

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Referral by the West Hartford Registrar of Voters

File No. 2020-076A

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Referring Officials, the West Hartford Registrars of Voters, filed the instant Referral with the Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7b. The following are the Commission's findings of fact and conclusions of law:

ALLEGATIONS

1. The Referring Officials alleged that the Respondent Christopher Bradford, Jr. appeared to have attempted to vote twice during the November 3, 2020 general election.
2. In the course of investigating this matter, evidence suggested that the election day registration ballot for Christopher Bradford, Jr. was not counted but should have been.

LAW

3. General Statutes § 9-360 prohibits casting more than one ballot in an election and provides:

Any person not legally qualified who fraudulently votes in any town meeting, primary, election or referendum in which the person is not qualified to vote, and any legally qualified person who, at such meeting, primary, election or referendum, fraudulently votes more than once at the same meeting, primary, election or referendum, shall be fined not less than three hundred dollars or more than five hundred dollars and shall be imprisoned not less than one year or more than two years and shall be disfranchised. Any person who votes or attempts to vote at any election, primary, referendum or town meeting by assuming the name of another legally qualified person shall be guilty of a class D felony and shall be disfranchised.

4. General Statutes § 9-19j (e) (2) details the process by which election officials handle election day registrations of individuals that are registered as voters in a different municipality and provides:

If the registrars of voters determine that such applicant is an elector in another municipality and such applicant states that he or she wants to change the municipality in which the applicant is an elector, notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-21, the registrars of voters of the municipality in which such elector now seeks to register shall immediately notify the registrars of voters in such other municipality that such elector is changing the municipality in which the applicant is an elector. The registrars of voters in such other municipality shall notify the

election officials in such municipality to remove such elector from the official voter list of such municipality. Such election officials shall cross through the elector's name on such official voter list and mark "off" next to such elector's name on such official voter list.

(A) If it is reported that such applicant already voted in such other municipality, the registrars of voters of such other municipality shall immediately notify the registrars of voters of the municipality in which such elector now seeks to register. In such event, such elector shall not receive an election day registration ballot from the registrars of voters of the municipality in which such elector now seeks to register. For any such elector, the election day registration process shall cease in the municipality in which such elector now seeks to register and such matter shall be reviewed by the registrars of voters in the municipality in which such elector now seeks to register. After completion of such review, if a resolution of the matter can not be made, such matter shall be reported to the State Elections Enforcement Commission which shall conduct an investigation of the matter.

(B) If there is no such report that such applicant already voted in the other municipality, the registrars of voters of the municipality in which the applicant seeks to register shall admit the applicant as an elector and the privileges of an elector shall attach immediately.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

5. At all times relevant hereto Christopher Bradford, Sr., born August 11, 1958, was a resident and an elector in the Town of Tolland.
6. Sometime prior to November 3, 2020, Christopher Bradford, Sr. voted in the general election being held on November 3, 2020 by submitting an absentee ballot to the Tolland Town Clerk.
7. At all times relevant hereto Christopher Bradford, Jr., born June 13, 1993, was the son of Christopher Bradford, Sr.
8. From on or before January of 2020 through August of 2020, Christopher Bradford, Jr. resided in Tolland with his parents.
9. In or about August of 2020, Christopher Bradford, Jr. moved to a new residence in West Hartford.
10. On or about November 3, 2020, Christopher Bradford, Jr. went to the election day registration ("EDR") location for the Town of West Hartford.

11. When Christopher Bradford, Jr. arrived at the EDR location for the Town of West Hartford, he indicated to a poll worker that he had moved from Tolland to West Hartford and that he would like to register as a voter in West Hartford and vote in the election being held that day.
12. In response to Christopher Bradford, Jr.'s request, a poll worker at the West Hartford EDR location provided Mr. Bradford a voter registration application ("VRA"), which Mr. Bradford immediately filled out and returned to a poll worker.
13. The VRA completed by Christopher Bradford, Jr. at the West Hartford EDR location included his correct date of birth, current address in West Hartford, and also included his prior address in Tolland.
14. Based upon the information provided in Christopher Bradford, Jr.'s VRA, a poll worker at the EDR location in West Hartford called the Town of Tolland Registrars of Voters to confirm whether Christopher Bradford, Jr. was a registered voter there and whether he had voted in the election that day.
15. When the poll worker in West Hartford placed the call to the Tolland Registrars of Voters, no one was available to answer the phone and the West Hartford poll worker left a message indicating the name, date of birth, and prior address of Christopher Bradford, Jr. and indicated that he was attempting to vote via EDR in West Hartford. The information conveyed to the Tolland Registrars of Voters was confirmed by contemporary documentation maintained by the West Hartford Registrars of Voters.
16. Having not received an answer from the Town of Tolland, the poll workers in West Hartford allowed Mr. Bradford to complete an EDR ballot.
17. An EDR ballot is substantially similar to an absentee ballot and is kept inside an identifying envelope until such ballots are counted.
18. Sometime after Christopher Bradford, Jr. had left the West Hartford EDR location, an individual with the Tolland Registrars of Voters office called the West Hartford EDR location and erroneously stated that Christopher Bradford, Jr. had already cast a ballot in the Town of Tolland.
19. Based upon the erroneous representation of the Tolland Registrars of Voters Office, the poll workers at the West Hartford EDR location removed Christopher Bradford, Jr.'s ballot from those to be counted.

20. On or about November 9, 2020, the West Hartford Registrars of Voters referred this matter to the Commission, requesting that the Commission investigate whether Christopher Bradford had attempted to vote twice in the November 3, 2020 general election.

DISCUSSION

21. After reviewing the evidence, it is clear that Christopher Bradford, Jr. did not attempt to vote twice in the November 3, 2020 election. Rather, when the Tolland Registrars of Voters checked whether Christopher Bradford, Jr. had voted in the November 3, 2020 election, the Tolland elections officials confused Christopher Bradford, Sr., who had voted in Tolland, with Christopher Bradford, Jr., who had not.
22. Based upon the erroneous information provided by the Tolland Registrars of Voters, the West Hartford Registrars of Voters removed Christopher Bradford, Jr.'s ballot from those to be counted. As a result of the error by the Tolland Registrars of Voters, Christopher Bradford, Jr.'s ballot was not counted in the November 3, 2020 election and Mr. Bradford was disenfranchised.
23. Accordingly, it is the determination of the Commission that the allegations against Christopher Bradford Jr. be dismissed.
24. It is further the determination of the Commission that the allegations against the West Hartford Registrars of Voters be dismissed.

ORDER

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

That the allegations in this matter concerning Respondents Christopher Bradford, Jr., Beth Kyle, and Patrice Peterson be dismissed.

Adopted this 17th day of November, 2021 at Hartford, Connecticut.



Stephen T. Penny
By Order of the Commission