

Subpoenas ordered in Bridgeport primary voting

By [Ken Dixon](#)

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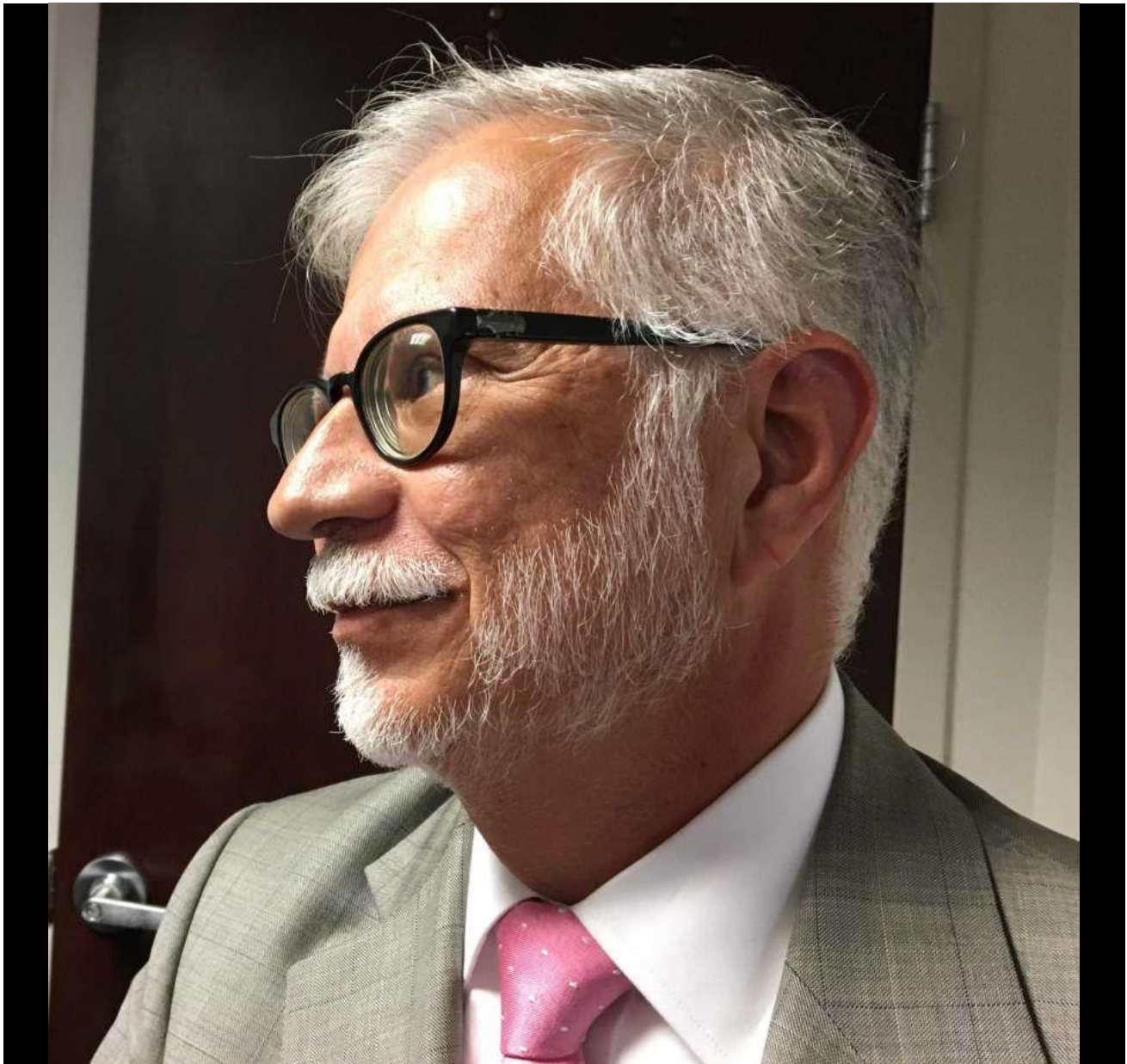


Photo: Ken Dixon

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Marilyn Moore's campaign attorney Maximino Medina delivered a complaint on the September 10 mayoral primary to the State Elections Enforcement Commission on Monday.

HARTFORD — The State Elections Enforcement Commission on Monday triggered an investigation into Bridgeport's recent Democratic mayoral primary, and ordered that Town Clerk Charles D. Clemons Jr. turn over a trove of documents on absentee ballots. During a special half-hour-long meeting of the commission, surveillance video and visitor logs of two apartment complexes run by Park City Communities — the P.T. Barnum Apartments in Black Rock and Harborview Towers on the East Side — were also targeted for subpoenas that SEEC staff were to deliver in person later in the afternoon.

The vote of the SEEC was the result of a series of [Hearst Connecticut Media](#) reports that prompted a referral of the issue last week to the SEEC from Secretary of the State Denise Merrill.

In addition, Maximino Medina Jr., a local Bridgeport attorney, filed a separate complaint with the SEEC, alleging a variety of possible illegalities in the Sept. 10 primary, which state Sen. Marilyn Moore won at the polls but ultimately lost to Mayor Joe Ganim because of a lopsided citywide absentee ballot total.

Medina asked the SEEC to refer possible illegal actions, documented in the Hearst series, to Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane.

Meanwhile, a lawsuit was filed on Monday by Prerna Roa, a Trumbull-based attorney for Bridgeport Generation Now, alleging cases of "irregularities and illegal conduct" involving the absentee or mail-in ballots.

According to Rao's lawsuit, Generation Now and some allies, post-primary, researched and found "multiple individuals associated with Mayor Ganim, the endorsed (Democratic) candidates and/or the (Democratic) Town Committee engaged in illegal and/or improper primary election activity concerning absentee ballots."

Earlier Monday, Medina, a former member of the city's Board of Education who is representing Moore's campaign, said he thinks there is a mechanism in state law that could force the attorney general to order city voting officials to give Moore a prominent, printed spot toward the top of the Nov. 5 election ballot.

"I think it's safe to say that some of this is new ground that needs to be plowed," Medina told reporters while the SEEC was discussing the issue behind closed doors, minutes before the panel approved the subpoenas that set off the investigation.

"The most important point is that the factual basis for all of this is so blatantly obvious, I mean the absolute disregard by so many Bridgeport politicians of the laws that are

supposed to regulate our voting process is outrageous,” Medina added. “Honest Bridgeporters who play by the rules are having their votes devalued because of this absentee ballot harvesting and other shenanigans.”

Gemeem Davis, Moore’s campaign manager who accompanied Medina and another campaign attorney to the SEEC, said that tactics used by pro-Ganim supporters included handling completed ballots in violation of state law; ballots that were mailed to homes where they had not been requested; ballot applications sent to people at different addresses.

Moore’s campaign manager said there were cases of voter “intimidation” at Harborview Towers, but there were no details in Medina’s filing with the SEEC, which will take up that complaint at a different meeting.

Davis said that at Harborview Towers several people complained that they were coerced into voting for Ganim.

“We believe, for example, that the relief that should be considered would include having an order issued compelling the city of Bridgeport to print ballots with Marilyn Moore’s name on it as an official candidate so that the voters don’t have to go to the extra trouble of looking for the write-in bubble at the bottom of the page,” Medina said, arguing that Moore’s name should be given a higher spot on the printed ballot because the “shenanigans” are linked to the Ganim campaign.

Ganim said last week that he knows little about the Democratic Town Committee’s absentee ballot process and noted that there is no proof that Moore’s campaign isn’t responsible for, or connected to, any of the problems and possible fraud with the absentee ballots.

Michael Brandi, executive director and chief counsel of the SEEC, said he’s confident that the agency will have enough staff to carry out the investigation. In addition to ordering civil fines, the SEEC can refer cases to both the chief state’s attorney and federal Department of Justice officials for criminal prosecution.

The subpoena to the Bridgeport town clerk demands a variety of absentee ballot-related material including logs, applications, voided and rejected ballots, as well as voting lists that were consulted on primary day.

Brandi said the investigation will look at all absentee ballots. “We’re doing everything in our power to secure all the necessary evidence,” he said. “No matter what agency is going to become involved in this, we need to establish, through the investigation exactly

the facts and what happened. Our role is in the aftermath of an election, or certainly in the campaign finance world, where violations are alleged, it's our job to investigate it and then pursue a remedy."