

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

_____	)	
In Re:	)	
	)	Administrative Order
Francisco White, Candidate	)	No. 26-048
	)	Appeal of Preliminary Determination
_____	)	

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) at a special meeting on August 13, 2026. It is an appeal from the Board’s Executive Director’s preliminary determination that Francisco White, candidate for the office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in Single-Member District 6B04 (“Candidate”) in the November 3, 2026 General Election (“the General Election”), could not have their name appear on the ballot as “Dana White.” Board Member Karyn Greenfield presided over the hearing on this matter. The Board’s General Counsel was also present.

BACKGROUND

On July 10, 2026, the Candidate submitted a Declaration of Candidacy form (“the Declaration”) in support of their candidacy for the office sought.¹ That form contained a field for a candidate to enter their name and another field for the candidate to enter how their name should be printed on the ballot. With respect to the latter field, the following admonition appears: “[W]hen listing your name, the Board will not permit a candidate to specify a modified form of their given

¹ The Declaration of Candidacy form must be filed by candidates seeking to have their names printed on the ballot.
3 DCMR § 601.1 *et seq.*

name that confuses or misleads voters and is otherwise not legally acceptable. For example, James Smith could be Jim Smith but not Jim ‘The Best’ Smith.”

On the Declaration, the Candidate entered “Francisco White” as their name and “Dana White” as the name that should be printed on the ballot.

On August 10, 2026, the Board’s Executive Director issued a preliminary determination finding that the Candidate was eligible to run for the office sought.² Her determination however also notified the Candidate that their name would appear on the ballot as “Francisco White,” thereby alerting the Candidate to the fact that the name “Dana White” would not appear on the ballot.

On August 11, 2026, the Candidate sent an email to the Board’s Office of General Counsel (“OGC”) seeking a Board hearing with respect to the Executive Director’s preliminary determination.³ In that email, the Candidate stated that “[a]s a candidate for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner of Single Member District 6B04, I’m requesting a hearing to be listed on the November 3, 2026 General Election ballot by my assumed name Dana White. This is the name I have used both socially and professionally, for years, and I’ve included proof of its usage that substantiates my request. Please advise about next steps in the process to resolve this matter. I’m looking forward to hearing from you and working together in the interests of the coming election. Thank you.” The email included a “work profile” link that indicates the Candidate is the “Advocacy Director” at Miriam’s Kitchen, a non-profit focused on ameliorating

² 3 DCMR § 601.6 (providing that the Board’s Executive Director or her designee will, within three business days after the deadline for filing nominating petitions for the office sought, issue a preliminary determination as to a candidate’s eligibility).

³ 3 DCMR § 601.11 (providing that the candidate must appeal a preliminary determination within three days after receipt of notice of an adverse determination).

homelessness issues in the District, and that their name is “Dana White.” It further identifies the Candidate’s work email address, which uses “dana.white.” The Candidate additionally provided links to three news articles from 2025 that identify “Dana White” as the Advocacy Director of Miriam’s Kitchen. The Candidate also provided a link in which they participated as “Dana White” in a forum hosted by Miriam’s Kitchen with three District mayoral candidates in 2022.

On August 11, 2026, OGC notified the Candidate via email that the Board intended to conduct a prehearing conference the morning of August 12, 2026. The Candidate appeared at the prehearing conference, and represented that they have used the first name “Dana” since 2018. The Candidate indicated that they began to use the name “Dana” in lieu of “Francisco” for personal, familial reasons. They further indicated that they used the name in their employment previous to Miriam’s Kitchen, which they subsequently substantiated with a news article that indicated their participation in a forum at a university in 2021 as a “Program Officer” for “True Colors United”—the employer they had specifically referred to in the prehearing conference. They further substantiated this assertion by submitting an article they published under the name Dana White in a Washington D.C. publication in September 2019 on behalf of their then-employer. The Candidate also indicated that they use the name “Dana” in their private, as well as professional life, and provided a social media handle from Instagram to substantiate the claim.

The Candidate was duly notified that a hearing on their appeal of the Executive Director’s preliminary determination would be held on August 13, 2026.⁴ The notice informed the Candidate that the hearing’s purpose was to allow the Candidate to present evidence to the Board that they believed justified the use of their preferred name on the ballot.

⁴ 3 DCMR § 601.12 (providing that the Board shall hold a hearing on preliminary determination appeals within three days after receipt of the appeal).

At the Board hearing, the General Counsel summarized the procedural history of the case and the assigned OGC attorney described the issues presented by the Candidate at the prehearing conference and the evidence the Candidate had offered. The Board then heard from the Candidate, who reiterated the request that their name appear on the ballot as “Dana White” for the reasons they had represented to the OGC at the prehearing conference. Candidate White specifically highlighted that the choice to use “Dana” in their personal and professional life rather than “Francisco” was based on their familial history, and that any witnesses who might testify to their consistent use of Dana for the past seven or eight years would not even be aware that their given name is Francisco.

After the Candidate’s testimony, the General Counsel recommended that the Board waive the regulation at 3 DCMR § 1203.2 (requiring that the name of candidates that appears on the ballot be the candidate’s actual name or a modified version of the candidate’s given name) and allow the name that would appear on the ballot for the Candidate to be “Dana White” instead of “Francisco White,” noting that use of the name would not confuse voters, would not amount to electioneering on the ballot, and would be supported by the evidence demonstrating the Candidate consistently uses the name Dana in their personal and professional life.

After hearing the evidence and the General Counsel’s recommendation, Board Member Greenfield made a motion to allow the Candidate’s name to appear on the ballot as “Dana White.”

ANALYSIS

The pertinent Board regulation provides that:

The name of a candidate for election shall appear on the ballot in the form designated on the Declaration of Candidacy executed and filed by the candidate . . . provided, that the name conforms to ... the given name or names, or the initial letter of a given name, if any, and surname.

... The Board may permit a candidate to specify a modified form of his or her given name or names on the ballot if the Board finds that the change shall not confuse or mislead the voters and is legally acceptable.⁵

The Board has previously explained that the regulation at issue serves the valid election administration interests of the Board, including that the ballot not be improperly used as a billboard for political advertising and the objective of avoiding voter confusion as to the identity of the candidate. Where, however, a candidate is known to the community by another given name that is not confusing or otherwise improper, the Board has waived its regulations to allow a candidate to include a preferred given name on the ballot. *See, e.g., In re Taylor*, BOE Case No. 26-016 (March 30, 2026); *In re Bose*, BOE Case No. 24-029 (August 20, 2024).

Here, it is undisputed that the Candidate’s legal name is “Francisco White.” However, the evidence indicates that they been known in their professional and private life as “Dana White,” for approximately eight years.⁶ This evidence further indicates that voters would know the Candidate as “Dana White” and suggests that identifying them instead as “Francisco” might confuse voters. In addition, the name “Dana” is not associated with a political message. Accordingly, voters would not be confused about the identity of the Candidate if their name on the ballot appeared as “Dana White” and there is no improper use of the ballot associated with placing the name “Dana White” on the ballot.

⁵ 3 DCMR §§ 1203.1-1203.2. The regulations also provide that the use of titles, degrees, and prefixes on the ballot is prohibited.

⁶ Unlike some prior cases where a candidate has been known in the community by a name other than their given name for a lengthier period of time, Candidate White has used the first name “Dana” for only approximately eight years. That said, the Candidate has provided evidence that he has been widely known in the community by this first name for a period of time consistent with the candidate in *In Re William Kuduk*. While we do not here identify a definite period of time or extent of community knowledge of a candidate’s use of a name that is not their given name that would justify waiving our regulations, we think the evidence that voters will not be confused by the name “Dana White” is sufficient here to warrant waiving our regulations.

CONCLUSION

For these reasons, it is hereby:

ORDERED that the Executive Director's preliminary determination that the Candidate cannot use the name "Dana White" in lieu of "Francisco White" on the 2026 Primary Election ballot is **REVERSED**. Subject to any successful petition challenge that might be filed, the name to be printed on the ballot for the Candidate shall be "Dana White."

I issue this written order today, which is consistent with the oral ruling rendered on August 13, 2026.

Dated: August 14, 2026



Karyn Greenfield
Presiding Board Member