

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

In the Matter of a Complaint by  
Monica Egan, Cheshire

File No. 2018-095

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Complainant brought this complaint pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b alleging that the candidate committee of Melissa Ziobron failed to report the use of campaign signs. Complainant alleged that the Ziobron campaign committee failed to properly provide a valuation for the lawn signs used in the 2016 campaign and report them in as expenses paid by the candidate. After the investigation of the complaint, the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. Melissa H. Ziobron registered the candidate committee “MZ 2018” (hereinafter “Committee”) with the Commission on February 13, 2018. The Committee was registered for Ziobron’s candidacy for election to the 33<sup>rd</sup> state senatorial district at November 6, 2018 election and Laurie Miller was designated its treasurer.<sup>1</sup>
2. Ziobron participated in the Citizens’ Election Program (CEP) and received a grant from the Citizens’ Election Fund (CEF) for her senatorial campaign for the November 6, 2018 election.
3. Complainant alleged that the candidate reused lawn signs from her 2016 state representative campaign without providing and reporting a valuation of the signs as expenses paid by the candidate. Further, Complainant alleged that the Committee failed to disclose and report that the candidate and the Committee paid the CEF for reuse of the sign as advised by the Commission.<sup>2</sup>
4. Finally, Complainant alleged that the Committee failed to disclose the identities of its contributors, as required by General Statutes § 9-608.
5. By way of background, Complainant filed this complaint after seeing Ziobron’s campaign Facebook page on or about October 10, 2018 that included screen shots of the campaign re-purposing 2016 campaign signs for use in the 2018 campaign and included the caption “*We are almost out of signs! So we are reusing some old ones. I will always treat your tax dollars carefully! Want a sign? Let me know!...*”.

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<sup>1</sup> See “MZ 2018”, *Registration by Candidate* (SEEC FORM 1), filed with the Commission on February 13, 2018. The registration was amended on the same date to add Dave Balthazar as deputy treasurer of the Committee.

<sup>2</sup> See *Affidavit of Complaint* (SEEC) by Monica Egan (Rec’d October 31, 2018).

6. General Statutes § 9-608 in pertinent part, provides:

(a) (1) Each treasurer of a committee, other than a state central committee, shall file a statement, sworn under penalty of false statement with the proper authority in accordance with the provisions of section 9-603, ... Each statement filed under subsection (a), (e) or (f) of this section shall include, but not be limited to: (A) An itemized accounting of each contribution, if any, including the full name and complete address of each contributor and the amount of the contribution; **(B) an itemized accounting of each expenditure**, ... [Emphasis added.]

7. By way of background, Complainant cited the Commission website to substantiate the alleged violations by Ziobron and the Committee, and provided the following excerpts:

*"Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Lawn Sign Valuation Provision in Public Act 10-01"*  
*"If you have already received a grant, you should report your custody and control over lawn signs in the Form 30 covering the filing period in which the committee gained custody and control using Section O: Campaign Expenses Paid by Candidate, as described above. You should write a check to the Citizens' Election Fund for the applicable amount as follows:...*

- *100 or more lawn signs for office of state senator - \$500...*

*The treasurer should provide a brief cover letter indicating that the check is for payment for old lawn signs and should provide a description in the note field of the check (i.e. `payment for 51 old lawn signs"). The committee check will be reported in Section N: Committee Expenditures of the SEEC Form 30. You should use the code "CEF" along with a description of the expenditure (i.e. "payment for 51 old lawn signs")."*

8. Upon investigation, the Commission finds that the Committee disclosed a payment in the amount of \$500.00 for "using signs" on its January 10, 2019 filing for the period of November 6, 2018 thru December 31, 2018.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See "MSZ 2018," *Itemized Campaign Finance Disclosure Statement* (SEEC Form 30), received January 11, 2019.

9. Further, the Commission finds that the Committee disclosed in Section N of the above January 10<sup>th</sup> filing that the payee was the State of Connecticut and the purpose for the expenditure coded as a reimbursement. The filing was made by the Committee's treasurer Laurie Miller.<sup>4</sup>
10. The Commission finds that the reporting of the reuse of signs by the Committee addresses the issues that originally gave rise to this complaint. Further, the Commission finds that the valuation and disclosure of the reuse of signs from the 2016 election cycle for use at the November 6, 2018 election, as well as reimbursement to the State for such reuse, is consistent with published advice and instructions by the Commission to CEP participants under such circumstances.
11. The Commission strongly encourages both Melissa Ziobron and Laurie Miller to review all of the requirements of candidates and treasurers pertaining to the CEP and the use of CEF grants. The Commission notes that as early as October 15, 2018 the Committee was taking steps to reuse 2016 campaign signs for the 2018 election and therefore could have reported the valuation and reimbursement for the reuse of signs in a timely manner on the Committee's financial disclosure statement for the period of October 1, 2018 thru October 16, 2018; which would have predated the filing of this complaint with the Commission.
12. The Commission nevertheless concludes that Melissa Ziobron and Laurie Miller, as the Committee treasurer, ultimately satisfied the requirements for the valuation, disclosure and reimbursement pertaining to the reuse of 2016 campaign signs for the November 6, 2018 election as required of CEP participants.
13. The Commission, in these narrow and specific circumstances, therefore declines to take further action regarding the allegations of this complaint.

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<sup>4</sup> See Id., at page 10.

**ORDER**

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

That no further action is taken pertaining to this matter.

Adopted this 18 day of September of 2019 at Hartford, Connecticut.

  
Salvatore Bramante  
By Order of the Commission