

2017-49: Ryan Campbell vs Vancouver Sun

June 30, 2017 – *For immediate release*

The National NewsMedia Council has dismissed a complaint from Ryan Campbell about inaccuracy and lack of opportunity to respond in an article by the Vancouver Sun.

The complainant stated that a May 3 2017 article, “Delta Liberal candidate admits to mistakenly signing nomination papers for Green opponent”, attacked BC Green Party candidate Jacquie Miller by including a quote from an NDP spokesperson that she was a last-minute entry who did not live in the riding.

According to the complainant, the comment was inaccurate and misleading, and the news media organization did not seek Miller's comment before publication. He said the candidate's contact information was available on the party website, and accused the news media organization of refusing to seek comment or make a correction.

The paper responded by stating that the Green Party was contacted with a request for a comment from the candidate, and that the party chose to respond through its communications director.

The Canadian Association of Journalists' Ethics Guidelines states that those publicly accused or criticized should have opportunity to respond before publication, and that effort to contact be genuine and reasonable. The NewsMedia Council found the news media organization adhered to that principle by contacting the Green Party to seek comment from the candidate. The party chose to make a spokesperson available, which is its prerogative and widely accepted practice. The paper also sought comment from the major rival parties.

Council agreed with the news media organization's statement that the focus of the story was on the action of a Liberal candidate, who was one of the signatories to the nomination of a Green Party candidate. It was a newsworthy issue.

The news media organization adhered to accepted journalistic practice by seeking response from the newsmaker and from rival parties. The views of one rival were unflattering to the Green Party candidate. The accuracy of those views, delivered as direct quotes, reflected on the speaker and not on the accuracy of the news media organization.

Other evidence in the story and on the website did not support the complainant's allegation of inaccuracy. The statement in question could reasonably be considered a detraction to the candidate, but the Green Party was given fair opportunity to respond. The news media is not in a position to force a political party to offer an interview with a candidate if it chooses to use another spokesperson instead.

Council noted the Green Party's response did not address the issue of the candidate's current residency, and that it is not Council's job to research her address.

Area – accuracy Tags – opportunity to respond, bias