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## Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

# Memo

**To:** Mike Murawski, independent ethics advocate  
**From:** Karl Ross, ethics investigator  
**Date:** Nov. 5, 2012  
**Re:** K12-135 (Gloria Romero Roses allegations)

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### **Background:**

This case was opened at the request of the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office as part of its Voter Fraud Task Force review of allegations of electoral fraud following the August 2012 primary election. ASA Jose Arrojo asked that one of the task force units or members contact U.S. Congressional candidate Gloria Romero Rosas, and interview her about alleged improprieties affecting her during the Aug. 14, 2012, Democratic Party primary. ASA Arrojo also requested that the assigned investigator serve as a liaison with federal agencies investigating the Justin Lamar Sternad campaign. Sternad, like Romero Roses, was a candidate for the Democratic Party primary to oppose incumbent Rep. David Rivera.

### **Findings:**

According to election results for the District 26 contest for the U.S. House of Representatives, Ms. Romero Roses was defeated in the primary by Joe Garcia, who received 53 percent of the vote. Romero Roses finished a distant second with 31 percent of the vote, and was trailed by Sternad with 11 percent and Gustavo Marin with 5 percent. She was interviewed on Sept. 21, along with a campaign advisor, Suzette Rice, and Carmen Morris, a candidate for the District 117 seat in the state House of Representatives. Ms. Morris advised she lost that race to Kionne McGee. The notes from said interview are attached in the investigative file.

It should be noted here that Ms. Romero Roses' main concern involved what she considered to be an unusually high turnout for early voting among Miami-Dade County voters and a high influx of first-time voters. She said she did not have any evidence linking these trends to operatives working on rival campaigns. She further stated she did not know whether her rivals benefitted as a consequence. She added that she was not aware of any irregularities involving absentee ballots.

Ms. Romero Roses advised that McGee, the winner of the state District 117 race, did share a campaign office with Garcia. She suggested that this might be an unreported in-kind contribution, but said she had not reviewed McGee's Campaign Treasurer's Reports (hereinafter, "CTRs"). Ms. Romero Roses and Ms. Morris further stated they believed that McGee did not live within the boundaries of District 117, stating they believed he lived in North Miami, where he has a law practice. They noted that under state law, candidates for the legislature are not required to live in their districts at the time they run for office so long as they establish residency after being elected.

Ms. Romero-Roses stated that she was approached by Timothy Milton, a campaign advisor and reputed ballot broker. She said Milton told her he would work for the Garcia campaign if she refused to hire him at a rate of \$1,000 a week plus \$1,500 for a canvassing team. Ms. Rice added that she too had been approached by Milton in connection with the Ross Hancock campaign for state District 114. She said Hancock, who won the Democratic Primary, did not retain Milton's services.

On Sept. 25, this investigator contacted Mr. Hancock to see if he would be willing to work with law enforcement if approached again by Milton during the General Election. He stated he met Milton through McGee and that Milton offered to assist his campaign for \$5,000 for get-out-the-vote services. He noted that he was sharing a campaign office with Jeffrey "Doc" Solomon, and stated that Milton is working on Solomon's campaign. He said he would keep an eye on Milton, and report whether he observed anything suspicious. This investigator re-contacted Mr. Hancock on Oct. 24, after Absentee Ballots were sent out, and Hancock advised that he had not seen Milton at the office since he was last interviewed this past Sept. 25.

In addition, this investigator learned that, as it relates to the residence of District 117 candidate McGee, a review of this matter had already been carried out by Ethics Commission investigator Breno Penichet. Penichet advised that, based on his findings, it appears that McGee does live within District 117 at 29020 SW 144<sup>th</sup> Ave., in the Leisure City area of Unincorporated Miami-Dade County.

## **Conclusions:**

Based on the initial interview with Ms. Romero-Roses, no specific allegations could be identified that would have impacted her unsuccessful bid for the District 26 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Furthermore, she did not provide information that related specifically to possible absentee ballot fraud. Attempts were made to follow

up on leads involving the state District 117 House of Representatives race, but the preliminary findings did not produce anything of substance. It would not appear that any of the concerns raised by Ms. Romero-Roses would in any way impact the ongoing federal investigation into the campaign of Mr. Sternad. As a result of the foregoing, this matter should be closed without further action.

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