

# CONSENT ORDER

## BEFORE THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

The Honorable Steuart Pittman, County Executive of Anne Arundel County

Case No.: I-25-70

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### RECITALS

1. The Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission ("Commission") is authorized pursuant to Article 7, Title 1, § 7-1-103 of the Anne Arundel County Code to administer and enforce the County's Public Ethics Law, including § 7-5-107 that prohibits an employee from using the "prestige of office" for their own personal gain, or the gain of another. The Commission has held on several occasions that this section precludes the use of County resources for political purposes.
2. In advisory opinions AO-20-37 (August, 2020) and AO-24-06 (March, 2024), the Commission advised County Executive Steuart Pittman ("Respondent") that § 7-5-107 prohibited the use of the county website or his periodic newsletter for the purpose of partisan political advocacy.
3. After the publication of the County Executive's Weekly Letter on November 6, 2025, the Commission received several inquiries alleging that the Respondent used County resources to disseminate partisan political commentary in an official government-issued publication, specifically the County Executive's Weekly Letter, "Election Reflection" distributed via County email systems and posted on the County's website.
4. The Commission conducted a preliminary inquiry and determined that portions of the November 6, 2025 letter contained language expressing partisan political opinions and commentary regarding national and state political figures, political parties, and recent election results, including the following excerpts:

*The world watched closely as Americans went to the polls Tuesday night in Virginia, New Jersey, New York City, California, and elsewhere. It was a major temperature check to see which political party was attracting more support in these cruel and chaotic times.*

*Democrats overperformed everywhere, decisively.*

*Zohran Mamdani in New York beat Trump-supported Andrew Cuomo by an 8.8 point margin.*

*Despite being a 34-year-old Muslim immigrant with no connections to the city's power structure, he won with a message of economic justice and dignity for all people.*

*He paid for his campaign with small dollar donations and public matching funds and brought new people into the electorate who had checked out of politics in the past, winning voters under 30 by a 70% margin.*

*Abigail Spanberger won the Virginia governor's race by 15 points, winning voters under 30 by 40%.*

*Her party's 51-49 majority in their House of Delegates grew to 64-36, and swept all the statewide races.*

*Mikie Sherrill for Governor in New Jersey was the one that some polls showed within the margin of error, but she won by 13%, and won voters under 30 by 2 to 1.*

*The California redistricting proposal to create five more Democratic districts passed by a 30 point margin.*

*It was presented as a response to President Trump's demand that Texas pass legislation to create five more Republican districts.*

*President Trump has without evidence called the California election rigged.*

*"All 'Mail-In' Ballots, where the Republicans in that State are 'Shut Out,' is under very serious legal and criminal review. STAY TUNED!" His grammar and punctuation, not mine.*

5. The Commission concluded that the above statements, when made and disseminated using official County resources and in the context of a government-issued communication, constituted a violation of the Anne Arundel County Ethics Code § 7-5-107(a)(1), in that they amounted to the use of the prestige of office for the benefit or detriment of a political party, and were not usual and customary constituent services.

6. Respondent acknowledges the Commission's finding, accepts responsibility for the content of the communication, and has cooperated fully in the resolution of this matter.
7. The parties wish to resolve this matter without the necessity of the filing of a formal complaint, a contested hearing, and a finding of facts and conclusions of law by the Ethics Commission.

## ORDER

WHEREBY, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, by consent of the parties, that:

1. Finding of Violation.  
The Commission finds that Respondent's use of County resources to disseminate partisan political commentary in the County Executive's Weekly Letter of Nov. 6, 2025 constituted a violation of Anne Arundel County Ethics Code § 7-5-107(a)(1), prohibiting the use of the prestige of office for the benefit or detriment of a political party or candidate.
2. Public Reprimand.  
Respondent is hereby publicly reprimanded for this violation. A copy of this Consent Order shall be posted on the Ethics Commission's website and made available to the public as part of the Commission's official records.
3. Cease and Desist.  
Respondent shall cease and desist from using County resources, including official County communication channels, email systems, websites, newsletters, or social media accounts, to express partisan political commentary, endorse or oppose any candidate or political party, or otherwise engage in activity prohibited under the Anne Arundel County Public Ethics Law.
4. Corrective Measures.  
Respondent agrees to implement or continue measures to ensure compliance with County ethics requirements, including, but not limited to, review of all future official communications by appropriate staff for compliance with Ethics Code requirements.

5. No Admission of Intent.

Respondent's consent to this Order is not an admission of willful intent to violate the ethics law but constitutes acknowledgment of the Commission's findings and authority and agreement to the terms of this resolution.

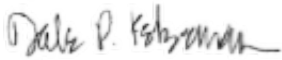
6. Effective Date.

This Order shall take effect immediately upon execution by the parties.

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**SO ORDERED AND AGREED:**

For the Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission,



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**Dale Kelberman, Esquire**

Chair, Ethics Commission

Date: 11/25/25

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For the Respondent,



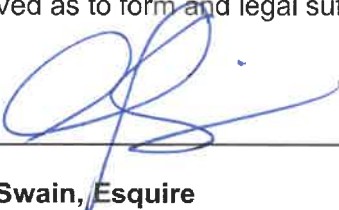
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**The Honorable Stuart Pittman**

County Executive, Anne Arundel County

Date: 11-25-25

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:



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**Greg Swain, Esquire**

Anne Arundel County Attorney

Date: 11/25/25

*Michael Botsaris*

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**Michael Botsaris, Esquire**

Executive Director, Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission

Date: 11/25/25



Gregory Swain &lt;lswai00@aacounty.org&gt;

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## County Executive's Weekly Letter - Election Reflection

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@Anne <anne@aacounty.org>  
Bcc: aaco\_all@aacounty.org

Fri, Nov 7, 2025 at 8:38 AM

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## @Anne - Announcements & Events

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### County Executive's Weekly Letter - Election Reflection



Comptroller Brooke Lierman captured the moment well yesterday when speaking to the Central Maryland Chamber of Commerce Economic Summit. She said that we all feel like we're not in control of our destiny, that so much about our economy and our lives these days is being determined by directives from Washington that are outside our control and impossible to predict. That's a bad thing when you're running a business - or a local government.

Howard County Executive Ball and I had just done a "fireside chat" in which we reflected on the sudden job market shift as a result of federal layoffs, deportations, and the uncertainty of tariffs.

In recent days, the courts ruled that Trump's refusal to pay SNAP benefits is illegal. Trump agreed to pay half. Governor Moore allocated \$62 million - in addition to the \$10 million for food banks - to pay the other half for November. Then Trump threatened to withhold the money from states that vote for Democrats.

On Tuesday we announced that the first \$500,000 of the \$10 million we set aside in our budget for response to federal attacks on our people would be invested in food boxes that will be distributed over the next four weeks. They'll be put together by the dream team at Anne Arundel County Food Bank, and distributed at four senior centers. We're doing this because, even if SNAP benefits do go out, the furloughed federal workers are showing up at our food pantries in large numbers, and we need to respond. Go to [aacounty.org/federal-impacts](https://aacounty.org/federal-impacts) for times and locations.

The world watched closely as Americans went to the polls Tuesday night in Virginia, New Jersey, New York City, California, and elsewhere. It was a major temperature check to see which political party was attracting more support in these cruel and chaotic times.

Democrats overperformed everywhere, decisively.

Zohran Mamdani in New York beat Trump-supported Andrew Cuomo by an 8.8 point margin. Despite being a 34-year-old Muslim immigrant with no connections to the city's power structure, he won with a message of economic justice and dignity for all people. He paid for his campaign with small dollar donations and public matching funds and brought new people into the electorate who had checked out of politics in the past, winning voters under 30 by a 70 percent margin.

Abigail Spanberger won the Virginia governor's race by 15 points, winning voters under 30 by 40 percent. Her party's 51-49 majority in their House of Delegates grew to 64-36, and swept all the statewide races.

Mikie Sherrill for Governor in New Jersey was the one that some polls showed within the margin of error, but she won by 13 percent, and won voters under 30 by 2 to 1.

The California redistricting proposal to create five more Democratic districts passed by a 30 point margin. It was presented as a response to President Trump's demand that Texas pass legislation to create five more Republican districts.

President Trump has without evidence called the California election rigged. "All 'Mail-In' Ballots, where the Republicans in that State are 'Shut Out,' is under very serious legal and criminal review. STAY TUNED!" His grammar and punctuation, not mine.

In Annapolis, we seem to be able to transfer power peacefully and responsibly, although the results demonstrate clearly that voters chose to stay the course in terms of policies and priorities. All of the incumbents on the ballot were re-elected, and the newcomers were all endorsed by electeds.

Why am I writing about election results in a government-issued weekly letter? Because election outcomes tell us how voters are feeling and what government policies are likely to be coming. It's information that people who run businesses, manage local governments, or are simply trying to plan a future consider carefully.

The message that I read from Tuesday night, and the exit polls bear this out, is that Americans want an end to the economic policies of the last ten months. They want to restore order in our nation.

So maybe, just maybe, members of Congress, judges, public servants, military commanders, and business owners will look at these results and side with the people in support of democracy, liberty, and justice for all.

As for Annapolis, I look forward to the December 1 inauguration of Mayor Littman and a new City Council, and working with them to steward the magical city that is the favorite place to visit in Anne Arundel County.

Until next week...

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