



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Preliminary Inquiry Report

Investigator: Larry Lebowitz

Case: PI-13-010	Case Name: Sosa	<u>Date Open:</u>	<u>Date Closed:</u>
Complainant(s): Anonymous	Subject(s): Commission Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa & staffers	07/01/2013	07/22/2013

Allegation(s):

Complainant approached Commission on Ethics as an unannounced, anonymous walk-in during employee's lunch hour on 27 June 2013 seeking advice. Complainant, who worked in the office of Commission Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa, asked to maintain her anonymity during this preliminary conversation. Complainant was upset, occasionally crying, said they feared they were being "set up" for imminent firing by others in Sosa's office – primarily Deputy Chief of Staff Betty Aguirre – based, in large part, on escalating series of confrontations over policy, performance, job title, hostile workplace comments and actions by Chief of Staff Hiram Barroso, Aguirre and others.

During this preliminary conversation, Complainant questioned whether some of actions by Chairwoman Sosa blurred the lines between her public job as commissioner, her Miami-Dade Public Schools job at Lindsey-Hopkins Technical Institute and her private life, and if these rose to the level of potential ethics violations. Other potential witnesses mentioned in this preliminary conversation included Legislative Director Vivian Castro and Sgt.-at-Arms Paul Hernandez, who is assigned to the chairwoman's office.

Complainant also disclosed contact, weeks earlier, with the county's Fair Employment Practices office as situation started to deteriorate between the Complainant and office colleagues, and with Chairwoman Sosa. Complainant was instructed by FEP specialist Christine Garcia, (305) 375-5916, cmg613@miamidade.gov, to develop a complete report and chronology for the file. Complainant worried that Garcia wasn't going to do anything, so Complainant consulted a lawyer (no name given) and also made an initial inquiry with the federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission's Miami office. EEOC in-take supervisor Ines Lozado reportedly told the Complainant that EEOC would be assigning an investigator, pursuing the allegations and contacting the county for a response if necessary.

The next day, 28 June 2013, the Complainant was fired, as predicted. Complainant agreed to bring documentation – press releases, some emails, the commissioner's calendars -- from Complainant's county laptop and iPad on a digital storage "stick" for transfer to this investigator's hard-drive in case further investigation was warranted. Materials were delivered 2 July 2013. Investigator will burn

everything to a disc to complete the file.

Asked several times, Complainant specifically responded they did not want to waive anonymity in pursuit of a formal complaint with the COE.

Applicable Law:

Potential “exploitation of official position” case.

Investigation:

Interviews

Four separate interviews with anonymous complainant.

- 1) 27 June 2013 in COE office. Preliminary conversation, walk-in.
- 2) 28 June 2013 – day Complainant was fired -- several phone calls to discuss status of complaint with federal EEOC, county Fair Employment Practices office, and whether COE was interested in Complainant’s information.
- 3) 2 July 2013 in COE office. Delivery of documents, calendars, emails on digital stick.
- 4) 22 July 2013 on phone. Follow up regarding status of Complainant’s contacts with county, federal EEOC, future plans, and whether Complainant wants to make a formal inquiry.

Document/Audio/Video Review:

Documents delivered on data storage stick by Complainant on 2 July 2013

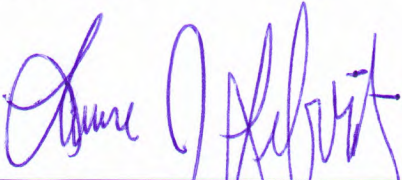
Printed emails delivered by Complainant on 2 July 2013

Preliminary review of Complainant’s personnel file

Conclusion(s):

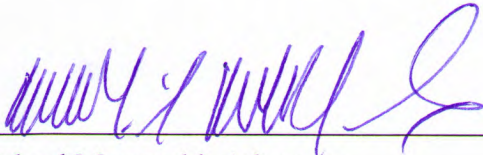
Close file. No further action at this time. We have no formal complaint and the bulk of the hostile work environment/retaliation complaints are better suited to federal EEOC and/or the county Fair Employment Practices office.

(Signature)

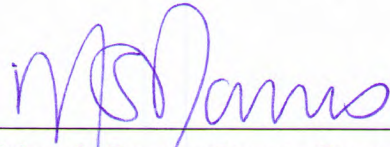


(Investigator's name), COE Investigator

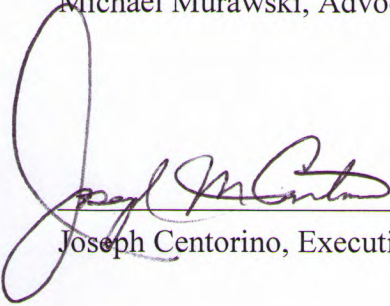
Approved by:



Michael Murawski, Advocate



Miriam S. Ramos, Deputy General Counsel



7/22/13

Joseph Centorino, Executive Director