

April 14, 2016

For Immediate Release:

STATE PROSECUTOR CHARGES VIOLATIONS OF THE ELECTION LAW

State Prosecutor Emmet Davitt announced today that Dennis Fusaro, 55, of Stephens City Virginia, and Stephen Waters, 51, of Greensboro, North Carolina, have been charged in the District Court for Anne Arundel County with violating and conspiring to violate the authority line requirements of the Maryland Election Laws.

The maximum penalty for each offense is one year imprisonment and a fine of \$5,000.00. No trial date has been set at this time.

The charges allege that Fusaro, who was a consultant and campaign manager for the 2014 campaign of Michael Anthony Peroutka for election to the Anne Arundel County Council, and Waters were the persons responsible for the publication and distribution of a “robo-call” to more than 5,000 persons in Anne Arundel County regarding Patrick Armstrong, Peroutka’s opponent in the 2014 general election. The call in question failed to identify Fusaro and Waters as the persons responsible for the call, and failed to state whether it was authorized by any candidate. Instead, the call falsely stated that it was “Paid for and authorized by Marylanders for Transgenders” and displayed the telephone number of an “untraceable” prepaid cell phone that was purchased for cash by Waters and Fusaro at a Walmart in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in an effort to conceal their identities as the persons authorizing and paying for the call

The text of the call was:

Hello, what a great opportunity for the LGBT community. We have a true believer for our cause in Patrick Armstrong who’s running for County Council in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Call Patrick today and thank him for his bravery in coming out of the closet. Coming out of the closet and supporting the fairness to all Marylander’s Act, the Maryland State Senate Bill 212, and supporting the rights for all transgenders. Transgenders can now openly and freely go into any bathroom of their choice based on their confused gender identity. Tell Patrick to continue to stand loud and proud in support for transgenders’ equal rights. While our opponent argued that children could be at risk by sexual predators with this new law, we celebrate the rights of transgenders and what this does for equality for transgenders in Maryland. Call him today at 410-██████████ and thank him for supporting the bathroom bill. Paid for and authorized by Marylander’s for Transgenders.

State Prosecutor Davitt commented “This message not only failed to provide the information required by Maryland law, it attempted to deliberately deceive by providing false and misleading information instead. Maryland voters are entitled to know what person or group is responsible for such material, particularly when it is published and distributed just a few days before Election Day. The credibility of the messenger is an essential factor in evaluating the value of the message.”

Although charged, the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted.