

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint by Karen Jackson, Bridgeport

File No. 2019-127

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Complainant filed the instant complaint with the Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7b. The Complainant alleged that Respondent Maria Pereira was taking possession of absentee ballots of others. The following are the Commission's findings of fact and conclusions of law:

PARTIES

1. At all times relevant hereto, Respondent Maria Pereira was an elector in the City of Bridgeport.

ALLEGATION

2. The Complainant alleged Respondent was taking possession of absentee ballots of others.
3. Specifically, Complainant alleged that a witness had seen and taken video of Maria Pereira taking possession of absentee ballots for the 2019 Democratic Primary in the City of Bridgeport.¹

STATEMENT OF THE LAW

4. General Statutes § 9-140b (d) in chapter 145 provides:

(d) No person shall have in his possession any official absentee ballot or ballot envelope for use at any primary, election or referendum except the applicant to whom it was issued, the Secretary of the State or his or her authorized agents, any official printer of absentee ballot forms and his designated carriers, the United States Postal Service, any other carrier, courier or messenger service recognized and approved by the Secretary of the State, any person authorized by a municipal clerk to receive and process official absentee ballot forms on behalf of the municipal clerk, any authorized primary, election or referendum official or any other person authorized by any provision of the general statutes to possess a ballot or ballot envelope.

¹ This final decision of the Commission relates solely to the allegations contained within the Complaint under Commission file number 2019-127. Other cases concerning the Respondent and concerning the 2019 Democratic Primary in the City of Bridgeport shall be addressed separately.

5. General Statutes § 9-359 further provides that:

Any (1) person who executes an absentee ballot for the purpose of informing any other person how he votes, or procures any absentee ballot to be prepared for such purpose, (2) municipal clerk or moderator, elector appointed to count any absentee ballot or other person who wilfully attempts to ascertain how any elector marked his absentee ballot or how it was cast, (3) person who unlawfully opens or fills out, except as provided in section 9-140a with respect to a person unable to write, any elector's absentee ballot signed in blank, (4) person designated under section 9-140a who executes an absentee ballot contrary to the elector's wishes, or (5) person who wilfully violates any provision of chapter 145, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

6. On September 10, 2019, the City of Bridgeport held a primary for the selection of Democratic nominees to municipal office in that city, including the office of Mayor (the "2019 Bridgeport Democratic Primary").
7. As part of that primary, some Bridgeport electors that were enrolled in the Democratic Party requested absentee ballots in order to participate in the 2019 Bridgeport Democratic Primary.
8. On or about September 26, 2019, the Complainant filed the instant complaint with the Commission.
9. The only supporting evidence supporting this particular complaint was that a witness had allegedly recorded the Respondent taking possession of others absentee ballots on video.
10. Commission investigators did obtain a copy of the video in question as a part of this investigation (the "Pereira Video").
11. The Pereira Video did show Maria Pareira in possession of an absentee ballot envelope while walking down the street.
12. The serial number of that absentee ballot was visible in the Pereira Video.
13. When Commission investigators compared the serial number of the absentee ballot envelope displayed in the Pereira Video to the original absentee ballot documents retained by the City of Bridgeport, it was revealed that the absentee ballot envelope visible in the Pereira Video was, in fact, the absentee ballot that had been issued by the City of Bridgeport to the Respondent.

14. The Commission discovered no other evidence, in connection with the instant complaint, that the Respondent improperly took possession of the absentee ballot of another.

CONCLUSION

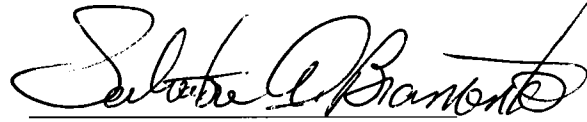
15. Based upon the foregoing, the Commission concludes that this matter should be dismissed.

ORDER

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

That this matter be dismissed.

Adopted this 16th day of September, 2020 at Hartford, Connecticut.



~~Anthony J. Castagno, Chairperson~~

By Order of the Commission

Salvatore Bramante, Vice Chair