

# MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



## REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

#K13-023

Date Opened: 02/25/13

Date Closed: 03/13/13

Investigator: Sylvia Batista

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An anonymous letter was received by the COE on 2/22/13 informing that City of Doral Mayor Luigi Boria (Boria) had been stopped by a City police officer on 06/26/12 for a traffic violation. According to the letter, then-councilmember Boria jumped from his vehicle and scolded the officer demanding to know whether the officer knew who he was. The letter informs that the incident was caught by the police officer's in-car video. Boria is alleged to have called former Chief of Police, Ricky Gomez, and filed a complaint against the officer.

The COE's issue relates to a possible violation of the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance Section 2-11.1(g) *Prohibition on exploitation of official position*.

### **Investigation:**

#### **03/01/13 – Richard Blom, Chief of Police, City of Doral Police Department –**

Chief Richard Blom ("Blom") met with COE investigator. Blom advised that he had heard about an anonymous letter that has been circulating, but had not seen it. Blom advised that the officer in question was Jeffrey Mederos ("Mederos"). He explained that

Mederos was a reserve officer at the time of the incident and was driving a police unit that did not have an in-car camera.

Blom explained that Mederos pulled over the vehicle as it was pulling out of a gas station with its headlights off. Boria was riding in the back seat of the car. There were two (2) other people in the vehicle, including the driver. Blom said that Mederos issued a citation to the driver. Blom advised that the ticketed driver later filed an informal complaint against the officer for taking too long to write the ticket and because two other police units had responded to the scene unnecessarily. Blom added that the incident happened around the time that Boria was campaigning for the mayor's seat.

Blom explained that former Chief Ricky Gomez had given the order that all police units must be equipped with an operational in-car camera. Chief Gomez's Lieutenant invested in the in-car cameras; however, the vehicle driven by Mederos did not have one.

Blom said that there was no complaint taken against Mederos because the allegations made against him by the driver did not warrant a formal complaint. The complainant said that he did not feel comfortable having 3 police units present for a minor traffic stop and felt that it took the officer too long to write the citation. Boria did not join in the complaint against Mederos.

Blom provided the COE with a copy of a memorandum from Lieutenant Carlos Alfaro of the Internal Affairs Unit in which he describes the driver's complaint against Mederos. The memorandum identifies the driver of the vehicle as Kenny Walters and the other passenger as Gonzalo Bello. In his memorandum Lt. Alfaro states that he received certified written statements from each Kenny Walters and Gonzalo Bello, but not one from Boria.

Blom said that no disciplinary action was taken against Mederos because there was no formal complaint filed against him. Mederos is still a reserve officer for the department. Reserve officers work 29 hours a week. Blom explained that they are retired police officers who wish to continue working in law enforcement.

**03/11/13 – Officer Jeffrey Mederos, City of Doral Police Department –**

Mederos explained that on the night of the subject traffic stop he noticed a vehicle stopped at the traffic light directly facing him with the headlights off. Mederos said that he flashed his headlights at the car and hit the spotlight in order to warn the driver that his lights were off, but the driver did not respond and continued to make the turn.

Mederos said that he stopped the vehicle and Boria, who was sitting in the back-seat of the car, began to speak to him. He said that Boria exited the vehicle and again tried to talk to him. Mederos said that he did not recognize Boria and told him that he did not know who he was and that he should get back in the car. Boria then produced an identification card and yelled out to Mederos, “I’m a councilman in the City of Doral.” Mederos said that Boria finally entered the vehicle. Mederos does not remember Boria trying to discourage him from issuing the citation or asking him to remove the citation after it was issued.

Mederos explained that other units drove up while he was making the stop because they were in the area and had heard about it on the radio. The traffic stop was unusual because it was raining. Mederos said that he made the stop because people sometimes forget to turn on their headlights when they are intoxicated.

Officer Mederos provided the COE with a copy of his statement describing what transpired during the traffic stop.

**Conclusion:**

There is insufficient evidence to substantiate a charge of exploitation by Boria.

Therefore the instant case is closed without further action.