

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint by Maria Pereira,
Bridgeport

File No. 2018-081

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Complainant Maria Pereira filed this Complaint pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b. The Complainant alleged violations pertaining to meeting the eligibility requirements for voting by absentee ballot pursuant to General Statutes § 9-135, 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. By way of background, Complainant claimed that nine absentee ballots were issued to individuals using a single address in the City of Bridgeport to vote by absentee ballots in the 124th voting district at the August 14, 2018 Democratic primary. Further, Complainant claimed that the use of nine absentee ballots from one residence was “extremely unusual.” Finally, she claimed that the fact that six siblings, from that address, all listed their “disabilities” as eligibility for voting by absentee ballot was suspect.
2. Additionally, Complainant alleged absentee ballot application irregularities based on the issuance of two absentee ballots to the same individual at that same address that lead to the voiding of an absentee ballot according to municipal employees and records. Finally, Complainant based her allegations on personal interviews of individuals living at the single address.
3. 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.*

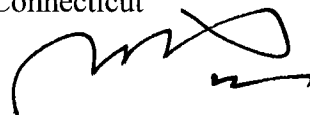
4. The Commission finds that eight individuals, from the address in question, completed absentee ballot applications for the August 14, 2018 Bridgeport Democratic primary. The Commission finds that each applicant indicated "My Illness" as the reason for voting in the 124th voting district by absentee ballot.
5. The investigation identified two, of the five individuals whose absentee ballots were returned for the August 14, 2014 Bridgeport Democratic primary, as suffering from demonstrable chronic illness.
6. Additionally, five individuals provided sworn statements that confirmed their signatures and handwriting on absentee ballot applications. Further, they confirmed that they were not assisted with completing and returning absentee ballots and volunteered to Commission staff the nature of their various illnesses.
7. While the Commission finds that one of the eight individuals was not fully cooperative with the Commission staff, on balance, the majority of individuals from the address in question appeared to have credible reasons for meeting the eligibility requirements pursuant to General Statutes § 9-135 for voting by absentee ballot.
8. Further, the Commission finds a lack of evidence that the eight individual applicants were coerced into falsely claiming eligibility to vote by absentee ballot, pursuant to General Statutes § 9-135, in connection with the August 14, 2018 Bridgeport Democratic primary.
9. The Commission concludes, as 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