

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

JUDICIAL PANEL
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

MATTHEW LEVINE

Plaintiff

v.

AMJAD ALMUTI

Defendant

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

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In the matter of *Levine v. Almuti*, the plaintiff alleges that the defendant violated Article II.A.a.i and 4 violations of Article IV.D.b of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws.

Election Bylaws

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.”

Article IV.D.b

“Candidates may not knowingly falsify any documents submitted to the Judicial Panel at any time or falsely testify/present false evidence in a Judicial Panel proceeding. This is a Type V bylaw.”

Held: The Judicial Panel finds that the Defendant is not in violation of Articles II.A.a.i and IV.D.b.

Opinion

In the matter of *Levine v. Almuti*, the plaintiff, Mr. Matthew Levine, alleged that the defendant, Mr. Amjad Almuti, violated Articles II.A.a.i and IV.D.b of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws by disseminating libelous or slanderous information, falsifying evidence in a Judicial Panel hearing, falsifying bylaws, misrepresenting witness testimony, and misrepresenting his intent in refiling a previous brief. After reviewing the evidence presented, the Judicial Panel finds that Mr. Almuti is not guilty of any of the alleged violations.

Mr. Levine’s primary claim centered around statements made in Mr. Almuti’s brief refiled on February 15, 2025, in which Mr. Almuti accused Mr. Levine of harassment and intimidation by coercing a student to run for a Senate seat in the Undergraduate Student Government. Due to improper bylaw citation, the Judicial Panel was unable to render a decision on the case at that time. However, Mr. Levine now alleges that Mr. Almuti misrepresented his words in the original filing, constituting falsification and libel. Upon review, the Judicial Panel compared the quotes provided by Mr. Almuti to the actual messages sent by Mr. Levine. Mr. Almuti originally stated that Mr. Levine told the student, *“Take the rod out of your ass and run”* and *“I am not asking you to run. I am demanding.”* In reality, Mr. Levine’s messages read, *“Take that rod out of ur butt”* and *“It’s less of an ask and more of a demand actually.”* During the hearing, Mr. Almuti stated that he did not have direct access to the messages at the time of filing, as another student, Ms. Mykenna Roy, showed him the messages in person but was unwilling to provide screenshots. As a result, he paraphrased the messages based on what was relayed to him. The

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Judicial Panel finds that the meaning of both versions remains substantively the same, and therefore, this is paraphrasing rather than falsification. As such, this does not constitute libel, slander, or the falsification of evidence.

Mr. Levine further alleged that Mr. Almuti falsified bylaws to mislead the Judicial Panel. Specifically, he claimed that Mr. Almuti cited a nonexistent bylaw prohibiting candidates from engaging in harassment or bullying of other candidates. The Judicial Panel acknowledges that Mr. Almuti incorrectly cited the section of the bylaw in question but finds that this error does not amount to falsification. Falsification of bylaws requires the intentional alteration, fabrication, misrepresentation, or manipulation of an organization's governing documents, including altering text, forging approvals, or misrepresenting provisions to mislead governing bodies. After comparing both versions of Mr. Almuti's brief, the Panel determined that the only change was the citation itself, not the language of the bylaw. Because the text was never modified, this does not meet the standard for falsification. If Mr. Almuti had altered the bylaw's wording, this would have been a clear violation, but no such evidence exists.

Another allegation presented by Mr. Levine was that Mr. Almuti knowingly falsified witness testimony by listing Ms. Roy as a witness despite her deleting messages related to the case. The evidence presented confirmed that Ms. Roy deleted messages between herself and another individual, Derek, regarding Mr. Levine's alleged coercion. Due to this deletion, the Judicial Panel had to dismiss her testimony, as her credibility could not be verified. However, Mr. Almuti is the defendant in this case, not Ms. Roy. There is no proof beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Almuti knew these messages had been deleted before listing her as a witness, nor is there any evidence that he instructed her to delete them. Because the burden of proof rests on the plaintiff to establish intent and involvement in the deletion of evidence, and no such proof was provided, the Judicial Panel finds that Mr. Almuti is not guilty of falsifying witness testimony.

Finally, Mr. Levine claimed that Mr. Almuti misrepresented his intent when refiling his original brief, alleging that he concealed his true purpose of removing instances of deceit. However, evidence presented by Mr. Levine showed no significant differences between the original and refiled briefs, aside from minor typographical and formatting corrections and adjustments to bylaw citations. Because the plaintiff could not prove that the refiling was done with deceptive intent, the Judicial Panel dismisses this claim.

After reviewing all allegations and supporting evidence, the Judicial Panel finds that Mr. Almuti is not guilty of any of the alleged violations. The paraphrased statements do not constitute falsification, libel, or slander, as their meaning remained the same. The incorrect bylaw citation does not meet the definition of falsifying bylaws, as the text was never altered. The allegation of falsifying witness testimony fails due to a lack of proof regarding Mr. Almuti's knowledge of or involvement in deleted messages. Lastly, the claim of misrepresenting intent in refiling a brief is unsubstantiated, as no evidence of deceit was presented.

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The Judicial Panel finds Amjad Almuti not guilty of all alleged violations.

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