

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of Complaint by Brendan Connery, Wallingford

File No. 2026-004

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Complaint

1. On February 2, 2026, the Commission received an Affidavit of Complaint from Brendan R. Connery, a resident of Wallingford, making the following two allegations against the “Fazio for Connecticut, Inc.” candidate committee related to the committee’s convention grant¹ application under the Citizen’s Election Program (“CEP”):

- a. That the committee, following the submission of its application on January 13, 2026, did not “suspend efforts to solicit and receive funds following submission of their application,” and that its online fundraising portal remained operational; and
- b. That the candidate’s written certification submitted with committee’s grant application that the committee had received the required number and amount of qualifying contributions, “was knowingly deficient and made in bad faith,” because the committee allegedly was aware that its submission had an excessive amount of out-of-state contributions and “was scheduling fundraising events on January 12, 2026.”

2. The complaint did not name any respondents. After a preliminary review of the complaint, the Commission named the committee candidate, Ryan Fazio, and the committee treasurer, Paolo Accomando, as Respondents.

3. On or about February 18, 2026, the Commission voted to authorize an investigation of the complaint’s allegations. After investigation, the Commission dismisses this matter by Findings and Conclusions as detailed herein.

Governing Legal Authority

4. General Statutes § 9-706 specifies the process for committees to apply for public funding under the CEP, including the requirement under § 9-706 (b) (1) that the committee’s application include a written certification from the candidate that the committee has received the required number and amount of qualifying contributions. Subsection § 9-706 (g) specifies the timelines for the submission of grant applications and their review by the Commission.

5. General Statutes § 9-707 specifies that, “[f]ollowing the initial deposit of moneys from the **Citizens’ Election Fund** into the depository account of a qualified candidate committee, no

¹ The Connecticut State Legislature, in Public Act 23-205, added to the Citizens Election Program grants for a campaign conducted prior to a party convention which are available to a “qualified candidate committee of a major party candidate for the office of Governor.”

contribution, loan, amount of the candidate's own moneys or any other moneys received by the candidate or the treasurer on behalf of the committee shall be deposited into said depository account.”[Emphasis added.]

Facts Found After Investigation

6. The committee submitted its convention CEP grant application on January 13, 2026.
7. In his submission, the Complainant included, as supporting evidence: (1) a screenshot of the committee’s online web portal dated January 27, 2026; and (2) a copy of a flyer dated January 12, 2026, advertising a “Fundraiser for Ryan Fazio” to be held on January 26, 2026, at Max’s Pizza in Bristol, Connecticut.
8. In response to inquiry by Commission staff, Respondent Accomando stated that the flyer included with the complaint had been sent out on January 11, 2026, and that the fundraiser had, following the submission of the committee’s grant application on January 13, been converted to “meet and greet” with the candidate. Respondent Accomando provided the Commission with an updated flyer dated January 21, 2026, advertising the event as a “Meet and Greet for Ryan Fazio” and subsequent flyers for the event (which was rescheduled to February 3, 2026, due to a snowstorm on January 25-26), all of which described the event as a “Meet and Greet.”
9. Respondent Accomando also provided photographs of the event and of the campaign materials distributed at the “Meet and Greet” event, which included a bumper sticker and palm cards. None of the materials had any references to fundraising, and there is no evidence of the committee receiving any additional contributions during or after the event.

Analysis and Conclusions of Law

Failure to Suspend Fundraising Efforts

10. Regarding the Complainant’s first allegation, that the committee failed to suspend its fundraising efforts following the submission of its convention CEP grant, there is nothing in the statutory language of either General Statutes § 9-706 or § 9-707 which requires a committee to cease fundraising efforts following its application for a grant but before the grant’s approval. Instead, General Statutes § 9-707 forbids the receipt of additional contributions only after a grant is approved and CEP funds are deposited to the committee’s account.² See also *Jarjura for Comptroller v. State Elections Enforcement Comm’n*, 51 Conn. Supp. 483 (2010).
11. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the Complainant’s first allegation fails to state a violation of the election laws of the State of Connecticut. Therefore, this allegation is dismissed as a matter of law.

² While there is no legal proscription against committees continuing to fundraise following their submission of a grant application, receiving additional contributions before the Commission has told a committee that it has not yet qualified and given them specific instructions can present an administrative issue for both the committee and the CEP. See § 9-706 (b) (4). For that reason, the Commission advises committees to suspend fundraising efforts while the grant application is pending review.

Certification in Bad Faith

12. In support of his second allegation, the Complainant asserts that Respondent Fazio's certification that the committee's application complied with the required number and amount of contributions was made in bad faith because the committee had continued to schedule fundraising events following the submission of the grant application.
13. The "fundraising" event in question, however, as discussed, *supra*, was clearly converted to a non-fundraising "Meet and Greet" event by the committee following the submission of its grant application.
14. Furthermore, even if the committee had continued to fundraise, as discussed previously, there is no legal bar against such efforts, and would not, in and of itself, be evidence of bad faith on the part of the committee. The Commission has generally exercised its discretion to allow committees to submit post-admission contributions to qualify such committees for the awarding of grants. "To the extent that the statutory scheme is unclear as to allowing the submission of post-application contributions, the legislative history of the CEP supports allowing such. Number 08-2 of the 2008 Public Acts (P.A. 08-2), which created the schedule contained in § 9-706 (g), was intended to establish a workable framework for the SEEC to meet and consider grant applications and establish a deadline by which the SEEC must disburse any CEP grants. Neither of those goals are served by prohibiting the SEEC from exercising its discretion to permit candidates to supplement or cure a timely application submitted by a candidate." *Jarjura*, 51 Conn. Supp. at 500.
15. While General Statute § 9-706 (b) requires a candidate's certification that their committee has received the required number and amount of contributions, "nothing in the language of that section expressly prohibits a candidate from raising additional qualifying contributions to remedy any deficiencies in his or her application discovered before the SEEC formally acts on it." *Id.* at 499-500. While it is possible that a committee could submit an application that is so deficient that it could not have been submitted in good faith, the Commission determines, for the reasons stated, that that is not the case here.
16. Accordingly, the Commission finds that there is no evidence that the Respondent Fazio submitted his certification that his committee had the required number and amount of qualifying contributions in bad faith. The Commission, therefore, dismisses this allegation as it fails on the facts and the law.

ORDER

Based upon the above factual determinations, conclusions of law and the entire record:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this matter is dismissed.

Adopted this 4th day of March, 2026 at Hartford, Connecticut by vote of the Commission.



Stephen T. Penny, Chairman
By Order of the Commission