

# Fair Election Practices Committee

Date: Thursday, November 1, 2007  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Fair Election Practices Committee Rules on Three Complaints

Monroe County, NY, November 1, 2007. The Fair Election Practices Committee (FEPC) received a flurry of last minute complaints from candidates in races across Monroe County over the past several days.

Due to the closeness of Election Day the FEPC heard three complaints in succession today in a marathon session beginning at 2:30pm and ending more than three hours later. In accordance with established FEPC procedures all the candidates were invited to present information to the committee regarding their particular complaint. After each hearing the committee met in private to deliberate & decide the outcome.

The first complaint – filed by Jeffrey Babcock, Republican candidate for supervisor in the town of Mendon – alleged that Ian McNabb, the Democratic & Independence Parties' candidate for town supervisor falsely presented himself as a candidate who is independent of “outside money” and any “county or state political committee” in various news reports & other materials. Although endorsed by two recognized political parties, Mr. McNabb is registered as a “Blank, No Party” with the Monroe County Board of Elections. The committee did not find substantial evidence to show direct support from “outside sources” that would undermine Mr. McNabb's contention that he is “independent”. However, there was enough information presented to the committee to leave the impression of a blurred line between Mr. McNabb and entities such as the Monroe County Democratic Committee. In the end the committee found that the discussion of Mr. McNabb's political independence from the outside sources to be an appropriate topic for inclusion in the public debate. **NO violation of the Fair Campaign Pledge was found in this complaint.** (See the decision form below.)

The second complaint – filed by Jeffrey Davignon, Democrat candidate for Sweden town board, alleged that a number of mailers and brochures promoting incumbents Patricia Connors & Thomas Ferris (Republican candidates for town board in Sweden), misrepresented a number of his positions, statements and actions. While the committee found some of the language in the materials to be “very tough” they did not find any significant, material mis-statements. The found the issues raised by the complaint to be worthy of public discussion in the context of the campaign. **The FEPC found no violation of the Fair Campaign Pledge in this complaint.** (See the decision form below.)

In the third and final complaint, filed by Democrat candidate for town board in Chili, James Vandervort, it was alleged that the Republican candidates for re-election, supervisor Tracy Logel, Councilman Michael Slattery, and Councilwoman Ginny Ignatowski falsely took credit for updating the Town of Chili's comprehensive master plan in a number of campaign materials. The committee found that while, technically, the town has not taken the final legal step in amending an update to the master plan due to reasonable considerations the town did indeed spend considerable time & energy updating & putting into practice improvements sited in an approved “Update Report”. Once again, the FEPC found the very important issues set forth in this complaint to be more appropriately debated & discussed in the context of the campaign. **The FEPC found no violation of the Fair Campaign Pledge in this complaint.** (See decision form below.)

The FEPC's role is to arbitrate complaints about alleged violations of the Fair Campaign Pledge. The committee is an independent, non-partisan body comprised of five members and two alternates. Rome Celli, John G. Curran, Channing Philbrick and Kay Wallace heard today's complaints. Alan Bernstein and Thomas Frey were out of town and Margaret Freeman could not participate in at today's session due to a scheduling conflict. The committee will hear complaints with a quorum of at least three members and no more than five. Members of the committee are chosen by the two sponsoring organizations.

Several of the candidates involved in today's complaints have not signed the “Fair Campaign Pledge” -- co-sponsored & promoted by the Interfaith Alliance of Rochester & the League of Women Voters, Rochester Metropolitan Area. The FEPC & its sponsors believe candidates should be held to the standards found in the “Fair Campaign Pledge” regardless of whether they signed the Pledge. The deadline for signing the Pledge was September 5, 2007.

NOTE: The committee will not comment on the content of the deliberations, vote totals or the precise reasoning behind its decisions. However, the FEPC chair, Rome Celli, will provide copies of the exhibits upon request as well as discuss the committee's history, standards and procedures.

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*The Fair Election Practices Committee can be reached by phone: 585.732.1767, by fax 585.473.487, by email at [cellir@rochesteralliance.org](mailto:cellir@rochesteralliance.org) or by U.S. mail in care of 156 Fair Oaks Ave, Roch., NY 14618.*

# Fair Election Practices Committee

## Decision Notification Form

**Election:** General Election on November 6, 2007

**Races:** Town of Mendon - Supervisor

**Complainant:** Jeffrey Babcock (Republican)

**The complaint was filed against:** Ian McNabb (Democrat)

Date Complaint Received: October 28, 2007

The Fair Election Practices Committee (FEPC) found that the various campaign materials cited in the complaint **DID NOT** violate the Fair Campaign Pledge.

- The FEPC has decided **AGAINST** the complainant.

Date of Decision: November 1, 2007