

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION**

ANGELA ARANCIO,

Charging Party,

v.

MIDDLESEX EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION,

Respondent.

PERC Charge No. _____

UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE CHARGE

Charging Party Angela Arancio (“Arancio”) hereby charges Respondent Middlesex Education Association (“MEA”) with violating N.J.S.A. 34:13A-5.4(b)(1) by retaliating against her for engaging in protected activity. In support of this charge, Arancio states as follows.

1. Arancio is a special education teacher at the Middlesex Public School District’s (“District”) Woodland Intermediate School.
2. MEA is a labor union that, for purposes of collective bargaining with the District, is the exclusive representative of special education teachers, like Arancio, among other education professionals.
3. Since 2014, Arancio has been employed by the District.
4. Since September 2014, Arancio has been a dues-paying member of MEA.
5. From 2016 until 2021, Arancio taught 4th Grade at the District’s Mauger Middle School.
6. Until 2021, Mauger Middle School had “upper” (Grades 6, 7, and 8) and “lower” (Grades 4 and 5) sections. During that time, teachers, such as Arancio, were considered elementary school teachers housed at the middle school.

7. In 2021, the District split Grades 4 and 5 from Mauger Middle School into a newly established school called Woodland Intermediate School (“Woodland”).
8. Thereafter, the District assigned Arancio to teach primarily at Woodland.
9. Teachers at Woodland were no longer considered elementary school teachers housed at the middle school, but were intermediate school teachers.
10. As a Woodland teacher, Arancio had significantly fewer non-teaching hours, which adversely impacted her ability to prepare for classes.
11. In Arancio’s view, the collective bargaining agreement between the District and MEA that was in force at that time, which was set to expire in June 2024 (“Old CBA”), did not sufficiently address the working conditions for Woodland teachers because the Old CBA did not have a category for intermediate school teachers.
12. On October 9, 2023, as MEA and the District were negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement (“New CBA”), Arancio met with MEA President Carolyn Muglia (“Muglia”) and Vice President Dana Barros (“Barros”), along with New Jersey Education Association Uniserv representative Brian Furry (“Furry”), regarding her concerns about the working conditions for Woodland teachers. She asked for the New CBA to explicitly cover Woodland. But MEA was not receptive to Arancio’s concerns.
13. On November 20, 2023, Arancio again met with Muglia, Barros, and Furry, as well as MEA’s counsel, Sandy Oxfeld, about her concerns. She left the meeting believing that MEA would file an unfair labor practice charge against the District for failing to negotiate protections for Woodland teachers.
14. In June 2024, the Old CBA expired.

15. In October 2024, during an MEA general membership meeting, Arancio asked about the status of the unfair labor practice charge that she thought the union had filed. MEA refused to acknowledge whether it filed the charge.

16. On information and belief, in connection with its contract negotiation efforts, MEA, in January 2025, formed a special committee called the Crisis Action Team (“CAT”).

17. In February 2025, Arancio became a member of CAT.

18. On May 29, 2025, during an MEA general membership meeting, Arancio learned that, contrary to its prior representations, MEA did not file the unfair labor practice charge that it originally discussed with her in 2023 and, in negotiating and executing the New CBA, did not seek or secure any additional protections for Woodland teachers.

19. That same day, May 29, 2025, Arancio filed an unfair labor practice charge against MEA. In her charge, she asserted that MEA breached its duty of fair representation based on its failure to address concerns relating to Woodland. *See* PERC Docket No. CI-2025-041.

20. On June 3, 2025, Arancio and other CAT members met via Zoom to discuss the May 29 general membership meeting. The meeting was not an official CAT meeting. Rather, it was a meeting among colleagues who happened to be CAT members. Only a small percentage of CAT members were on the Zoom call, as it was not intended to be a CAT meeting.

21. On June 4, 2025, Barbara Mark (“Mark”), a CAT member who was on the Zoom call, offered to send a text message to other MEA members in support of Arancio’s unfair labor practice charge. *See* Text message screen shot attached as Exhibit 1.

22. Arancio agreed to the text message, and Mark sent it on June 4 or 5, 2025.

23. The text message read:

Your Support is Needed

If you attended the General Membership Meeting on May 29, and have concerns about the conduct of MEA leadership and/or Uniserv Representative Mr. Furry, please consider sharing your experience.

Angela Arancio has filed a case with NJPERC regarding the events of [the May 29] meeting, particularly around potential violations of member rights. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Not allowing members (including Angela) to speak
- Accusations of dishonesty
- Unprofessional or hostile behavior
- Any inappropriate remarks or actions during or after the meeting

Your testimony or supporting evidence could be vital in helping to address these ongoing concerns and ensure accountability moving forward.

Please reach out to Angela as soon as possible at angelat831@gmail.com. The more documentation we gather, the stronger the case for change.

Thank you for standing up for respectful and fair representation.

See id.

24. Mark authored the text message in her personal capacity, not on behalf of CAT, and sent it to a broad selection of MEA members for whom she had phone numbers. Those MEA members included a number of individuals who were not CAT members. *See id.*

25. Two of the text message recipients were CAT members who supported the MEA president and sent the text message to her.

26. In response, on June 9, 2025, the MEA president sent Mark an email, stating that “the MEA Action Team has been using its platform to solicit support for Angela Arancio’s Unfair Labor Practice against the Association. This is an inappropriate use of the team’s purpose and a serious breach of its intended role.” *See* Email from Carolyn Muglia attached as Exhibit 2.

27. The June 9 email further stated that, “Effective immediately, the MEA Action Team is hereby disbanded for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year. The next MEA Leadership

Team will have the discretion to determine whether to reinstate the team and, if so, to appoint its members accordingly.” *Id.*

CLAIM FOR RELIEF
Violation of N.J.S.A. 34:13A-5.4(b)(1)
Retaliatory Interference with Exercise of Rights

28. Arancio incorporates the preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

29. Pursuant to the New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act (“NJEERA”), employee organizations are prohibited from “[i]nterfering with, restraining or coercing employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed to them by this act.” N.J.S.A. 34:13A-5.4(b)(1).

30. On May 29, 2025, Arancio, in an exercise of her statutory rights, filed an unfair labor practice charge against MEA. In the charge, she asserted that MEA breached its duty of fair representation with respect to the Woodland teachers, like her.

31. On June 3, 2025, Arancio spoke with colleagues about the conditions of their employment and her view that MEA had failed to treat union members with respect and fairly represent Woodland teachers.

32. In an effort to aid Arancio with her unfair labor charge, Mark communicated with MEA members about the charge. She encouraged anyone who was interested in helping with the charge to contact Arancio directly.

33. On June 9, 2025, Muglia notified Mark that CAT would be shut down because the CAT “platform” was used “to solicit support for Angela Arancio’s Unfair Labor Practice against the Association.”

34. Neither the June 3, 2025 conversation among Arancio and her colleagues nor the subsequent text from Mark was sent through, or on behalf of, the Crisis Action Team or on MEA time.

35. MEA expressly based its decision to disband CAT on Arancio's filing of her unfair labor practice charge and her colleagues' desire to support her charge.

36. MEA disbanded CAT to retaliate against Arancio for filing her unfair labor practice charge and chill her efforts and others' efforts to garner support for the charge.

37. Although the ways in which unions establish and disband committees and working groups may, as a general matter, be considered internal union affairs, PERC has jurisdiction to review them when, as here, they are connected to unfair practices. In other words, "the Commission will not intercede in intra-union disputes *unless* they are connected to allegations that an unfair practice has been committed." *PBA, Loc. 334 (Mendoza)*, P.E.R.C. No. 2025-3, 51 NJPER 105 (¶25 2024) (emphasis added); *see also N.J. State PBA & PBA Loc. 199 (Rinaldo)*, P.E.R.C. No. 2011-83, 38 NJPER 56 (¶8 2011).

REQUESTED RELIEF

a) Order MEA to cease and desist from retaliating against Arancio or any other bargaining unit member for exercising their rights under the NJEERA;

b) Order MEA to post a notice in each District building that informs bargaining unit members that it violated the NJEERA by retaliating against Arancio for exercising her statutory rights;

c) Order MEA to publish a notice in its weekly membership newsletter that informs bargaining unit members that it violated the NJEERA by retaliating against Arancio for exercising her statutory rights; and

d) Any other relief PERC deems appropriate.

Dated: November 25, 2025



Anthony R. Holtzman
State Bar ID No. 506042024
arholtzman@fairnesscenter.org

Jonathan R. Vaitl

jrwaitl@fairnesscenter.org

THE FAIRNESS CENTER

500 North Third Street, Suite 600

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Phone: 844.293.1001

Fax: 717.307.3424

EXHIBIT 1

7:35

Yeah I think that's good!



copy to Dana



Barbara



Yes

Barros

Wed, Jun 4 at 9:33 PM

This is what I would like to send out to all MEA members via text message. Thoughts?

Your Support is Needed

If you attended the General Membership Meeting on **May 29**, and have concerns about the conduct of **MEA leadership** and/or **Uniserv Representative Mr. Furry**, please consider sharing your experience.

Angela Arancio has filed a case with **NJPERC** regarding the events of that meeting, particularly around potential violations of member rights. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Not allowing members (including Angela) to speak
- Accusations of dishonesty
- Unprofessional or hostile behavior
- Any inappropriate remarks or actions during or after the



in iMessage



Your testimony or supporting

6:23

75



Barbara



- Not allowing members (including Angela)
- Accusations of dishonesty
- Unprofessional or hostile behavior
- Any inappropriate remarks or actions during or after the meeting

Your testimony or supporting evidence could be vital in helping to address these ongoing concerns and ensure accountability moving forward.

Please reach out to Angela as soon as possible at angelat831@gmail.com. The more documentation we gather, the stronger the case for change.

Thank you for standing up for respectful and fair representation.



I think it's great

EXHIBIT 2

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carolyn Muglia** <cmuglia@middlesexea-nj.org>
Date: Mon, Jun 9, 2025 at 4:59 PM
Subject: Disbandment Action Team
To: Barbara Wojtowicz <barbsnj67@gmail.com>
CC: Dana Barros <dbarros@middlesexea-nj.org>, Carolyn Muglia <cmuglia@middlesexea-nj.org>, William Junker <wjunker@njea.org>

Barbara,

It has come to my attention that the MEA Action Team has been using its platform to solicit support for Angela Arancio's Unfair Labor Practice against the Association. This is an inappropriate use of the team's purpose and a serious breach of its intended role.

Effective immediately, the MEA Action Team is hereby disbanded for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year. The next MEA Leadership Team will have the discretion to determine whether to reinstate the team and, if so, to appoint its members accordingly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Carolyn Muglia
President
Middlesex Education Association
cmuglia@middlesexea-nj.org



"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."
Edmund Burke

← Reply

→ Forward



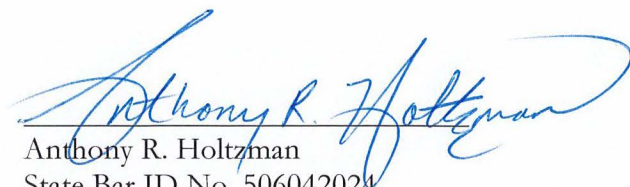
PROOF OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this date a copy of the foregoing unfair labor practice charge was served on Respondent as follows:

Via email:

Carolyn Muglia, President
Middlesex Education Association
300 John F. Kennedy Drive
Middlesex, NJ 08846
cmuglia@middlesexea-nj.org

Dated: November 25, 2025



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