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In re:

MIAMI-DADE
COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST

C 14-19

Marie Erlande Steril

PUBLIC REPORT AND FINAL ORDER

An ethics complaint was filed against Respondent, Marie Erlande Steril (Steril) by Deputy General Counsel for the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE). The complaint charged that Steril violated Section 2-11.1(g) of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance entitled "Exploitation of official position prohibited" when she demanded upgraded appliances be installed in the kitchen of a townhouse her mother was receiving through the City of North Miami's Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Steril was and continues to be a councilperson in the City of North Miami. Using her position as an elected official, Steril demanded that the *Formica* countertops be replaced with granite and that the brand new white appliances be replaced with higher-priced stainless steel appliances.

On October 8, 2014, pursuant to a settlement agreement, the Ethics Commission accepted Steril's plea of No Contest to violating one (1) count of Section 2-11.1(g). Steril agreed to pay \$500 in investigative costs to the COE, \$4,950 in restitution to the City and accept a Letter of Reprimand from the COE.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that COMPLAINT C 14-19 against Respondent Marie Erlande Steril is hereby concluded.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics & Public Trust in public session on December 10, 2014.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS
& PUBLIC TRUST

By:

Nelson C. Bellido

Chair

Signed on : 12/12/2014

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



LETTER OF REPRIMAND

To: North Miami Councilperson Marie Erlande Steril
From: Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust
Re: Ethics Complaint C14-019
Date: December 2014

On February 25, 2014, the Deputy General Counsel for the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) filed an Ethics Complaint against Respondent, North Miami Councilperson Marie E. Steril (Steril). The complaint charged Steril with violating Section 2-11.1(g), *Exploitation of official position prohibited*, of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. It alleged that Steril exploited her official position in order to get her mother upgraded appliances and materials on the townhome she purchased through a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program being administered by the City of North Miami.

On March 13, 2014, the COE found that there was probable cause to substantiate the claim that Steril exploited her position as Councilperson. Subsequently, on October 8, 2014, she entered into a Settlement Agreement wherein she admitted to a violation of Sec. 2-11.1(g), agreed to pay investigative costs and restitution to the City of North Miami and accept a Letter of Reprimand.

WHEREFORE, the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust hereby issues this Letter of Reprimand to North Miami Councilperson Marie E. Steril.

The facts of this case are as follows:

-Steril has been a Councilperson in the City of North Miami since 2005.

-In 2009, the City began participating in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) through HUD. The NSP was designed to stabilize and revitalize neglected areas of the City by,

We remind Councilperson Steril that compliance with the code of ethics is not optional. It is an individual responsibility imposed by law, and any effort to benefit a personal interest through official action is a violation of the public trust. We define the term "benefit" very broadly, to include anything that is to the person's advantage or personal self-interest.

We hope Councilperson Steril takes this Public Reprimand to heart and never again uses or attempts to use her official position, or any public position she may hold in the future, to obtain a benefit for herself or for someone else. It is also our hope that all elected officials take note of this letter and govern themselves accordingly in the future.