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Campaign complaint dismissed

A complaint filed by one candidate for Miami Beach City Commission against another was dismissed during an expedited hearing conducted by The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust today.

Jose Ricardo "Ricky" Arriola accused Mark Weithorn of violating a portion of the mandatory provisions of Fair Campaign Practices ordinance by mailing fliers detailing how Arriola had been arrested, without clarifying that the charges had been dismissed and determining whether those viewing the ads would know the difference between a "police record" and "criminal record." The mailed advertisements, as well as a television ad, also showed a copy of the arrest record that included Arriola's social security number, which he claimed puts him at risk for identity theft.

The special hearing was held because of the timing of the complaint (**C 15-28**), since the Miami Beach election will be held tomorrow. Former Chief Judge Gerald Kogan, sitting as hearing examiner, found No Probable Cause that Weithorn knowingly published false information, as required to violate the County's Ethical Campaign Practices ordinance.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.

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