

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

JUDICIAL PANEL
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

AMJAD ALMUTI

Plaintiff

v.

MATTHEW LEVINE

Defendant

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

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In the matter of *Almuti v. Levine*, the plaintiff alleges that the defendant violated Article IV.D.b, Article III.E.e, Article II.A.v, Article II.A.a.v, and Article II.A.b.viii of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws.

Election Bylaws

First, it must be mentioned that there were some instances of incomplete citations of the bylaws listed in the Plaintiff's brief. The Judicial Panel Standing Rules on Plaintiff briefs state that they must include, "The specific bylaw alleged to have been violated." The Plaintiff only included only an in-text citation of these rules, not the clause, which the Judicial Panel finds, and had found previously (in *Almuti v. Cox (2025)*, *Almuti v. Griffith (2025)*, *Cox v. Griffith (2025)*, and *Almuti v. Levine (2025)*), to be an incomplete citation. Below are the bylaws stated by the plaintiff in their brief:

Article IV.D.b

"Candidates may not knowingly falsify any documents submitted to the Judicial Panel at any time."

Article III.E.e

"All briefs dealing with campaign violations must be submitted within 72 hours of discovery of the violation(s) and by the end of voting."

Article II.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.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."

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

Article II.A.b.viii

“Furthermore, no person may use any Undergraduate Student Government resources including meeting spaces or Student Government Suite resources for any campaign activity..”

Held: The Judicial Panel finds that the Defendant is in violation of Article II.A.a.v.

Opinion

In the matter of Almuti v. Levine, the plaintiff, Mr. Amjad Almuti, alleged that the defendant, Mr. Matthew Levine, violated multiple sections of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws, including falsification of documents, improper delay of a complaint filing, coercion and intimidation, misuse of Undergraduate Student Government (USG) resources, and harassment through belittling statements. After reviewing the evidence presented, the Judicial Panel finds that Mr. Levine is guilty of one violation, which results in his disqualification.

Regarding Article IV.D.b, Mr. Almuti alleged that Mr. Levine knowingly falsified documents submitted to the Judicial Panel. Specifically, Mr. Almuti stated in his brief that Mr. Levine told a student, "I am not asking you to run. I am demanding," while Mr. Levine actually stated, "It's less of an ask and more of a demand actually." Mr. Almuti argued that Mr. Levine falsely claimed he never made a coercive demand for a student to run for USG Senate. However, the Judicial Panel finds this to be a disagreement over interpretation rather than a falsification of documents. Whether or not either statement constitutes a “coercive demand” is subjective, and both parties were entitled to their respective interpretations of the conversation. Because falsification requires the intentional alteration of information for deceptive purposes, the Judicial Panel does not find Mr. Levine guilty of this charge.

Mr. Almuti further alleged falsification of documents on the basis that Mr. Levine accused him of removing evidence from his refiled brief in an attempt to “hide” facts. Upon review, the Judicial Panel finds this accusation by Mr. Levine to be erroneous but not an act of falsification. Falsification is defined as the intentional modification of records to deceive others, and the Judicial Panel finds that Mr. Levine did not alter any documents but merely made an accusation. Because an accusation alone does not constitute falsification, Mr. Levine is not guilty of this charge.

Regarding Article III.E.e, Mr. Almuti alleged that Mr. Levine deliberately delayed filing his brief to use it as a political weapon rather than to raise a legitimate concern. Mr. Almuti asserted that Mr. Levine strategically waited until February 24, 2025, to file his complaint despite receiving the original brief on February 13, 2025. However, evidence shows that Mr. Almuti refiled his brief, which Mr. Levine received on February 21, 2025, and that Mr. Levine submitted his

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

complaint within the required 72-hour timeframe. Because Mr. Levine's filing complied with election regulations, the Judicial Panel finds him not guilty of this charge.

Regarding Article II.A.v, Mr. Almuti alleged that Mr. Levine pressured individuals into running for Senate seats using manipulative language. However, "Article II.A.v" does not exist in the Election Bylaws, making it impossible for the Judicial Panel to rule on this claim. The Judicial Panel has consistently ruled that it cannot issue decisions on election bylaws that are improperly cited, incomplete, or nonexistent, including in previous rulings such as *Almuti v. Cox (2025)*, *Almuti v. Griffith (2025)*, *Cox v. Griffith (2025)*, and *Almuti v. Levine (2025)*. Due to the improper citation, this allegation cannot be considered, and no ruling is made on it.

Regarding Article II.A.b.viii, Mr. Almuti alleged that Mr. Levine used USG resources, including meeting spaces or Student Government Suite resources, for campaign activity, citing comments made by Mr. Levine regarding packing the Judicial Panel with certain types of candidates. While the Judicial Panel acknowledges the ethical concerns raised by these remarks, there is no evidence to suggest that Mr. Levine actually used USG resources for campaign activity. The Judicial Panel finds that this does not constitute a violation of Article II.A.b.viii, and Mr. Levine is not guilty of this charge.

However, regarding Article II.A.a.v, Mr. Almuti alleged that Mr. Levine engaged in bullying, harassment, belittlement, and intimidation by making statements that sought to undermine the candidacy of others. The evidence includes two statements made by Mr. Levine:

1. *"...you can totally smoke them in an election and these are seats we can't lose."*
2. *"Look, it's not going to take much to win. These names aren't marketable at all."*

The Judicial Panel does not find the first statement to be a violation, as the term "smoke them in an election" could be interpreted as competitive rhetoric, which is common in election settings. However, the second statement regarding the "marketability" of a name is found to be an act of belittlement intended to undermine another candidate's legitimacy. During the hearing, Mr. Levine failed to provide a clear and consistent definition of what he meant by "marketability", and the Judicial Panel determined that this statement meets the threshold for belittlement under Article II.A.a.v. As a Type IV bylaw violation, Mr. Levine is fined \$150, to be deducted from his campaign budget.

Under Article II.C.b.i, the Election Bylaws limit a Senate candidate's campaign budget to \$100. Article II.C.b.v further states that if a candidate incurs fines that bring their budget below zero, they must be disqualified from the election. Because Mr. Levine, as a Senate candidate, has been fined \$150, this puts his campaign budget at -\$50, thereby triggering an automatic disqualification from candidacy.

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

In conclusion, the Judicial Panel finds Mr. Levine guilty of violating Article II.A.a.v by engaging in belittlement to undermine the candidacy of another candidate. As a Type IV violation, he is fined \$150, which exceeds the campaign budget limit for Senate candidates and results in his automatic disqualification under Article II.C.b.v. Additionally, the Judicial Panel finds Mr. Levine not guilty of falsifying documents, delaying complaint filings, using USG resources for campaign activity, or engaging in bullying or harassment beyond the single violation identified. The Judicial Panel also cannot issue a ruling on the coercion allegations due to improper citation of bylaws. Our final ruling is that Matthew Levine is disqualified from candidacy due to exceeding the Senate campaign spending limit following a Type IV bylaw violation.

It is so ordered.

Signed: The Judicial Panel

Majority:

Chief Justice Matthew Okocha

Justice RiverJordan Carr

Justice Ethan Moore

Justice Sean O'Brien

Justice Judith Vega