



OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

DOCKET NUMBER 2020-6 :
IN THE MATTER OF A : 18-20 TRINITY STREET
COMPLAINT AGAINST : HARTFORD, CT 06106
JO-ANN WILLIAMS : JUNE 17, 2020

STIPULATION AND CONSENT ORDER

Pursuant to the Code of Ethics, General Statutes §§ 1-79, *et seq.*, Mark Wasielewski, Ethics Enforcement Officer, filed an Amended Complaint against Jo-Ann Williams (hereinafter “Williams” or “Respondent”), alleging violations of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials. Based on the investigation by the Enforcement Division of the Office of State Ethics (hereinafter “OSE”), the OSE finds that there is probable cause to believe that Respondent violated the Code of Ethics as further set forth herein.

The Parties have entered into this Consent Order following the issuance of the Complaint, but without any adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein.

I. STIPULATION

The Ethics Enforcement Officer and the Respondent stipulate to the following facts:

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent held the position of Coordinator for

the Alternate Route to Certification in Early Childhood Education program (“ARC program”) at Charter Oak State College.

2. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was a “state employee” as that term is defined by General Statutes § 1-79 (13).

3. At all times relevant hereto, as part of her duties for the state, the Respondent was responsible for administering the process to select instructors and mentors for the ARC program.

4. At all times relevant hereto, as a part of her duties for the state, the Respondent was responsible for supervising the work of instructors and mentors for the ARC program.

5. The instructor and mentor positions for the ARC programs were paid positions.

6. On several occasions, from 2017 through 2019, the Respondent personally selected her sister as an instructor or as a mentor for the ARC program.

7. From 2017 through 2019, the Respondent directly supervised her sister’s work as an instructor or mentor for the ARC program, including, but not limited to approving her sister’s hours worked.

8. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-84 (c):

[N]o public official or state employee shall use his public office or position... to obtain financial gain for himself... or sister[.]

9. The Respondent, by acting on behalf of her sister to secure the ARC program instructor and mentor positions, and thereafter by supervising her sister’s employment, used her position to obtain financial gain for her sister, in violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (c).

10. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-86 (a):

Any public official or state employee . . . who, in the discharge of [her] official duties, would be required to take an action that would affect a financial interest of . . . such official’s... sister. . . has a potential conflict of interest. Under such circumstances, such official or employee shall, in the case of either a substantial or potential conflict of interest, prepare a written statement signed under penalty of false statement describing the matter requiring action and the nature of the conflict and deliver a

copy of the statement to such official's or employee's immediate superior, if any, who shall assign the matter to another employee...

11. Beginning no later than 2017 and continuing through on or about 2019, the Respondent was, in the discharge of her official duties, required to take various actions that would affect the financial interest of her sister.

12. Each time Respondent was required to take action affecting the financial interest of her sister, the Respondent was required to 1) prepare a written statement, signed under penalty of false statement, describing the matter requiring action and the nature of the conflict, and 2) deliver a copy of the statement to her immediate supervisor.

13. Beginning no later than 2017 and continuing through on or about 2019, the Respondent, when required to take action affecting the financial interest of her sister, did not prepare a written statement and deliver it to her immediate supervisor.

14. By failing to prepare and deliver a written statement to her immediate supervisor as set forth herein, the Respondent violated General Statutes § 1-86 (a).

15. The Respondent admits to the facts set forth herein and admits such facts constitute violations of the Code of Ethics as set forth herein.

II. RESPONDENT'S POSITION

1. The Respondent states that, at the time of the aforesaid actions, she did not believe that her conduct raised any issues under the Code of Ethics, and states that she did not act intentionally. The Respondent states that she now understands the restrictions set forth in the Code of Ethics regarding this matter.

2. The Respondent states that, at the time of aforesaid actions, she was the sole administrator of the ARC program and undergoing cancer treatment. She states that she hired her sister, who was otherwise qualified for the position, to ensure the program's needs were filled.

III. JURISDICTION

1. The Ethics Enforcement Officer is authorized to investigate the Respondent's acts as set forth herein, and to enter into this Stipulation and Consent Order.

2. The provisions of this Stipulation and Consent Order apply to and are binding upon the Respondent.

3. The Respondent hereby waives all objections and defenses to the jurisdiction of the Ethics Enforcement Officer over matters addressed in this Stipulation and Consent Order.

4. The Respondent waives any rights she may have under General Statutes §§ 1-80, 1-82, 1-82a, 1-87 and 1-88, including the right to a hearing or appeal in this case, and agrees with the Ethics Enforcement Officer to an informal disposition of this matter as authorized by General Statutes § 4-177 (c).

5. The Respondent consents to jurisdiction and venue in the Connecticut Superior Court, Judicial District of Hartford, in the event that the State of Connecticut seeks to enforce this Stipulation and Consent Order. The Respondent recognizes that the Connecticut Superior Court has the authority to specifically enforce the provisions of this Stipulation and Consent Order, including the authority to award equitable relief.

6. The terms set forth herein are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other existing or future statutory, regulatory, or other legal obligation that may be applicable to the Respondent.

7. The Respondent understands that she has a right to counsel and has been represented by counsel during the OSE's investigation and in connection with this Stipulation and Consent Order.

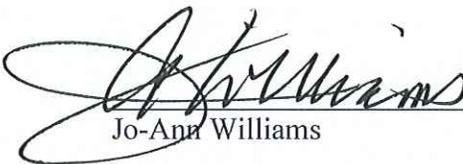
IV. ORDER

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to General Statutes § 4-177 (c), the Office of State Ethics hereby ORDERS, and Ms. Williams agrees, that:

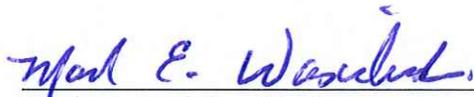
1. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (1), Ms. Williams will cease and desist from any future violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (c).
2. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (1), Ms. Williams will cease and desist from any future violation of General Statutes § 1-86 (a).
3. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (3), Ms. Williams will pay civil penalties to the State in the amount of one thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$1,750.00) for her violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (c) as set forth in the Complaint and herein.
4. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (3), Ms. Williams will pay civil penalties to the State in the amount of one thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$1,750.00) for her violation of General Statutes § 1-86 (a) as set forth in the Complaint and herein.

WHEREFORE, the Ethics Enforcement Officer and Ms. Williams hereby execute this Stipulation and Consent Order dated June 17, 2020.

Dated: 7-28-2020


Jo-Ann Williams

Dated: 8/10/20


Mark E. Wasielewski, Esq.
Ethics Enforcement Officer
Connecticut Office of State Ethics
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Hartford, CT 06106
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