

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ETHICS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

Office of Government Ethics



In Re: Y. Fields  
Case No.: 24-0051-P

**NEGOTIATED DISPOSITION**

Pursuant to section 221 (a)(4)(E)<sup>1</sup> of the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability Establishment and Comprehensive Ethics Reform Amendment Act of 2011, effective April 27, 2012, D.C. Law 19-124, D.C. Code § 1-1161.01 et seq., (“Ethics Act”), the Office of Government Ethics (the “Office” or “OGE”) hereby enters into this public negotiated settlement agreement with the Respondent, Y. Fields. Respondent agrees that the resulting disposition is a settlement of the above-titled action, detailed as follows:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Respondent has been a District employee since January 11, 2009, and currently serves as a Program Support Specialist with the District of Columbia Department of Youth and Rehabilitative Services (“DYRS”). Respondent began receiving emails regarding the District’s Ward 7 Councilmember election on March 4, 2024, and started using her email account for election-related matters and her candidacy on March 5, 2024. On March 6, 2024, the Respondent submitted a nominating petition to appear on the ballot as a candidate<sup>2</sup> in the Primary Election contest for the Ward 7 Councilmember seat in the June 4, 2024, Democratic Primary Election.

This Office’s investigation revealed that the Respondent used her District government email to send and receive approximately 40 emails regarding her candidacy in the election between March 4, 2024, and March 26, 2024. The emails were sent during the Respondent’s tour of duty. Respondent informed OGE that she used her government email address because she had too many emails on her phone and had issues with her personal email address. Respondent explained that she cleared emails from her phone and would begin using her personal email address moving forward.

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 221(a)(4)(E) of the Ethics Act provides, “[i]n addition to any civil penalty imposed under this title, a violation of the Code of Conduct may result in the following: . . . [a] negotiated disposition of a matter offered by the Director of Government Ethics, and accepted by the respondent, subject to approval by the Ethics Board.”

<sup>2</sup> See D.C. Official Code § 1-1171.01(2) defines candidate as an individual who seeks nomination or election to any elective office in the District whether or not the person is elected. An individual is deemed to be a candidate if the individual has received political contributions or made expenditures or has consented to another person receiving contributions or making expenditures with a view to bringing about the individual’s nomination or election.

During an interview with OGE, Respondent was informed that District government employees are prohibited from running for a partisan<sup>3</sup> political office in the District, “while maintaining District government employment.”<sup>4</sup> Respondent stated, in the interview, that on March 13, 2024, a challenge to her nominating petition was filed with the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“BOE”) and that a hearing regarding the challenge would be held on March 27, 2024. During the interview, it was OGE's understanding that the Respondent's paramount aim/primary objective was to participate in the election with the aspiration of becoming the Ward 7 Council Member. She stated that only if she lost the election would she remain a DYRS employee; however, if she won, she intended to take a leave of absence. OGE explained to the Respondent that a leave of absence was insufficient to address the conflict. OGE further clarified that maintaining District government employment while participating in a partisan election is prohibited and that she must resign from her District government position if she wished to remain a candidate. On March 29, 2024, the BOE issued an Order upholding the challenge to the Respondent’s nominating petition, which made the Respondent ineligible to run in the Primary Election on June 4, 2024.

### NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Respondent violated the following provisions of the District Personnel Manual (“DPM”) and District of Columbia Code (“D.C. Official Code”):

- ❖ **Count One:** D.C. Official Code § 1-1171.02(a)(3) - Employees shall not file as a candidate for election to a partisan political office.
  - The Respondent violated this rule on March 6, 2024, when she submitted, a nominating petition to BOE to appear on the ballot as a candidate in the Primary Election contest for the office of Ward 7 Councilmember in the June 4, 2024, Democratic Primary Election. At that time, Respondent was still employed with DYRS.
  
- ❖ **Count Two:** D.C. Official Code § 1-1171.03(a) - An employee shall not engage in political activity<sup>5</sup> while the employee is: on duty; in any room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties in the District government, including any agency or instrumentality thereof; or wearing a uniform or official insignia identifying the office or position of the employee.
  - The Respondent violated this rule when on several occasions she sent emails regarding her candidacy in a government building during her tour of duty.

---

<sup>3</sup> See D.C. Official Code § 1-1171.01(5) “partisan” when used as an adjective means related to a political party.

<sup>4</sup> See D.C. Official Code § 1-1171.01(a) an employee may take an active part in political management or in political campaigns; provided, that an employee shall not [...] and then See D.C. Code § 1-1171.01(a)(3) File as a candidate for election to a partisan political office.

<sup>5</sup> See D.C. Official Code § 1-1171.01(2) defines “political activity” as any activity that is regulated by the District directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, partisan political group, ballot initiative, or referendum [...].

❖ **Count Three:** DPM § 1808.1 - Employees shall protect and conserve government property and shall not use it, or allow its use, for other than authorized purposes.

- The Respondent violated this rule when, on dozens of occasions, she used her District government email for matters pertaining to her run for Councilmember.

**None of the above-referenced actions were authorized by the District of Columbia.**

In mitigation, the Respondent stopped using her government email for non-DYRS matters after OGE staff informed her that it was not permissible. Respondent admits that her actions described herein violated the District's Code of Conduct and enters into this Negotiated Disposition to facilitate a resolution of these violations. Respondent waives her right to proceed to an adversarial hearing in this matter and voluntarily, knowingly, and understandingly consents to the Board's imposition of a fine against her in this matter. Moreover, by agreeing to settle this matter via a Negotiated Disposition, Respondent will allow OGE to avoid expending significant time and resources to litigate this matter through a contested hearing, and to focus its finite resources on other investigations.

#### TERMS OF THE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

Respondent acknowledges that her conduct was a serious violation of the Code of Conduct. Respondent agrees to pay a fine in the amount of **FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS** (\$5,000.00), to resolve this matter, in accordance with the following terms and conditions:

1. Respondent agrees to pay the \$5,000 by having **\$200.00** per pay period automatically deducted from her bi-weekly paycheck from the District government commencing immediately and continuing until such time as the fine amount is fully satisfied;
2. By this agreement, Respondent expressly authorizes the Office of Pay and Retirement Services (OPRS) to make these deductions and to transfer such funds to the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability;
3. In the event that Respondent's employment with the District government ceases prior to complete satisfaction of the fine amount, Respondent agrees that any outstanding fine amount will be satisfied by deduction in full from Respondent's final District government paycheck and/or any payment to the Respondent from the District government for unused annual leave;
4. Respondent agrees to satisfy the entire fine amount by July 1, 2025 (the "Maturity Date");
5. Respondent acknowledges that, whether OPRS completes these deductions as described herein, Respondent is nonetheless solely responsible for satisfying the fine. Payment will be accepted by certified check or money order, made out to the D.C. Treasurer, delivered to and received by OGE at 1030 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 700 West Washington, DC 20005 or by electronic payment at <https://dcwebforms.dc.gov/pay/bega1/> using transaction ID 24-0051-P;

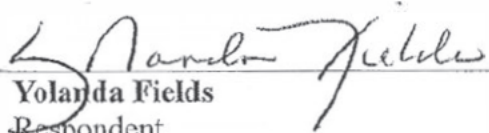
6. Respondent agrees to attend ethics training no later than August 1, 2024.

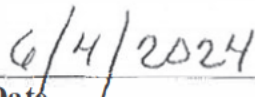
Respondent also understands that if she fails to pay the \$5,000.00 fine in the manner and within the time limit provided above, pursuant to section 221(a)(5)(A) of the Ethics Act (D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.21(a)(5)(A)), the Ethics Board may file a petition in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for enforcement of this Negotiated Disposition and the accompanying Board Order assessing the fine. Respondent agrees that this Negotiated Disposition is not just an admission of wrongdoing but constitutes various factual admissions by her that may be used in any subsequent enforcement or judicial proceeding that may result from her failure to comply with this agreement.

Respondent knowingly and willingly waives her right to appeal the accompanying Board Order imposing a fine in this matter in exchange for the concessions made by this Office in this Negotiated Disposition.

Respondent further understands that if she fails to adhere to this agreement, OGE may instead, at its sole option, send any unpaid fine amount to collections or recommend that the Ethics Board nullify this settlement and hold an open and adversarial hearing on this matter, after which the Ethics Board may impose sanctions up to the full statutory amount (\$5,000.00 per violation) as provided in the Ethics Act for each violation.<sup>6</sup> Because OGE is, at this time, foregoing requesting that the Ethics Board hold an open and adversarial hearing on this matter, Respondent waives any statute of limitation defenses should the Ethics Board decide to proceed in that matter as a result of Respondent's breach of this agreement. Respondent also understands that if she fails to pay the fine in accordance with the terms set forth hereinabove, pursuant to Section 221 (a)(5)(A) of the Ethics Act (D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.21 (a)(5)(A)), the Ethics Board may file a petition in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for enforcement of this settlement and the accompanying Board Order assessing the fine.

The mutual promises outlined herein constitute the entire agreement in this case. Failure to adhere to any provision of this agreement is a breach rendering the entire agreement void. By our signatures, we agree to the terms outlined above.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Yolanda Fields  
Respondent

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ashley D. Cooks  
Director of Government Ethics

6/4/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<sup>6</sup> Section 221(a)(1) (D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.21(a)(1)).

This agreement shall not be deemed effective unless and until it is approved by the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability, as demonstrated by the signature of the Chairperson below.

APPROVED:



6/6/2024

---

**Norma Hutcheson**  
Chairperson,  
Board of Ethics and Government  
Accountability

---

**Date**

#24-0051-P  
AC/ASM/MJ

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ETHICS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS



**IN RE: Y. Fields  
Respondent**

**CASE No.: 24-0051-P**

**ORDER**

Based upon the mutual representations and promises contained in the Negotiated Disposition approved by the Board herein on **June 6, 2024**, and upon the entire record in this case; it is, therefore

ORDERED that Respondent pay a civil penalty in the amount of **FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,000.00)**;

This Order is effective upon approval by the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability, as demonstrated by the signature of the Chairperson below.



**Norma Hutcheson**  
Chairperson, Board of Ethics and Government  
Accountability

6/6/2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**