

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint by Thomas L. Brown
Danbury

File No. 2021-121

AGREEMENT CONTAINING CONSENT ORDER

This agreement by and between Sedeaka Lawrence of the City of Danbury, County of Fairfield, State of Connecticut (hereinafter "Respondent") and the authorized representative of the State Elections Enforcement Commission is entered into in accordance with § 9-7b-54 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies and § 4-177(c) of the General Statutes of Connecticut. In accordance herewith, the parties agree that:

1. Complainant Thomas L. Brown of Danbury filed this complaint on April 26, 2021, alleging that mailers that promoted Sedeaka Lawrence for the mayor's office in Danbury did not carry the proper disclaimers as required under General Statutes § 9-621. The mailers were distributed via mail to residents of Danbury.
2. Respondent Lawrence created a candidate committee to run for the office of mayor in the 2021 municipal election cycle. Lawrence filed that paperwork with the Danbury Town Clerk's office on February 16, 2021. In the filing, he named Diana Campbell as the committee's treasurer.
3. Respondent Campbell acknowledged that she served as the treasurer of the committee. She said that in her role as treasurer for the committee, she did not handle any contributions to the committee and did not make any expenditures on behalf of the committee. Early in 2022, however, Campbell relocated to Spring, Texas, and has no current plans to return to Connecticut.
4. Over the course of the 2021 election cycle, Lawrence stated that he spent as much as \$6,000 of his personal funds on mailers that he sent to individuals in Danbury as well as other advertising. Lawrence said that he did not receive any contributions from individuals to promote his candidacy and used only his own money.

5. General Statutes § 9-621 (a) states, in relevant part:

(a) No . . . candidate or committee shall make or incur any expenditure . . . 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: . . . (B) in the case of a committee other than a party committee, the name of the committee and its treasurer; . . . and (2) the words "approved by" and the following: . . . (B) in the case of a candidate committee, the name of the candidate.

6. Based on the above, the communication sent out by Lawrence should have stated "paid for by" the candidate committee and the name of the treasurer as well as "approved by" the candidate. The Lawrence candidate committee sent out the mailer without the requisite attributions required by the statute.
7. In addition, General Statutes § 9-607 (k) allows a candidate to pay for expenditures that promote his candidacy. When the candidate makes a payment, however, the candidate must report within the same reporting period any expenditures that exceed \$50 to the treasurer, who in turn must include those expenses paid by the candidate on the committee's relevant campaign finance disclosure statement.
8. Respondent Lawrence failed to provide the treasurer with information regarding the funds that he had spent to promote his candidacy as required under General Statutes § 9-607 (k) and failed to ensure that the mailers he produced to promote his own candidacy included the proper attributions required under General Statutes § 9-621.
9. As enumerated in § 9-7b-48 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies:
In its determination of the amount of the civil penalty to be imposed, the Commission shall consider, among other mitigating or aggravating circumstances:
- (1) the gravity of the act or omission;
 - (2) the amount necessary to insure immediate and continued compliance;
 - (3) the previous history of similar acts or omissions; and
 - (4) whether the person has shown good faith in attempting to comply with the applicable provisions of the General Statutes.

10. The Commission possesses the authority to set the punishment it metes out to individuals who violate the statutes under its authority. While the maximum penalty available under the enabling statute is \$2,000 per offense or twice the amount of any improper expenditure, the Commission also has the authority to set a lesser penalty where circumstances call for such leniency.
11. It is understood and agreed that this agreement will be submitted to the Commission at its next meeting and, if it is not accepted by the Commission, it is withdrawn by the Respondent and may not be used by either party as an admission in any subsequent hearing or against the Company in any proceeding, if the same becomes necessary.
12. Respondent waives:
 - a. any further procedural steps;
 - b. the requirement that the Commission's decision contain a statement of findings of fact and conclusions of law, separately stated; and
 - c. all rights to seek judicial review or otherwise to challenge or contest the validity of the Order entered into pursuant to this agreement.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the Respondent shall henceforth strictly comply with the provisions of General Statutes §§ 9-621 and 9-607 (k).

The Respondent:

BY:



Sedeaka Lawrence
43 Lilac Lane
Danbury, CT

Dated: 10/17/2022

For the State of Connecticut:

BY:



Michael J. Brandi, Esq.
Executive Director and General Counsel
And Authorized Representative of the
State Elections Enforcement Commission
55 Farmington Ave., 8th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut

Dated: 11/7/22

Adopted this 20th day of July, 2022, at Hartford, Connecticut



Commissioner STEPHANIE E. PENNEY
By Order of the Commission