

Complaint #26-22

Petitioner(s): Madelyn Stuart

Respondent(s): Tav Cockrell and Ian Kariuki

The following allegations were filed March 3, 2026, 4:20 PM:

- **Article 4, Section 2, Clause 4 (University Promotional Policies):** "No candidate may campaign door-to-door in residence halls or take any other action that violates the University of Houston Student Housing & Residential Life Policy."
- **University Housing & CSI Policy:** "Materials may not be posted in any unauthorized location, including doors, light posts, trees, building windows, car windshields, etc.; or over previously posted materials."

Decision [03/05/26]: Petitioner's complaint **HAS MERIT** and this **IS** a violation of the Election Code.

Conclusion: The campaign for Tav Cockrell and Ian Kariuki placed promotional flyers directly on car windshields in Zone B. Both the University of Houston Student Housing & Residential Life Policy and the Center for Student Involvement explicitly categorize car windshields as unauthorized locations for promotional materials. By failing to abide by these university-wide regulations, the campaign has committed a direct violation of the Election Code's requirement to follow campus promotion guidelines.

Sanction: Class C Violation. As these candidates have received more than one Class C violation, they are issued a **12-hour suspension** from all campaigning activities.

Appeals:

Good afternoon,

I am writing to formally appeal the violation issued to our campaign regarding "Unauthorized Posting (Car Windshields)" under Article 4, Section 2, Clause 4 of the SGA Election Code and the referenced University Housing/CSI promotional materials policy.

First, we would like to clarify that the activity referenced in the complaint occurred in an open parking lot area (Zone B) and not within a university building or parking garage.

Prior to campaigning in these areas, our campaign specifically reached out to the Election Commission to request clarification regarding whether parking garages were considered university buildings for campaigning purposes. The response we received from the Chief Election Commissioner stated that parking garages would be considered UH buildings and that campaigns should refrain from campaigning within them. At no point were open parking lots mentioned or clarified as prohibited areas.

Because the guidance provided to us specifically referenced parking garages, our campaign reasonably interpreted that open parking lots were permissible, as they are outdoor public spaces and not enclosed university facilities. The lack of explicit clarification regarding parking lots created ambiguity that should not reasonably result in a campaign violation. Second, the violation references Article 4, Section 2, Clause 4 of the SGA Election Code, which states: “Campaign materials must comply with all University of Houston policies regarding posting and distribution of promotional materials.”

This clause requires campaigns to follow existing university policies, but it does not itself define specific campaign material placement restrictions. Therefore, for a violation to occur, there must be a clearly applicable university policy that directly governs the activity in question. The document submitted in the complaint references UH Brand and Student Organization General Posting Policies, which state: “All materials must be sponsored or cosponsored by a registered student organization or a university department.” and “Materials may not be posted on any undesignated areas, including doors, glass, walls, car windshields, or over previously posted materials.”

However, these policies are specifically written to govern materials posted by registered student organizations or university departments utilizing university posting privileges and institutional promotional channels.

Our campaign, however, is not operating as a university department, institutional entity, or registered organization distributing materials through CSI or housing channels. Campaign materials are independently funded by the candidates themselves, as permitted under the SGA Election Code’s campaign finance provisions. As such, our campaign is functioning as individual students participating in the election process rather than as a university-sponsored organization using institutional posting privileges. Additionally, the activity in question occurred in an open outdoor parking lot, not within residence halls, housing-managed spaces, or university-controlled posting areas such as bulletin boards or designated poster locations.

Because of this, the promotional policy cited in the complaint does not reasonably apply to independently funded student campaign materials distributed in outdoor

parking areas, particularly where the Election Code itself does not explicitly prohibit such activity.

Furthermore, the Election Code does not clearly specify that placing flyers on vehicles in open parking lots constitutes a prohibited campaign activity. Because this restriction is not explicitly articulated within the Election Code or in the guidance previously provided by the Election

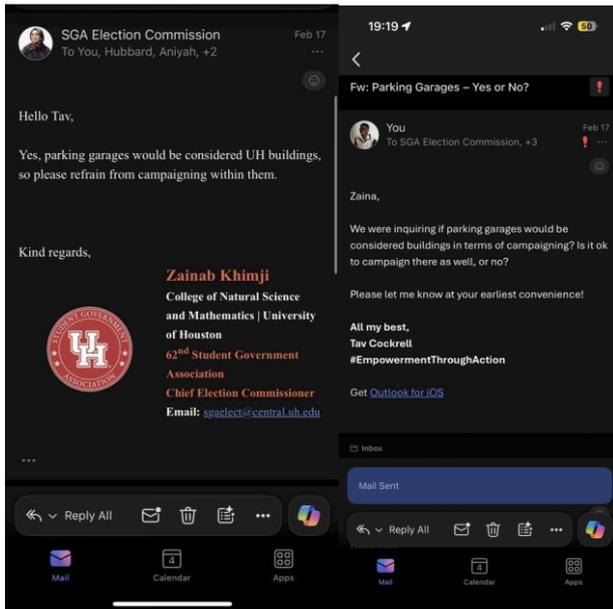
Commission, applying such a rule retroactively creates ambiguity in enforcement.

Our campaign has made a good-faith effort throughout this election cycle to comply with all Election Code regulations and has proactively sought clarification from the Election Commission when uncertainty arose. The attached correspondence demonstrates that we sought guidance specifically regarding parking areas, and the information provided to us did not indicate that open parking lots would be treated the same as university buildings or garages.

For these reasons:

- The activity occurred in an open parking lot, not a university building or garage.
- The Election Commission's prior guidance only referenced garages, not parking lots.
- Article 4, Section 2, Clause 4 requires compliance with university policies but does not itself prohibit placing flyers on vehicles.
- The posting policy cited governs registered student organizations and university-sponsored promotional materials, not independently funded campaign materials distributed by individual candidates.
- The restriction being applied was not clearly communicated in the Election Code or prior guidance provided to campaigns. Given these circumstances, we respectfully request that this violation be reconsidered and dismissed due to the lack of clear policy applicability and the reasonable reliance on the guidance provided to our campaign.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We remain happy to provide any additional clarification if necessary.



Judiciary Decision:

Violation 26-22: **Reversed** based on Article 4, Section 2, Clause 4 of the University Housing/CSI Policy, which states: “No candidate may campaign door-to-door in residence halls or take any other action that violates the University of Houston Student Housing & Residential Life Policy.” The alleged violation appears not to have occurred within the Residence Halls and therefore does not meet the criteria outlined in the policy.

Zainab Khimji

Election Commissioner

General Advertising Expectations:

1. Materials may not include advertising for personal or commercial benefit. Any sort of advertising or soliciting of a service or product is also prohibited.
2. Individuals, residential communities, and/or student organizations may be held financially responsible for repairing damages, painting costs, and general maintenance related to improper posting or the removal of posted materials.
3. Any materials from outside organizations or community groups that are co-sponsored with a student organization must have that co-sponsorship listed on the advertising for approval
4. Distribution of handbills/door hangers or leaving unapproved items in the Halls is prohibited.
5. Materials may not be posted in any unauthorized location, including doors, light posts, trees, building windows, car windshields, etc.; or over previously posted materials.

EVENT MARKETING & PROMOTION

UH BRAND AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The University of Houston has designed this page to help equip you with all of the necessary information to represent the university using UH trademarks (logos, graphics, etc.)

GENERAL POSTING POLICIES

1. All materials must be sponsored or cosponsored by a registered student organization or a university department.
2. All materials must include the full name of the sponsoring department or student organization, and all content must be printed or translated in English.
3. Materials may not be posted on any undesignated areas, including doors, glass, walls, car windshields, or over previously posted materials.
4. Materials may not include advertising for personal or commercial gain.
5. Materials from other campuses, non-profit organizations or those not affiliated with the University which advertise student, university, or community programs and are cosponsored with a university department or registered student organization may be posted with special approval from the Director of the Center for Student Involvement (CSI).
6. Failure by a student organization to comply with regulations in this policy may result in suspension of posting privileges for one semester (15 school weeks). Continuing to post while privileges are revoked can result in the suspension of the student organization.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTERS AND FLYERS

1. A "poster" as used here is any printed or pictorial matter displayed on university property inclusive of, but not limited to, flyers, table tents, etc.
2. Posting is permitted on general university bulletin boards. Use of departmental or special area boards requires that permission be obtained from the related office.
3. All general University bulletin boards are cleared before 2 p.m. on the first and third Friday of each month.
4. Poster size cannot exceed 14 inches by 22 inches.
5. Only one posting per event, idea or product is allowed per bulletin board.
6. The University may remove and discard any posters displayed on campus property which are in violation of these policies.
7. With prior approval from Student Housing and Residential Life, signs may be posted within designated areas in university residence hall locations by Student Housing and Residential Life staff members. Poster size in the residence halls may not exceed 8-1/2 inches by 14 inches and all materials can be dropped off in the Housing Services office, located on the ground floor of Cougar Village II. (Questions, please call Student Housing and Residential Life X36000).
8. In case of shortage of bulletin board space, the Center for Student Involvement (CSI) shall assign priority and determine removal date.











