

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

JUDICIAL PANEL
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OLIVER GRIFFITH

Plaintiff

v.

ROBERT ROSSING-NOMA CAMPAIGN

Defendants

MARCH 17, 2025

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In the matter of OLIVER GRIFFITH v. ROBERT ROSSING-NOMA CAMPAIGN, the plaintiff alleges that the defendants violated Article II.A.a.v and Article II.A.a.i of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws.

Election Bylaws

Article II.A.a.v.

“Any candidate seeking election to any position is required to abstain from engaging in any type of bullying or harassment of other candidates. This includes, but is not limited to, actions such as mockery, belittlement, intimidation, or any other behavior intended to harm, demean, or undermine the candidacy of others. This is a Type IV bylaw.”

Article II.A.a.i.

“Candidates, candidate teams, and slates may not disseminate libelous or slanderous information against another candidate. This is a Type III bylaw.”

Held: The Judicial Panel finds the Rossing-Noma campaign not guilty of all alleged violations.

Opinion

In the matter of OLIVER GRIFFITH v. ROBERT ROSSING-NOMA CAMPAIGN, the plaintiff, Mr. Oliver Griffith, alleged that the Rossing-Noma campaign committed five violations of Article II.A.a.v, which prohibits candidates from engaging in bullying or harassment through mockery, belittlement, intimidation, or any other behavior intended to harm, demean, or undermine the candidacy of others. Additionally, Mr. Griffith alleged three violations of Article II.A.a.i, which prohibits candidates, candidate teams, and slates from disseminating libelous or slanderous information against another candidate. After reviewing the evidence, the Judicial Panel finds that while the statements made by Mr. Francesco Migliore may constitute bullying, harassment under the bylaws, the Rossing-Noma campaign itself is not guilty of any of the alleged violations because Mr. Migliore was not a candidate for election.

The allegations of bullying or harassment stem from social media posts made by Mr. Francesco Migliore, an alleged member of the Rossing-Noma campaign. Mr. Griffith argued that Mr. Migliore was an active campaign member, as he provided evidence that Mr. Migliore served as a circulator on the Rossing-Noma petition to be placed on the election ballot. While the Judicial Panel acknowledges that petitioning and campaigning are separate periods, we recognize that a campaign cannot function without first petitioning, making the two processes inherently linked. Based on this, it is reasonable to classify Mr. Migliore as a member of the Rossing-Noma campaign team. However, as he was not a candidate for election, the campaign itself cannot be held responsible for some of his statements under the election bylaws.

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The first accusation of bullying or harassment arises from Mr. Migliore's comment on a Griffith-More campaign post, in which he stated, *"Imagine voting for someone found guilty of intimidation against other candidates."* While this comment could be seen as detrimental to Mr. Griffith's campaign, Mr. Migliore was not a candidate for election, whether senatorial or presidential. As Article II.A.a.v specifically governs the actions of candidates, this does not constitute a violation by the Rossing-Noma campaign.

The second accusation of bullying or harassment concerns a post made by Mr. Migliore on the "Ohio State 2026" Snapchat story, where he shared an image of the Griffith-More campaign Instagram page, stating: *"When the Griffith campaign blocks me for calling them out for being found guilty of intimidation against other candidates."* Mr. Griffith alleged that this post was mockery and intimidation. However, the screenshot confirms that Mr. Migliore was indeed blocked by the Griffith-More campaign Instagram. The reason for the block is unknown, but if it was due to Mr. Migliore's reference to Mr. Griffith's past intimidation ruling, that statement would be factually accurate. Because Mr. Migliore was not a candidate for election, the Rossing-Noma campaign is not guilty of this violation.

The third accusation of bullying or harassment stems from another Snapchat story post by Mr. Migliore, in which he stated: *"The Griffith campaign insta blocked my friends too when they didn't even say anything. They are the type of people who will silence you if you don't fit their narrative."* He followed this with, *"Be careful who you vote for in the USG election."* While this could be perceived as harmful to Mr. Griffith's campaign, Mr. Migliore was not a candidate for election. Therefore, the Rossing-Noma campaign is not guilty of this offense.

The fourth accusation of bullying or harassment concerns another Snapchat post by Mr. Migliore, where he stated, *"Someone is mad"* while sharing a screenshot of Mr. Griffith's Snapchat name and character, showing that Mr. Griffith screenshotted his message. Again, while this could be seen as detrimental to Mr. Griffith's campaign, Mr. Migliore was not a candidate for election. Therefore, the Rossing-Noma campaign is not guilty of this offense.

The fifth and final accusation of bullying or harassment stems from Mr. Migliore posting on Snapchat, stating: *"I really hope this is someone pretending to be him and not him having 3 burners cause that would be wild"* with a screenshot of Mr. Griffith's Snapchat name and character. While this could be perceived as an attempt to mock or belittle Mr. Griffith, Mr. Migliore was not a candidate for election. Therefore, the Rossing-Noma campaign is not guilty of this offense.

The allegations of libel were evaluated under the Election Bylaws' definition of libel, which states that libel is a false statement or report that can injure a candidate's, candidate team's, or slate's reputation.

The first accusation of libel arises from Mr. Migliore's Snapchat post, stating: *"The Griffith campaign insta blocked my friends too when they didn't even say anything. They are the type of*

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people who will silence you if you don't fit their narrative." Mr. Griffith admitted to blocking Derek Korane, Mykenna Roy, and Mr. Migliore on the Griffith-More campaign Instagram. He claimed that Mr. Migliore's statement was false because Ms. Roy referred to him as "unhinged" and "a psychopath" in private text messages, and Mr. Korane referred to him as "a Jeffrey Epstein Jr." However, these comments were made via text message, not on Instagram, meaning that Mr. Migliore's claim that these individuals "didn't say anything" on Instagram was not demonstrably false. Furthermore, Mr. Migliore's statement, "They are the type of people who will silence you if you don't fit their narrative," is an opinion rather than a provable statement of fact. Since libel requires a false factual claim, this does not constitute a violation.

The second accusation of libel arises from Mr. Migliore's Snapchat post stating, "Someone is mad," with a screenshot of Mr. Griffith's Snapchat activity. This statement does not assert a verifiable false claim and is more of an opinion than a statement of fact, meaning it does not meet the standard for libel.

The third accusation of libel concerns Mr. Migliore's Snapchat post, where he speculated about Mr. Griffith having "three burner accounts." The statement was speculative rather than a definitive claim, and phrases like "I really hope" indicate uncertainty rather than a factual assertion. Without testimony clarifying what Mr. Migliore meant, the Judicial Panel cannot determine beyond a reasonable doubt that this statement constitutes libel. Therefore, the Rossing-Noma campaign is not guilty of this violation.

The Judicial Panel finds that Mr. Migliore's statements may constitute bullying, harassment under the USG Election Bylaws, but because he was not a candidate for election, the Rossing-Noma campaign itself is not guilty of any of the alleged violations. Additionally, his statements do not meet the standard for libel under Article II.A.a.i, as they were either opinions or not provably false. However, the Judicial Panel acknowledges that campaigns at times enlist individuals to act as unofficial spokespeople to spread damaging rhetoric against opponents. While this practice may provide plausible deniability to campaigns, it is a deceitful and unethical strategy that has no place in Undergraduate Student Government elections. The Judicial Panel strongly advises against candidates, slates, or campaign teams engaging in this kind of behavior in the future. If evidence is ever presented proving that a campaign directed or encouraged individuals to engage in such behavior, serious repercussions will follow.

It is so ordered.

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Signed: The Judicial Panel

Majority:

Chief Justice Matthew Okocha

Justice Judith Vega

Justice Sean O'Brien

Justice Ryan Buchko

Justice Abigail Yallop