (imposing four year minimum on retention of records related to committee expenditures).

<sup>7</sup> See Regulations, Conn. State Agencies, § 9-607-1 (a) (State Elections Enforcement Comm'n) (creating basic requirements for documentation to substantiate expenditures for services in excess of \$100 made by committees).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

8. The Commission is authorized to impose a civil penalty of as much as \$2,000 per violation of any provisions of chapters 155 and 157.
9. The Respondent admits all jurisdictional facts and agrees that this Agreement and Order shall have the same force and effect as a final decision and Order entered into after a full hearing and shall become final when adopted by the Commission.
10. The Respondent waives:
  - a) Any further procedural steps;
  - b) The requirement that the Commission's decision contain a statement of findings of fact and conclusions of law, separately stated; and
  - c) All rights to seek judicial review or otherwise to challenge or contest the validity of the Order entered into pursuant to this Agreement.
11. Upon the Respondent's agreement to comply with the Order hereinafter stated, the Commission shall not initiate any further proceedings against her concerning this matter or any other findings that appear in the Final Audit Report for the 2012 *Committee to Elect Christina "Tita" Ayala* candidate committee.
12. It is understood and agreed that this Agreement will be submitted to the Commission for consideration at its next meeting and, if the Commission does not accept it, it is withdrawn and may not be used as an admission by the Respondent in any subsequent hearing, if the same becomes necessary.

**ORDER**

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of <sup>five</sup>~~eight~~ hundred dollars ~~\$500.00~~ (~~\$800.00~~) to the Commission and shall henceforth strictly comply with the requirements of General Statutes §§ 9-606, 9-607, as well as Commission regulation § 9-607-1.

The Respondent

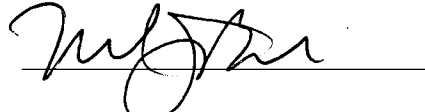
For the State of Connecticut

By:



Lisa Quinones  
318 Pleasantview St.  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

By:



Michael J. Brandi, Esq.  
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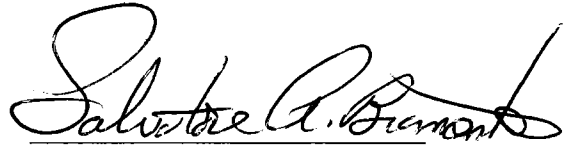
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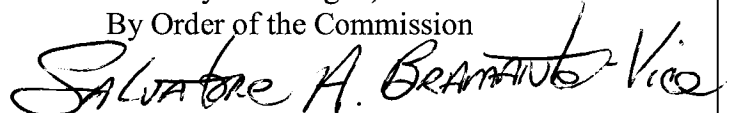
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Adopted this 14<sup>th</sup> day of DEC, 2016 at Hartford, Connecticut by vote of the Commission.



Anthony J. Castagnò, Chairman

By Order of the Commission

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ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION