

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FINDINGS IN THE COMPLAINTS OF FRANK GORDON AGAINST
HARRISON UNITED**

Tarrytown, NY (September 1, 2021) - The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met via Zoom on August 30, 2021 to hear the complaints of Frank Gordon, candidate for Supervisor/Mayor of the Town/Village of Harrison and a member of the Moving Harrison Forward (MHF) slate, against Richard Dionisio, candidate for the same position, and the Harrison United (HU) slate. Mr. Gordon attended on his own behalf. The Harrison United slate was represented by Jim Castro-Blanco.

COMPLAINT 1: Frank Gordon complains that the Harrison United campaign misled voters by stating in a campaign mailing that: “Our opponents are well funded by Albany deep pockets...”, stating that it would have been impossible for Harrison United to know the source of MHF’s finances at the time of the mailing. Also, Mr. Gordon states that the finance filing shows it has not received campaign contributions from any Albany-based person or organization.

FINDING: UNFAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE

Stating that Moving Harrison Forward is “well funded by Albany deep pockets” gives the impression that the slate is unduly influenced by New York State government or outside groups. No evidence was provided which supported that the **current** Moving Harrison Forward slate, comprised of Frank Gordon, Rachel Berkey, and Adam Weiner, received funding from an Albany-based person or organization.

The campaign mailing violates the following FCPC Principle: “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.”

COMPLAINT 2: Frank Gordon complains that the Harrison United campaign “misled voters by distributing campaign communications that are replete with disparaging, unsubstantiated and baseless accusations with respect to Moving Harrison Forward, in particular branding the latter’s communications ‘untruthful’.” The full sentence in the campaign mailing reads, “Let’s end the unfortunate, untruthful and divisive rhetoric that the opposition has injected into local affairs.”

FINDING: UNFAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE

Assertions made in campaign materials about candidates’ opponents should be specific and supported. The mailer used an unqualified assertion of untruthfulness that reasonably could be

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read to mean that all the opposition’s rhetoric is untruthful. The mailer did not include any examples, citations, or footnotes to support the statement that Moving Harrison Forward has included untruthful rhetoric in its communications. As such, it is an overbroad statement that could mislead readers.

The campaign mailing violates the following FCPC Principle: “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.”

This Finding addresses the lack of supporting material in the Harrison United campaign mailing and is not a Finding about whether or not the sentences in the communications were accurate.

Committee Members: Susan P. Guma, [Chair], Jennifer Mebes Flagg [Coordinator], Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, Victor J. Goldberg, LaRuth Gray, Kyle-Beth Hilfer, Lee Kinnally, Robert C. Kirkwood, 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, 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

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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.
- The candidate will not participate in or 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 from the Committee's Findings unless the individual Finding cited is quoted in its entirety. The Committee considers selective quotation or misrepresentation of its Findings to be an unfair campaign practice.
- The candidate will publicly repudiate materials or actions made on behalf of their candidacy that violate this Statement of Principles.