

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FINDINGS IN THE COMPLAINTS OF FRANK GORDON, CANDIDATE FOR TOWN/VILLAGE OF HARRISON SUPERVISOR/MAYOR, AGAINST THE BELMONT TEAM

Tarrytown, NY (November 3, 2019) - The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee (FCPC) met on November 2, 2019 to hear the complaints of Democratic candidate Frank Gordon, candidate for Town/Village of Harrison Supervisor/Mayor, against The Belmont Team consisting of Republican candidates Ronald Belmont (incumbent candidate for Supervisor/Mayor), Fred Sciliano (candidate for Town/Village Council), Carlo Riccobono (candidate for Town/Village Council) and Jackie Greer (candidate for Town/Village Clerk). Frank Gordon attended and represented himself. Mr. Belmont did not attend and did not have a representative at the meeting.

COMPLAINT 1: Frank Gordon complains that The Belmont Team campaign has repeatedly misled voters through uses of images of other elected officials in campaign materials.

FINDING: UNFAIR

The FCPC's Principles and Guidance state, "The candidate will not use or condone any campaign material...that misleads the public," and "A candidate may not alter materials ... created in different circumstances in such a way as to convey a false impression." The use of the photograph with US Congresswoman Nita Lowey as the profile photo on Mr. Belmont's Twitter account violates the FCPC's Principles and Guidance. In using an image of a candidate with another public figure in campaign materials, including social media accounts, the candidate should ensure that the context in which the photo was taken is clearly and factually conveyed. It is critical that the image not be used out of context or with no context provided.

COMPLAINT 2: Frank Gordon complains that candidate Belmont and The Belmont Team campaign have appropriated preexisting social media accounts in order to create the false appearance of support for or interest in the slate of candidates.

FINDING: NO FINDING

There was inadequate information available to the Committee and therefore the Committee could not find for or against either party.

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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.
- 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.

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- 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.