

To: Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices

Date: July 23, 2024

Re: anonymous mailer sent to St. George voters re May 13, 2024 ballot referendum

Commission members,

I urge you to open a formal investigation into the complaint submitted by Rep. Ann Matlack, a St. George resident, who received the anonymous mailer sent to many town residents immediately preceding our annual Town Meeting in May 2024.

While I did not receive one of the postcards, as a member of the St. George Select Board I received a number of calls and emails from residents who had received it and were angry that the sender failed to identify him or herself and included inflammatory and inaccurate information in the mailer, sent only a few days before the election on a ballot question.

Although it may be difficult, or even impossible, to identify the person who circulated this mailing, the Commission should investigate and make a formal declaration as to whether this anonymous mailing violated State election law. Irrespective of the ability to hold this individual accountable, deterring future attempts to illegally influence local elections is an important function of this Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Conrad

117 Barbers Pt. Rd

St. George, ME 04860

(207) 372-6621

From: [Gregory Soutiea](#)
To: [Wayne, Jonathan](#)
Cc: [Commission, Ethics](#)
Subject: Request for Investigation – May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 11:30:38 AM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Director Wayne,

I am writing as a St. George Resident, business owner, and chair of our town Housing Committee. I am writing to support Representative Matlack's request for investigation by the Ethics and Elections Commission. This postcard should easily be seen to have a cost over \$500 based on the population of the peninsula and the cost of postage. I personally know of people both republican and democrat who received the postcard.

It was very clear that the voter turnout was significantly impacted by this postcard and the vote for the town to donate land to a non-profit for the purpose of workforce housing was negatively impacted. Again, I would like to suggest that the Commission continue to investigate to determine who is responsible for the postcard that violated state election rules.

Respectfully,

Greg Soutiea(He/Him)

<http://www.Crainair.com>

<http://www.PlantAthletic.com>

<http://www.SoutieaRuns.com>

From: tohler154@gmail.com
To: [Commission, Ethics](#)
Subject: May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 11:47:43 AM

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As a resident of St. George, Maine I received through the U. S. Postal Service an unsigned card with information, I believe was false, directed at the May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine.

I was troubled by the lack of a signature leaving me without recourse to correct the false and deliberately misleading information.

The card arrived just prior to the vote clouding the air surrounding the referendum issue with inaccuracy.

I appreciate your review of this situation.
Thank you,
Patricia Ohler
St. George, Maine resident
Sent from my iPhone

From: [John Maltais](#)
To: [Commission, Ethics](#)
Cc: [Wayne, Jonathan](#)
Subject: Request for Investigation – May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 12:54:11 PM

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To:

STATE OF MAINE COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS AND ELECTION PRACTICES

Dear Members of the Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support and encouragement for the Maine State Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections Practices to thoroughly investigate the complaint regarding the anonymous mailer sent to St. George voters in May 2024. This mailer, which contained inaccurate information, has raised significant concerns within our community about the integrity and transparency of our electoral processes.

Representative Ann Matlack, a respected resident of St. George, has rightly filed a complaint alleging a violation of the Maine Campaign Finance Law. As stipulated in 30-A M.R.S.A. 1055-A(1), any person or organization spending over \$500 on communications advocating for or against a ballot question must disclose the source of funding. The failure to do so undermines public trust and transparency, essential pillars of our democratic process.

The agenda item for your meeting on July 24, 2024, at 9 a.m. specifically addresses this issue under "Request for Investigation – May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine." I urge the Commission to take decisive action in this matter to uphold the principles of fairness and accountability in our elections. Investigating and addressing this complaint will reinforce the importance of adherence to campaign finance laws and deter future violations.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. Your efforts to maintain the integrity of our electoral system are greatly appreciated by the residents of St. George and all citizens of Maine.

Sincerely,

John Maltais
Chair, Comprehensive Plan Committee
Saint George, ME

From: [Meg Ciftci](#)
To: [Wayne, Jonathan](#); [Commission, Ethics](#)
Subject: Re: Request for Investigation – May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 1:11:13 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon Director Wayne and Commission Members,

As a long-time St. George resident, I am writing this email to express sincere support for Representative Matlack's request for investigation.

I and many people I know received the postcard, and were surprised by the hysterical nature of the language that was used, and the use of that language to spread misinformation.

I firmly believe that the postcard had a negative impact on voter turnout, and I request with great conviction that this investigation moves forward to deter individuals from violating state election laws further.

Kind Regards,
Margaret Ciftci

From: [Ken Oelberger](#)
To: [Wayne, Jonathan](#)
Subject: May 2024 Referendum in St George
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 12:03:12 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Wayne,

I'm writing in regard to the Request for Investigation relative to the May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine. I received one of the anonymous postcards just days before the voting on the ballot measure. Having been to several public information sessions on the ballot measure, it was very disturbing to read the lies and misinformation contained in the mailer.

I urge the Ethics Commission to conduct a thorough investigation and find out who was responsible for the mailer.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Oelberger
157 Treasure Point Rd, St George, ME 04860

To: Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics & Election Practices

Date: July 23, 2024

From: Dennis Leight

298 Turkey Cove Road

Tenants Harbor, ME 04860

207-372-6668

Re: Request for investigation of mailer sent to some St. George voters concerning May 13th ballot referendum

I was among an unknown number of Town of St George residents who received the post card in question as well as other supportive material for this proposition presumably from the CDC prior to May 13th.

Earlier, on March 25th I attended a public hearing at the town office at which time this proposal was presented. I asked several questions of Mr. Robert Kelley from the CDC, to which he failed to provide me with adequate answers. I heard several other statements from residents in attendance expressing opposition to this proposal for a variety of reasons. I do not recall hearing supportive statements and claims from anyone other than Mr. Kelley himself.

To say the very least, this ballot referendum has proven to be highly controversial among St. George residents and would provoke additional controversy the more widely it might become known should it be presented again. I would urge the commissioners to simply make the applicable laws known and proceed no further with an attempted investigation at this time.

Sincerely,

Dennis Leight

From: [Barry Goldberg](#)
To: [Wayne, Jonathan](#)
Subject: Request investigation —may 24 Referendum in St George
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 7:39:15 PM

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Dear Director Wayne,

I am a current St. George Resident. I've been told that the recent postcard mailed to me was illegal. It was offensive as well. I highly encourage you to not let this type of activity occur again.

Thank you for your consideration,

Barry Goldberg
Sent from my iPhone

From: [SL Goldberg](#)
To: [Wayne, Jonathan](#)
Subject: Request for Investigation-May 2024 Referendum in St. George, ME
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 3:27:43 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Director Wayne,

I am writing as a St. George resident to register a public comment on and support of Representative Matlack's request for investigation by the Ethics and Elections Commission of an illegally distributed campaign postcard.

I was surprised to receive the postcard she describes, on the Friday before the Monday election where this matter would be decided. Having educated myself about the issue, it was very clear to me that the information on the postcard was bogus at best, the timing of its distribution designed to thwart any public discussion, and had been distributed illegally as it lacked any identifying information on it regarding its creator.

I urge you to strongly consider a full investigation of this matter in order to preserve a just and legal election process.

Sincerely,

Sara Leavitt Goldberg
267 Clark Island Road
St. George, ME 04859

From: [Melick, Scott \(PSM-RAF\)](#)
To: [Wayne, Jonathan](#); [Commission, Ethics](#)
Subject: Request for Investigation - May 2024 Referendum in St. George, Maine
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 7:28:43 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Director Wayne,

I am sending this email as a St. George Resident. I am writing to support Representative Matlack's request for investigation by the Ethics and Elections Commission. This postcard should easily be seen to have a cost over \$500 based on the population of the peninsula and the cost of postage. I personally know of people both republican and democrat who received the postcard. I believe that the voter turnout was significantly impacted by this postcard and the vote for the town to donate land to a nonprofit for the purpose of workforce housing was negatively impacted. I would like to suggest that the Commission continue to investigate to determine who is responsible for the postcard that violated state election rules.

Best,

Scott Melick

This message contains information which may be confidential and privileged. Unless you are the intended recipient (or authorized to receive this message for the intended recipient), you may not use, copy, disseminate or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail, and delete the message. Thank you very much.

From: [Lauren Soutiea](#)
To: [Commission, Ethics](#)
Subject: investigation concerning an anonymous postcard mailing to residents of St. George
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 8:06:50 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am writing to support Representative Anne Matlack's request for investigation by the Ethics and Election Committee into the anonymous postcard mailed in St. George.

As a business owner in St. George, I received the mailing at our business address. It would seem this mailing reached a wide range of people and had a decent budget to support the production and mailing.

I believe that the state election rules should be upheld and those responsible should be held accountable for not following the proper protocols.

Thank you,
Lauren Soutiea

From: [Steve Cartwright](#)
To: [Commission, Ethics](#)
Subject: illegal propaganda in St.George
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 7:25:39 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections Practices

As an elected member of the St.George selectboard, I'd like to add my voice (and outrage) to the issue of an unsigned, anonymous mailing of false information that undoubtedly added to the defeat of a badly-needed affordable housing project in our town. The post cards contained a number of false claims and scare tactics.

Thank you for considering this,

Steve Cartwright

Tenants Harbor

372-6534

From: Sandra Roak <sandraroak@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2024 9:24 AM

To: Commission, Ethics <Ethics.Commission@maine.gov>

Subject: anonymous post card

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The post card about the plan of the Town of St. George to donate land for housing included errors which I believe contributed to the defeat of the proposal. Because the post card arrived on a Saturday before the Monday vote, and because there was no identification as to who sent it, there was NO chance to correct the information for the voters.

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This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.avast.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7CEthics.Commission%40maine.gov%7Cbd76d079349e465bc01708dcabe3d52c%7C413fa8ab207d4b629bcdea1a8f2f864e%7C0%7C0%7C638574242219035885%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C60000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=AU8mXoNVTz7nlYGXE%2BwWYDABEqRcoSA4Jy0sdva5lrs%3D&reserved=0>