

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

K 12-125

Date Opened: August 14, 2012

Date Closed: February 14, 2013

Name of Investigator: Breno Penichet

Allegation:

A letter was received from South Florida Jobs with Justice (SFJWJ) advising that, during the 2012 political campaign, a Political Action Committee (PAC) called "Change Miami-Dade Now (CMDN)" may have engaged in voter fraud by, among other things, ordering absentee ballots for persons in order to further their agenda.

Investigation:

Information received in the form of a letter alleged that CMDN set up a toll-free help line to assist voters in ordering absentee ballots in order to further their own agenda. In the letter, Fred Frost (Frost), Director for SFJWJ, wanted an accounting from the Miami-Dade County Elections Department as to how many actual ballots were ordered and received by CMDN.

Vanessa Brito, CMDN

COE Investigators contacted Vanessa Brito (Brito), who is one of the persons in charge of CMDN and had information on the help line. Brito advised that the help line was set up to assist voters with language problems or questions on how to obtain applications for absentee ballots; they also helped those who requested an absentee ballot to fill out. Brito advised that, in fact, CMDN told callers to: fill the ballots out themselves and deliver the sealed ballots to the post office to be mailed and not to let anyone else do it except a relative or trusted friend.

Yvette Taylor, CMDN

COE Investigators contacted Yvette Taylor (Taylor), who is also one of the persons in charge of CMDN, and had information on the help line. Taylor verified that the help line was set up to assist voters that had language problems or questions on how to obtain applications for absentee ballots; they also helped those who requested an absentee ballot to fill it out. Taylor, like Brito, advised that, in fact, CMDN told callers to: fill the ballots out themselves and deliver the sealed ballots to the post office to be mailed and not to let anyone else do it except a relative or trusted friend.

Tara Smith, Deputy Supervisor of Elections

COE Investigators contacted Tara Smith (Smith), Deputy Supervisor of Elections and advised her of the allegations. Smith advised that she would check the records and advise if CMDN had asked for or received any absentee ballots. No records were found showing CMDN receiving any ballots.

CONCLUSION:

Advocate Michael Murawski advised that no further action would be taken since there does not appear to be any ethics related violation. Accordingly, it is recommended that the above case be closed without further action.