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Fields raps Miller's mailings

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VIRGINIA FIELDS complained to the city's ethics watchdog yesterday that Gifford Miller has used his City Council speaker's office to get an edge in the mayor's race with taxpayer-funded mailings.

Fields' complaint came as her own campaign sent out literature describing her as a "civil rights pioneer" and showing her with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Fields' campaign lawyer, Leo Glickman, griped to the city Conflicts of Interest Board a week after the City Council sent out four separate mailings, all prominently featuring Miller. One was a slick, full-size glossy brochure promoting the Council's campaign to reduce class size and featuring Miller reading to kids.

The other three were smaller and related to specific budget cuts, like libraries

and police issues, also featuring shots of Miller in a classroom. Council officials said about 100,000 pieces were mailed.

Glickman cited a City Charter code prohibiting officials from using their public office for private gain. He accused Miller of "using his taxpayer funded office to fulfill his own private political ambitions."

Conflicts board officials declined to comment.

Fields' camp is also arguing to the Campaign Finance Board that the mailings should count against what Miller can spend in the race.

Miller spokesman Steve Sigmund said the mailings were standard budget-time communications. "Any political opponent criticizing that work is just playing silly politics," he said, adding the mailings have helped "Miller's Council restore millions in cuts to the borough president's offices, funds she has readily accepted."

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