

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES
COMMITTEE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FINDINGS IN THE COMPLAINTS OF NOAM BRAMSON AGAINST
ROB ASTORINO, CANDIDATES FOR WESTCHESTER COUNTY
EXECUTIVE, AND AGAINST FRIENDS OF ROB ASTORINO AND
THE NEW YORK REPUBLICAN STATE COMMITTEE**

The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met on October 30, 2013, to hear the complaints of Noam Bramson (D), candidate for Westchester County Executive, against Rob Astorino (R), candidate for the same office, and against Friends of Rob Astorino and the New York Republican State Committee. The Bramson campaign was represented by Barry Caro. The Astorino campaign representative did not appear at the originally scheduled October 29th hearing and, at their request, the hearing was rescheduled for October 30; the representative for the Astorino campaign did not appear.

COMPLAINT: Mr. Bramston complained that the Committee had found five separate claims by the Astor no campaign to be false or misleading and that the Astorino campaign generally refused to alter or modify these claims, despite the fact that the Astorino campaign itself has acknowledged that its ads are not accurate.

FINDING: Unfair

The Astor no campaign continued to use campaign materials that were found to be unfair and contrary to the guidelines of the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee.

COMPLAINT: Mr. Bramston complained that a mailer to veterans on behalf of and coordinated with Mr. Astorino's campaign made a series of false and inaccurate claims about Mr. Bramson's position on the military and veterans and that Mr. Astorino is responsible for the contents of such a mailer. The mailer

claimed that “While attending Harvard, he [Bramson] arrogantly fought to keep ROTC banned from campus.”

FINDING: Unfair

The accusation that Bramson fought to keep ROTC banned was not supported by the actual quotes in the *Harvard Crimson*, November 3, 1989.

COMPLAINT: Mr. Bramson complained that the same mailer stated: “Resisting all efforts to create a Veterans Center at the Armory” and that no source is given for this false and misleading statement.

FINDING: Unfair

There was no evidence presented to substantiate that Mayor Bramson did not support Veteran activities at the center.

COMPLAINT: Mr. Bramson complained that the same mailer falsely and without verification stated: “For years he [Bramson] had disrespected Veterans at public hearings by mocking their testimony.”

FINDING: Unfair

No evidence was submitted to support this statement.

COMPLAINT: The mailer also claims that: “[Rob Astorino] believes as a blessed community we should and could do more for returning warriors. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for his opponent, Noam Bramson.”

FINDING: Unfair

There was no evidence submitted to support this statement.

COMPLAINT: Mr. Bramson complained that a radio advertisement repeatedly digitally altered remarks made by Mr. Bramson to make them unintelligible, then claimed they are proof that Mayor Bramson has not answered the hypothetical questions posed.

FINDING: Unfair

A candidate may not alter materials in such a way as to convey a false impression.

COMPLAINT: In addition to generally editing mayor Bramson's statements in a way designed to deceive voters, the Astorino campaign has also edited them in a way designed to suggest that a fictional set of questions had been posed to Mayor Bramson, and that he had not answered them.

FINDING: Unfair

A candidate may not alter materials in such a way as to convey a false impression.

If a candidate or campaign wishes to quote from a Finding, the Committee requires that it be quoted in its entirety. The Committee regards selective quotation of its Findings as a violation of fair campaign practices.

Committee Members: Susan Schwarz, (Chair), Miriam Cohen (Coordinator), Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, Dan Franklin, Victor Goldberg LaRuth Gray,, Susan Pace Guma, Milton Hoffman, Lee Kinnally, Robert Kirkwood, Polly M. Kuhn. Eileen Santiago, Evelyn M. Stock, Lorelei A. Vargas.

Party representatives (ex officio): Republican Party, Democratic Party, Conservative Party, Working Families Part and Independence Party

The purpose of the Westchester Fair Campaign Committee is to promote a climate in

which candidates conduct honest and fair campaigns. The Committee encourages candidates to conduct campaigns openly and fairly, to discuss issues, to refrain from dishonest and defamatory attacks, and not to use campaign materials that distort the facts.

The Committee does not sit as a censor of political discussion nor as a body to enforce election law or make legal decisions. Its task is to accept written complaints about alleged unfair campaign practices and to determine whether the action complained about is indeed unfair. Among other things, the Committee will consider to be unfair any campaign practice that is a misstatement of a material fact or that misleads the public.

The Committee has no power to compel anyone to stop doing what it has found to be unfair. If the Committee acts on a complaint, it will release its findings to inform the public. The Committee may choose not to consider a complaint; in that case, a hearing is not held and the parties to the complaint are notified.

Statement of Principles of the Committee, as stated in its Manual, is available at www.faircampaignpractices.org. The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee believes that candidates should conduct their campaigns in accordance with the following principles:

- The candidate will conduct a campaign for public office openly and fairly. The candidate will discuss the issues and participate in fair debate with respect to her/his views and qualifications.
- The candidate will neither engage in nor be involved with unfair or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent, nor will the candidate engage in invasions of personal privacy unrelated to fitness for office.
- The candidate will not participate in or condone an appeal to prejudice.
- The candidate will neither use nor be involved with the use of any campaign material or advertisements that misrepresent or distorts the facts.
- The candidate will clearly identify by name the source of all advertisements and campaign literature published and distributed.
- The candidate will not abuse the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee process in order to obtain political advantage.

The candidate will publicly repudiate materials or actions from any individual or group that would violate the Statement of Principles.

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