PROPOSED

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-

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ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD COUNTY. **FLORIDA** PERTAINING TO ELECTION CAMPAIGN PRACTICES CREATING A NEW ARTICLE V WITHIN CHAPTER 11 OF BROWARD COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES ("CODE") ENTITLED "ETHICAL CAMPAIGN PRACTICES CREATING CODE SECTIONS 11-66 THROUGH 11-71: RENUMBERING AND AMENDING SECTION 11-4 OF THE CODE; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, INCLUSION IN THE CODE, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

(Sponsored by Senator Steve Geller)

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WHEREAS, false and misleading statements made as part of an election campaign harm the public interest by confusing voters and increasing the likelihood that elections will be decided, in part, on the basis of such statements rather than on the merits and actual record of candidates seeking office;

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WHEREAS, the Broward County Ethical Campaign Practices Act, Section 11-4 of the Broward County Code of Ordinances ("Code"), applies to each candidate whose constituency resides, in whole or in part, in Broward County, and allows candidates to whom the Act applies to voluntarily pledge to follow the Statement of Ethical Campaign Practices;

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WHEREAS, no body within Broward County presently determines whether candidates adhere to the principles stated in the Statement of Ethical Campaign Practices;

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WHEREAS, the Florida Elections Commission and Federal Elections Commission have limited authority to investigate, adjudicate, and penalize claims of unfair campaign practices;

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WHEREAS, even where the Florida Elections Commission and Federal Elections Commission have jurisdiction to adjudicate unfair campaign practices, they generally take months or years to resolve cases, at which point false and misleading statements have done irreparable harm to a candidate's reputation and election prospects; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Broward County, Florida, hereby establishes the Fair Campaign Practices Committee to enable allegations of unfair campaign practices to be promptly addressed,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Chapter 11, Article V, Sections 11-66 through 11-71 of the Broward County Code of Ordinances are hereby created to read as follows:

[Underlining omitted]

ARTICLE V. ETHICAL CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

Sec. 11-66. Purpose.

Coding:

- (a) The Board of County Commissioners hereby creates the Broward County Fair Campaign Practices Committee ("Committee"). The Committee will provide candidates the opportunity to timely and fairly adjudicate disputes involving alleged unfair campaign practices, make findings of fact, and issue a public statement regarding the alleged violation of the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles.
- (b) This article shall not be interpreted in any way as granting Broward County the power to regulate speech or political expression; compel participation in any part of any proceeding; or affect anyone's rights, duties, or privileges. No decision or opinion of

the Committee will have any effect on any candidate's ability to seek redress by any other means provided by law.

Sec. 11-67. Definitions.

Coding:

The following words, phrases, and terms when used in this article shall have the indicated meanings:

- (a) Candidate shall have the meaning set forth in Section 106.011(3), Florida Statutes, as amended or renumbered.
- (b) Committee Member or Member means the Representative Members and Honorary Members of the Committee, as defined by Section 11-69(a) of the Broward County Code of Ordinances ("Code").
- (c) *Election* shall have the meaning set forth in Section 106.011(7), Florida Statutes, as amended or renumbered.
- (d) Ethical Campaign Practices Principles means those principles enumerated in Section 11-68 of the Code.
- (e) *Political advertisement* shall have the meaning set forth in Section 106.011(15), Florida Statutes, as amended or renumbered.
- (f) Political Committee shall have the meaning set forth in Section 106.011(16), Florida Statutes, as amended or renumbered.
- (g) Supermajority Vote means a vote requiring two-thirds (2/3) approval of Committee Members in attendance at any meeting.

Sec. 11-68. Ethical Campaign Practices Principles.

(a) The Board of County Commissioners of Broward County expresses that the following minimum standards of conduct should govern the statements and conduct of Candidates and Political Committees. A Candidate or Political Committee should:

1	(1)	Not make an opponent's race, color, religion, gender, national origin,
2		physical disability, or sexual orientation a significant or recurring issue in a
3		campaign;
4	(2)	Condemn any appeal to prejudice based on race, color, religion, gender,
5		national origin, age, marital status, familial status, physical disability, or
6		sexual orientation that is made in support of, or in opposition to, either one's
7		own or an opponent's campaign;
8	(3)	Not question an opponent's patriotism;
9	(4)	Not publish, display, or circulate anonymous campaign literature or political
10		advertisements;
11	(5)	Not destroy or unlawfully remove campaign materials or signs displayed on
12		public or private property;
13	(6)	Run a positive campaign emphasizing a Candidate's qualifications for office
14		and positions on issues of public concern, and limit attacks on an opponent
15		to legitimate challenges to that person's record, qualifications, and
16		positions;
17	(7)	Not use malicious untruths, innuendoes about an opponent's personal life,
18		or unfounded accusations to discredit an opponent;
19	(8)	Not use campaign material that falsifies, distorts, or misrepresents facts;
20	(9)	Prohibit any member of his or her campaign from engaging in activities or
21		making statements that would violate these principles; and
22	(10)	Repudiate the support of any individual or entity engaging in activities or
23		making statements in violation of these principles.
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- (b) These principles shall be interpreted in accordance with common sense notions of fairness, taking into account the realities of both politics and government operation. The consideration of whether conduct or expression comports with these principles should include whether said conduct or expression is misleading or unfair by omission or creates a misleading, unfair, or prejudicial implication.
- (c) Adherence to these principles is strictly voluntary and shall not, in any way, affect any Candidate's rights, duties, or privileges.

Sec. 11-69. Ethical Campaign Practices Committee; generally.

- (a) Composition. The Committee shall be composed of between nine (9) and fifteen (15) Representative Members, up to three (3) Honorary Members, and two (2) Nonvoting Representatives.
 - (1) Representative Members. Representative Members are those Committee Members who have been nominated by a nonpartisan, community organization.
 - a. The following organizations may each nominate one (1)
 Representative Member:
 - 1. The League of Women Voters of Broward County, Inc.;
 - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Fort Lauderdale/Broward Branch;
 - 3. Broward County Bar Association;
 - 4. Broward Hispanic Bar Association;
 - 5. Nova Southeastern University College of Law;
 - 6. South Florida Manufacturers Association;
 - 7. Marine Industries Association of South Florida;

- 8. South Florida Aviation Maintenance Council:
- 9. Anti-Defamation League Corp.; and
- 10. Urban League of Broward County, Incorporated.
- b. By two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Committee, the Committee may add additional groups that may nominate Representative Members. The Chair shall notify the Board of County Commissioners and County Attorney if any additional groups have been added and, by majority vote, the County Commission may nullify the addition of any group. A group added pursuant to this paragraph should be experienced in legal matters, must be a bona fide entity representing community interests, and may not endorse candidates or be parent to, subsidiary of, or be in formal legal affiliation with organizations that endorse Candidates.
- (2) Honorary Members. The Committee may, by majority vote, nominate up to three (3) Honorary Members. While not representative of any particular group, Honorary Members should be those who have provided a lifetime of service to the community and who have an outstanding reputation and unimpeachable credibility. Examples of possible Honorary Members include, but are not limited to, retired judges, former elected officials, attorneys with distinguished careers performing pro bono work, retired university deans and presidents, retired journalists, and other prominent community leaders.
- (3) Nonvoting Representatives. The Broward Democratic Party and Broward Republican Party may each nominate one (1) Nonvoting Representative

that shall be entitled to sit with the Committee and take part in the Committee's business but may not vote and shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. Minor political parties, as defined by Section 97.021(19), Florida Statutes, as amended and renumbered, may nominate a Nonvoting Representative if, in the previous Florida Governor's election, the minor political party's Candidate received at least ten percent (10%) of the vote in Broward County.

- (4) All Committee Members and Nonvoting Representatives are subject to confirmation by the Board of County Commissioners.
- (5) Before a Committee Member may vote at any hearing held pursuant to Section 11-70, the Committee Member must receive at least one (1) training session on common campaign practices, as provided by Section 11-69(e).
- (b) Committee Member Requirements. All Committee Members shall be residents of Broward County. In addition, the following restrictions and limitations apply:
 - (1) Disqualifications. No Committee Member may:
 - a. Be a Candidate for any elected office;
 - b. Currently hold elected office or have held elected office within the previous two (2) year period preceding the date of his or her appointment;
 - c. Be a member of any partisan organization (merely being a registered member of a political party shall not, in itself, be disqualifying); or
 - d. Be employed by Broward County or by any other government entity over whose elections the Committee has jurisdiction.

- (2) Recusal. A Committee Member must recuse himself or herself from any decision or proceeding involving any Candidate whom the Committee Member has endorsed or if the Committee Member has donated to the Candidate's campaign or Political Committee.
- (c) Removal. Committee Members and Nonvoting Representatives have a four-year term and may otherwise serve until they are removed, resign, or are replaced by a successor named by the nominating organization. Committee Members and Nonvoting Representatives may be reappointed for and serve for an unlimited number of terms.
 - (1) Committee Members and Nonvoting Representatives may be removed by majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners or Supermajority Vote of the Committee.
 - (2) A Committee Member is automatically removed if he or she has more than three (3) consecutive unexcused absences. The automatic removal of a Committee Member is deemed effective when written notice of the reason for the removal is sent to the Committee Member and to the appointing organization, if any, by the County Attorney or his or her designee. The absence of a Committee Member shall be deemed excused under the following circumstances:
 - a. When the Member is performing an authorized alternative activity relating to Committee business that directly conflicts with the properly noticed meeting;
 - b. The death of an immediate family member, defined as a spouse, father, mother, stepparent, one who has stood in the place of a

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- parent (in loco parentis), child, stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, guardian, or custodian;
- The death of a Member's domestic partner, or the death of a child, stepchild, parent, grandparent, or grandchild of a Member's domestic partner;
- d. The Member's hospitalization or receipt of necessary emergency medical treatment at or around the time of a properly noticed meeting;
- e. When the Member is summoned to jury duty;
- f. When the Member is attending a deposition, hearing, trial, or other legal proceeding for which attendance is required by a subpoena or by order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or
- g. For other good cause, as determined by the Chair, where such absence does not prevent the Committee from convening due to the lack of a quorum.
- (d) General Committee Procedures.
- (1) The Committee will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, both of whom must be members in good standing of any state bar or former members of any state bar whose lapse in membership is not the result of disciplinary action, and such other officers from among its Members as it may deem necessary. In any instance where this article prescribes a duty to the Chair, and the Chair is unavailable or delegates such duty to the Vice-Chair, the Vice-Chair will perform that duty. Each officer shall be elected by a majority vote for a term of one (1) year. All officers shall take office on the date of the election.

- (2) Meetings may be called by the Chair or the Vice-Chair or by any two (2) Committee Members.
- (3) A majority of Committee Members shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those present and voting shall be required to make any decision, except as otherwise provided in this article.
- (4) The Office of the County Attorney shall represent the Committee and shall supply the required administrative assistance to the Committee. The County Administrator shall supply the Committee with required meeting space.
- (e) *Meetings*. The Committee shall meet from time to time in order to conduct any business of the Committee as it may deem necessary. No fewer than two (2) times a year, the Committee shall conduct training, including hearing from speakers who are experienced in common campaign practices, in order to educate the Committee Members.

Sec. 11-70. Ethical Campaign Practices Committee; hearings.

- (a) Jurisdiction. The Committee may act only upon a written complaint filed by a Candidate or authorized representative of a Candidate ("Complainant") that alleges another Candidate or a Political Committee ("Respondent") has violated the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles in a manner directly affecting the Complainant. The Committee is without jurisdiction to consider a complaint involving any of the following offices:
 - (1) Federal office;

(2) Judicial office;

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(3) Statewide office; or

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An office that has a majority of its constituency residing outside of Broward

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- stated in Section 11-70(b), or states only a de minimis violation of the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles, it must be dismissed by the Chair.
- (2) Where a complaint is not dismissed pursuant to the preceding paragraph, the Chair will notify the Respondent of the Complaint and request that the Respondent respond in writing to the allegations made in the complaint. The Respondent shall be given five (5) business days to respond, except as provided in Section 11-71. If after consideration of the Respondent's response or nonresponse, the Chair finds there exists any reasonable basis for finding a violation has occurred and the violation is more than de minimis, the Chair will convene a hearing. If no such reasonable basis exists or if the violation is de minimis, the complaint must be dismissed. The Chair may not consider any counterclaims asserted in the response at the hearing on the complaint, and such counterclaims must be brought as a separately filed complaint.
- (3) Dismissal of a complaint is final and unreviewable. However, a new complaint may be submitted if it is based on facts that occurred or were discovered by the Complainant after the date of filing the initial complaint. Upon dismissing the complaint, the Chair will notify the Complainant in writing of the reason for the dismissal. Amendment to a dismissed complaint is not permitted.
- (4) If the Chair finds that the same Candidate or authorized representative has filed repetitious and frivolous complaints, the Chair may, in his or her discretion, immediately deny, without comment, all future complaints from that Candidate or authorized representative.

2		a.	All persons who will be providing testimony shall be sworn.
3		b.	The Complainant will make a presentation, including any witnesses
4			the Complainant may wish to call.
5		C.	The Respondent will make a presentation, including any witnesses
6			the Respondent may wish to call.
7		d.	Rebuttal by the Complainant, if requested.
8	(3)	Forma	al rules of evidence do not apply, but fundamental principles of due
9		proce	ss shall be observed and govern the proceedings. All evidence of a
10		type c	commonly relied upon by reasonably prudent persons in the conduct
11		of the	ir affairs will be admissible whether or not such evidence would be
12		admis	sible in a state of Florida court.
13		a.	The Chair is entitled to make all determinations as to the admissibility
14			of evidence.
15		b.	The Office of the County Attorney will provide the Chair and
16			Committee with legal advice as to evidence's admissibility and
17			procedural matters.
18	(4)	After	each witness provides testimony, the other party will be entitled to
19		condu	ct cross-examination, limited to the scope of the direct testimony.
20		a.	The Committee may also question either party or any witness.
21		b.	The Chair may direct the person conducting cross-examination not
22			to harass, intimidate, or embarrass the witness, or may direct the
23			witness not to address matters that are irrelevant or beyond the
24			scope of the witness's direct testimony.
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The following shall generally be the order of the proceeding:

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(2)

- c. If the party conducting the cross-examination violates direction from the Chair to end a line of questioning deemed irrelevant or designed to harass, intimidate, or embarrass a witness, the Chair may terminate the cross-examination.
- (5) The Chair shall establish reasonable time limits on hearings as well as all proceedings at the hearing and may confer with the Complainant and Respondent to determine what time limits may be appropriate. All hearings must conclude no later than eight (8) hours after they begin.
- (6) The Chair may consolidate separately filed complaints so long as all complaints are substantially related and consolidation will not cause delay.
- (7) Hearings must be publicly noticed and open to the public. All testimony shall be under oath, minutes shall be taken, and the proceedings shall be recorded.
- (8) Participation at all stages of the proceeding is voluntary and no witness or party may be compelled to respond to any question or request. In making its findings, the Committee may take into account a party's refusal to participate or appear.
- (9) If the Complainant fails to appear, the complaint must be dismissed. If the Respondent fails to appear, the Committee may proceed ex parte.
- (10) All parties and witnesses may be represented by an attorney.
- (f) Findings and Conclusions.

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(1) Upon the conclusion of proceedings, the Committee will determine whether the Respondent has committed more than a de minimis violation of the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles. A finding that there has been more

than a de minimis violation of the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles requires a Supermajority Vote and must be based on clear and convincing evidence of the violation. If the Supermajority Vote fails, the complaint must be dismissed.

- (2) Upon a finding that the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles have been violated, the Committee must decide the level of culpability. The following levels of culpability apply:
 - a. Inadvertent violation. Applicable where the unintentional violation occurs as a result of negligence, such as the failure to monitor campaign staff or campaign materials. A finding of an inadvertent violation requires only a majority vote.
 - Reprimand. Applicable where intentional conduct violates Ethical Campaign Practices Principles. A reprimand requires a Supermajority Vote.
 - c. Reprimand with condemnation. Applicable where intentional conduct violates Ethical Campaign Practices Principles in a serious and egregious way or where violations of the Ethical Campaign Practices Principles are pervasive. A reprimand with condemnation requires a Supermajority Vote.
- (3) The Committee should consider, but is not bound by, precedent of prior proceedings.
- (g) Announcement. The Committee must announce its decision at or immediately following the hearing. The Chair shall, on behalf of the Committee, state findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision will be promptly reduced to writing

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by the Office of the County Attorney and published upon the Chair's approval. The Office of the County Attorney shall maintain all written decisions on the County's website and ensure these decisions are available to serve as precedent.

- (h) *Dismissal*. The Chair must dismiss the complaint if, prior to the conclusion of any proceeding:
 - (1) The Election that the allegations relate to occurs; or
 - (2) The Committee would be without jurisdiction to hear the complaint.

Sec. 11-71. Expedited procedures.

- (a) The following procedures supplement those procedures provided for in Section 11-70. These procedures apply if a complaint is filed within thirty (30) calendar days before the applicable Election.
- (b) Complaints should be evaluated as expeditiously as possible. As determined by the Chair, the Respondent will have between one (1) and five (5) business days to respond in writing to a complaint's allegations.
- (c) At the Chair's discretion, the Chair may either call an expedited hearing to be convened as soon as practicable, providing no less than three (3) business days' notice, or may convene a hearing of the Committee as soon as practicable, providing notice to both the Complainant and Respondent, to decide whether a violation has occurred based upon only the complaint and response, if any.
- (d) Any decision by the Committee must be made immediately after the hearing concludes or as soon thereafter as practicable.
- Section 2. Section 11-4 of the Broward County Code of Ordinances is hereby renumbered as Section 11-72 and amended to read as follows:

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2	Sec. 11-72.	Ethical campaign practices.				
3	(a)	This section may be cited as the "Broward County Ethical Campaign				
4	Practices Act."					
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6	(c)	As used in this section, "candidate" means any person to whom any one or				
7	more of the following applies:					
8	(1)	Any person who seeks to qualify for nomination or election by means of the				
9		petitioning process;				
10	(2)	Any person who seeks to qualify for election as a write-in candidate;				
11	(3)	Any person who receives contributions or makes expenditures, with a view				
12		to bringing about his or her nomination or election to, or retention in, public				
13		office;				
14	(4)	Any person who appoints a treasurer and designates a primary depository;				
15		Of				
16	(5)	Any person who files qualification papers and subscribes to a candidate's				
17		oath as required by law.				
18	(d) <u>(c)</u>	Ethical Campaign Practices. Upon becoming a eCandidate for an elected				
19	public office	, a \in Candidate shall obtain from the officer before whom the \in Candidate				
20	qualifies the statement described in subsSection (e) (d) for the purpose of voluntarily					
21	executing said statement and agreeing to abide by the eEthical eCampaign pPractices					
22	established in this section. A eCandidate's decision regarding whether to execute the					
23	statement is strictly voluntary.					
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(e) (d) Statement of Ethical Campaign Practices. In accordance with subsSection (d) (c), the following statement of Ethical Campaign Practices shall be provided to each eCandidate for elected public office in Broward County:

(f) (e) A eCandidate executing the statement of eEthical eCampaign pPractices in subsSection (e) (d) shall file the original and a copy of the executed statement, bearing the eCandidate's signature, with the officer before whom the eCandidate qualifies within

five (5) days after becoming a eCandidate for the elected public office.

Section 3. Severability.

If any portion of this Ordinance is determined by any court to be invalid, the invalid portion will be stricken, and such striking will not affect the validity of the remainder of this Ordinance. If any court determines that this Ordinance, in whole or in part, cannot be legally applied to any individual, group, entity, property, or circumstance, such determination will not affect the applicability of this Ordinance to any other individual, group, entity, property, or circumstance.

Section 4. <u>Inclusion in the Broward County Code of Ordinances</u>.

It is the intention of the Board of County Commissioners that the provisions of this Ordinance become part of the Broward County Code of Ordinances as of the effective date. The sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered or relettered and the word "ordinance" may be changed to "section," "article," or such other appropriate word or phrase to the extent necessary in order to accomplish such intention.

1	Section 5. <u>Effective Date</u> .						
2	This Ordinance is effective as of the date provided by law.						
3	DDODOGED						
4	ENACTED						
5	FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE						
6	EFFECTIVE						
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8	Approved as to form and legal sufficiency: Andrew J. Meyers, County Attorney						
9	Andrew J. Meyers, County Attorney						
10	By /s/ Joseph K. Jarone 01/31/19						
11	Joseph K. Jarone (date) Assistant County Attorney						
12	By /s/ Maite Azcoitia 01/31/19						
13	Maite Azcoitia (date) Deputy County Attorney						
14	Deputy County Attorney						
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