

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FINDINGS IN THE COMPLAINTS OF RONALD BELMONT AGAINST THE “MOVING HARRISON FORWARD” CAMPAIGN TEAM

Tarrytown, NY (October 30, 2019) - The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met on October 29, 2019 to hear the complaints of incumbent Republican candidate Ronald Belmont, candidate for Supervisor/Mayor in the Town/Village of Harrison, against the "Moving Harrison Forward" Democratic candidates consisting of Frank Gordon (candidate for Supervisor/Mayor), Lauren Leader (candidate for Town/Village Council), and Michael Romita (candidate for Town/Village Council). Mr. Belmont did not attend and was represented by Christopher Arnold. Frank Gordon and Michael Romita attended and were represented by Robert Piliero. Lauren Leader did not attend.

COMPLAINT 1: Ronald Belmont complains that, in a flyer that was mailed and distributed at the Harrison train station, the “Moving Harrison Forward” slate of candidates gave the false and misleading impression that his administration is “overrun with corruption,” that he is personally involved with “corrupt government in Harrison,” and that he is involved with “self-dealing.”

FINDING: UNFAIR

Examples cited in the flyer are not sufficient to warrant the language that the administration is "overrun with corruption."

COMPLAINT 2: Ronald Belmont complains that, in a flyer that was mailed and distributed at the Harrison train station, the “Moving Harrison Forward” slate of candidates misstated, misrepresented or distorted material fact by asserting that a lawful campaign contribution by the Harrison Little League which was subsequently returned by Ronald Belmont’s campaign had some nexus to corruption.

FINDING: NO FINDING

The Committee found arguments that could support either side of the complaint and therefore could not find for or against either party.

COMPLAINT 3: Ronald Belmont complains that, in a flyer that was mailed and distributed at the Harrison train station, the “Moving Harrison Forward” slate of candidates made the false and misleading statements that a State audit by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli found that Mayor Ron Belmont and his running mates are “purposely overtaxing” and “overcharging taxpayers” in the Town/Village of Harrison.

FINDING: FAIR

The Comptroller's report used language that was close enough to the language used in the flyer to determine that it was fair.

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Committee Members: Susan P. Guma, [Chair], Jennifer Mebes Flagg [Coordinator], Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, Miriam Cohen, Victor J. Goldberg, LaRuth Gray, Kyle-Beth Hilfer, Lee Kinnally, Robert C. Kirkwood, Peter Larr, Carole Princer Levy, Don Marra, Paul Bennett Marrow, Joy Rosenzweig, Susan Schwarz, John Stern, Evelyn M. Stock
Party representatives (ex officio): Republican Party, Democratic Party, Conservative Party, Working Families Party, Independence Party, Green Party

The purpose of the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee is to help set an acceptable standard for political discussion by offering a forum for identifying unfair campaign practices and promoting a climate in which candidates conduct honest and fair campaigns. The Committee encourages candidates to conduct campaigns openly and fairly, to focus on issues and qualifications, to refrain from dishonest and defamatory attacks, and to avoid the use of campaign materials that distort the facts.

The Committee accepts written complaints from candidates about alleged unfair campaign practices. The Committee may then hold hearings to determine whether the action complained about is indeed unfair or whether it falls within acceptable political discourse. Among other things that the Committee will consider to be an unfair campaign practice is a misstatement of a material fact or any communication that misleads the public.

The Committee has no power to compel anyone or any group to stop doing what it has found to be unfair, nor does it have the authority or power to enforce election or other laws.

If the Committee acts on a complaint, it will release its findings to inform the public. The Committee may choose not to consider a complaint; in that case, a hearing is not held and the parties to the complaint are notified.

Statement of Principles of the Committee, as stated in its Manual, is available at www.faircampaignpractices.org. The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee believes that candidates should conduct their campaigns in accordance with the following principles:

- The Candidate will conduct a campaign for public office openly and fairly, focusing on issues and qualifications.
- The Candidate will not use or condone any campaign material or advertisement that misstates, misrepresents or distorts material fact or any communication that misleads the public.

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- The Candidate will neither engage in nor be involved with false or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent, nor in invasions of privacy unrelated to fitness for office.
- The Candidate will not participate in nor condone any appeal to prejudice.
- The Candidate will clearly identify by name the funding source of all advertisements and campaign literature published and distributed.
- The Candidate will not abuse the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee process in order to obtain political advantage. This includes, but is not limited to, announcing that he/she has filed a complaint, or quoting the Committee's Findings unless the individual Finding cited is quoted in its entirety.

The Candidate will publicly repudiate materials or actions made on behalf of their candidacy that violate this Statement of Principles.