

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint by Maria Pereira,
Bridgeport

File No. 2018-080

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Complainant Maria Pereira filed this Complaint pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b. The Complainant alleged violations of Connecticut election laws by individuals pertaining to their use of absentee ballots from a single address in the City of Bridgeport. After its investigation, the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. Complainant alleged that eleven individuals were using a single address in the City of Bridgeport to vote absentee ballot in various primaries and elections in Bridgeport without satisfying the requirements for voting by absentee ballot in Connecticut.
2. This Complaint was received on June 18, 2018, and an investigation was made into the use of absentee ballots, from the address and individuals identified by Complainant, in connection with the August 14, 2018 Democratic primary in Bridgeport. Five absentee ballots were identified as cast from the address by family members identified by Complainant.
3. While Complainant's allegations were, in part, based on media coverage of prior violations of absentee ballot laws by an individual, identified by Complainant as a family member connected with the alleged absentee ballot improprieties, the investigation revealed that the individual did not reside with her family members and voted in person on August 14, 2018.
4. General Statutes § 9-135, provides eligibility requirements for voting by absentee ballot: *(a) Any elector eligible to vote at a primary or an election and any person eligible to vote at a referendum may vote by absentee ballot if he or she is unable to appear at his or her polling place during the hours of voting for any of the following reasons: (1) His or her active service with the armed forces of the United States; (2) his or her absence from the town of his or her voting residence during all of the hours of voting; (3) his or her illness; (4) his or her physical disability; (5) the tenets of his or her religion forbid secular activity on the day of the primary, election or referendum; or (6) the required performance of his or her duties as a primary, election or referendum official, including as a town clerk or registrar of voters or as staff of the clerk or registrar, at a polling place other than his or her own during all of the hours of voting at such primary, election or referendum.*

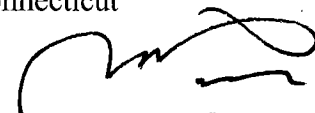
5. The Commission finds, after investigation, on the five absentee ballot applications the reason for voting by absentee ballot identified by four individuals was “my absence from town during all hours of voting.” One individual identified “my physical disability” as their reason for using an absentee ballot in the 126th voting district for the August 14, 2018 Democratic primary in the City of Bridgeport.
6. The Commission further finds that the individual applicant who identified their physical disability was 84 years old and was demonstrably wheel chair bound. Additionally, in the course of the investigation two individuals asserted that they were participating in a “family event” in North Carolina on primary day.
7. These same two individuals also asserted that each of the four individuals, who were identified by Complainant from the same address and used “absence from town” for their eligibility for voting absentee ballot, were indeed all family members and who attended the same North Carolina function. The Commission found a lack of evidence to contradict the written and oral statements of the two individual family members.
8. The Commission finds evidence that three of the five individuals appeared to have credible explanations and reasons for meeting the eligibility requirements pursuant to General Statutes § 9-135 for voting by absentee ballot in the 126 voting district at the August 14, 2018 Bridgeport Democratic primary. Further, the Commission finds credible evidence that the two additional family members who voted by absentee ballot from the same address, more likely than not, satisfied the requirements for doing so.
9. The Commission concludes, for the findings and conclusions detailed herein, that Complainant’s allegations remain unsubstantiated after investigation. The Commission therefore determines that this matter should be dismissed.

ORDER

The following Order is recommended on the basis of the aforementioned finding:

That the complaint is dismissed.

Adopted this 17th day of July 2019, at Hartford, Connecticut



Stephen T. Penny
By Order of the Commission