

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

In the Matter of a Complaint by David Harden, Stratford

File No. 2019-137

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The Complainant, David Harden, filed the instant complaint with the Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7b. The Complainant alleged that Respondents Kathleen Calahan, Karen Tracy, Stephanie Philips, Steven Taccogna, and James Simon violated General Statutes § 9-621.<sup>1</sup> The following are the Commission's findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. At all times relevant hereto, *Voices of Stratford PAC* was a durational political slate committee registered in the Town of Stratford to make expenditures concerning the November 11, 2019 election.
2. On or about July 24, 2019, Respondents Kathleen Callahan and Karen Tracy registered the *Voices of Stratford PAC* as a political slate committee within the Town of Stratford Town Clerk.
3. From on or about July 24, 2019 through on or about October 1, 2019, Respondent Kathleen Callahan was the chairperson of *Voices of Stratford PAC*.
4. From on or about July 24, 2019 through on or about October 1, 2019, Respondent Karen Tracy was the treasurer of *Voices of Stratford PAC*.
5. From on or about July 24, 2019 through on or about October 1, 2019, Respondent Stephanie Phillips was the deputy treasurer of *Voices of Stratford PAC*.
6. From October 1, 2019 through its termination Respondent Stephanie Phillips was the chairperson of *Voices of Stratford PAC*.
7. At all times relevant hereto, Respondent James L. Simon was a candidate for municipal office in the Town of Stratford.
8. The Complaint alleges that Respondent Steven Taccogna was the deputy treasurer of "Voices for Stratford." However, the investigation did not reveal evidence that Respondent Taccogna ever held a formal position within *Voices of Stratford PAC* or had any liability for the allegations contained in the Complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> The complaint also makes allegations concerning "Title 18 of the US Code chapter 63" and "mail fraud." As these allegations are beyond the jurisdiction of the Commission such allegations are not addressed herein.

9. Complainant alleged that Respondents “distributed literature by mail without proper attribution and attribution approve.”
10. Complainant further stated that he “filed the proper paperwork (SEEC form 3) with the Town Clerk in Stratford, to remove myself from the Voices of Stratford PAC.”
11. Complainant further stated that “[t]he entire board of Voices for Stratford was given sufficient notification for removal of my name to ALL political distributions.”
12. General Statutes § 9-621 (a) provides:

No individual shall make or incur any expenditure with the consent of, in coordination with or in consultation with any candidate, candidate committee or candidate's agent, no group of two or more individuals acting together that receives funds or makes or incurs expenditures not exceeding one thousand dollars in the aggregate and has not formed a political committee shall make or incur any expenditure, and no candidate or committee shall make or incur any expenditure including an organization expenditure for a party candidate listing, as defined in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (25) of section 9-601, for any written, typed or other printed communication, or any web-based, written communication, which promotes the success or defeat of any candidate's campaign for nomination at a primary or election or promotes or opposes any political party or solicits funds to benefit any political party or committee unless such communication bears upon its face as a disclaimer (1) the words “paid for by” and the following: (A) In the case of such an individual, the name and address of such individual; (B) in the case of a committee other than a party committee, the name of the committee and its treasurer; (C) in the case of a party committee, the name of the committee; or (D) in the case of a group of two or more individuals that receives funds or makes or incurs expenditures not exceeding one thousand dollars in the aggregate and has not formed a political committee, the name of the group and the name and address of its agent, and (2) the words “approved by” and the following: (A) In the case of an individual, group or committee other than a candidate committee making or incurring an expenditure with the consent of, in coordination with or in consultation with any candidate, candidate committee or candidate's agent, the name of the candidate; or (B) in the case of a candidate committee, the name of the candidate.

13. The Commission investigation of this matter revealed that Complainant had, in fact, submitted a new candidate registration form indicating that his campaign was no longer financed by *Voices for Stratford PAC* on or about September 24, 2019.
14. On or prior to September 24, 2019, several orders for campaign advertisements had been placed with vendors on behalf of *Voices for Stratford PAC*.

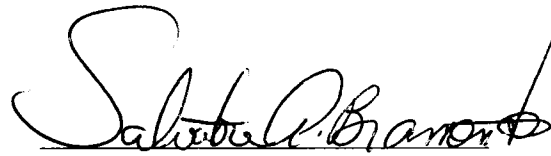
15. Evidence collected in the course of the investigation revealed that, upon being apprised change status of *Voices for Stratford PAC*, Respondent Phillips attempt to correct the attributions that were to included on the mailers not yet transmitted. However, due to the printing schedules and errors in communication between the vendor and the political committee, two mailers were transmitted that included Complainant's name in the attribution.
16. While the Commission takes seriously the requirements to accurately attribute campaign communications, the Commission also takes note of the Respondents' good faith attempt to comply with the law and the affirmative steps that Respondents took in attempting to comply.
17. Accordingly, it is the determination of the Commission that no further action should be taken with regard to this matter.

ORDER

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

That no further action should be taken with regard to this matter.

Adopted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2020 at Hartford, Connecticut.



~~Anthony J. Castagno, Chairperson~~

By Order of the Commission

*Salvatore A. Bramante, Vice Chair*