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Rodriguez probe halted

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By Angela Carter

NEW HAVEN - An investigation into whether Westville Alderman Sergio Rodriguez, D-26, violated the federal Hatch Act has come to a halt, according to a citizen group that requested the inquiry.

The Steering Committee of New Haven Citizens' Action Network asked the U.S. Office of Special Counsel for an opinion on whether Rodriguez is in violation of the act because of his former job as a community services manager for the Housing Authority of New Haven.

The Hatch Act prohibits employees who earn or handle public funds from running for public office in a partisan election, or using official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the results of an election or nomination, or directly or indirectly coercing contributions from subordinates in support of a political party or candidate.

Steering Committee member Mona Berman said Thursday a representative from the Office of Special Counsel told her the investigation would not continue because Rodriguez was laid off from the housing authority.

"We think this is pretty big news," she said.

Rodriguez said he was laid off Monday and is looking for a job. "I got a letter from (Executive Director) Jimmy Miller saying they are reorganizing and consolidating positions," Rodriguez said.

"I'm not fighting the layoff. I don't want to be accused of using my position (as an alderman) to keep my job," he said.

The Steering Committee held a press conference prior to a special meeting of the group.

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