

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Kendall Ridley,	)	
Challenger	)	Administrative
	)	Order #26-057
	)	
v.	)	Re: Challenge to Nominating
	)	Petition Submitted for
	)	Advisory Neighborhood
	)	Commissioner, SMD 8C04
De’Ja Edmundson,	)	
Candidate.	)	

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Introduction

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) on September 3, 2026. It is a challenge to the nominating petition submitted by De’Ja Edmundson (“the Candidate”) to run for the office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in Single Member District (“SMD”) 8C04 in the November 3, 2026 General Election (“the General Election”). The challenge was filed by Kendall Ridley (“the Challenger”), a registered voter in the District of Columbia, pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08(o)(1). Board Members Karyn Greenfield and Michael Wakefield presided over the hearing. The Challenger appeared *pro se*. The Candidate did not appear at either the prehearing conference or the Board hearing. The Board’s General Counsel, Terri Stroud, was also present.

Background

On August 5, 2026, the Candidate submitted a nominating petition to appear on the ballot as a candidate in the General Election contest for the office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in SMD 8C04 (“the Petition”). The Candidate needed to submit at least 25

signatures from registered qualified electors registered within the SMD to obtain ballot access for this office. The Petition contained 28 signatures across four petition sheets. Pursuant to Title 3, District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (D.C.M.R.) § 1603.7, the Board's Registrar of Voters accepted 28 signatures for review. All four petition sheets were circulated by a single circulator, Salim Adofo, who is himself an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner.

On August 8, 2026, the Board posted the Petition for public inspection for 10 days, as required by law. On August 17, 2026, the Challenger, who is the incumbent Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for SMD 8C04, challenged the Petition.

The Challenger filed challenges to 19 of the 28 signatures on the Petition. The signatures were challenged pursuant to Title 3 D.C.M.R. § 1607.1 of the Board's regulations on the following grounds: the signer, according to the Board's records, is not registered to vote at the address listed on the petition at the time the petition was signed (§ 1607.1(b)); the petition does not include the address of the signer (§ 1607.1(e)); and the signature is not made by the person whose signature it purports to be (§ 1607.1(i)).

Assistant Registrar's Preliminary Determination

The Assistant Registrar's review of the challenge indicated that 17 of the 19 signature challenges were valid. She found that one challenge is valid because the signer is not registered to vote; two challenges are valid because the signer is not registered to vote at the address listed on the petition at the time the petition was signed; one challenge is valid because the petition does not include the address of the signer; and thirteen challenges are valid because the signature is not made by the person whose signature it purports to be.

Accordingly, the Assistant Registrar preliminarily determined the Petition contained 11 valid signatures, which is 14 signatures below the 25 required for ballot access.

August 31, 2026 Pre-Hearing Conference

Pursuant to 3 D.C.M.R. § 415.1, the Office of the General Counsel convened a prehearing conference with the parties on August 31, 2026. In her findings report issued prior to the prehearing conference, the Assistant Registrar outlined her determinations with respect to the validity of each signature challenged and provided a key code explaining the notations she used to indicate the basis for upholding or denying each challenge.

The Candidate did not appear at the prehearing conference. The presiding attorney attempted to contact the Candidate by telephone during the conference and reached her voicemail. The Candidate had received notice of the conference by way of both the original notice of the prehearing conference and a subsequent notice advising her of the Registrar's findings, including advisement of her right to counsel, her right against self-incrimination, and the potential applicability of D.C. Official Code §§ 1-1001.14(b), 1-1001.18, and 22-2405. The Challenger appeared *pro se*.

An election services specialist presented the Assistant Registrar's findings on the record. The Challenger stated that she fully agreed with the Assistant Registrar's findings and expressed concern regarding the 13 signatures that appear to have been forged, particularly given that the circulator of the Petition is himself an elected official. The Challenger did not identify additional witnesses or evidence beyond the record.

Because the Candidate did not appear, no issues were preserved on her behalf for consideration by the Board. The Candidate did not file a withdrawal of candidacy form.

As the matter was not resolved, it was set for a Board hearing on September 3, 2026. The Board notified the Candidate and the Challenger of the hearing.

September 3, 2026 Board Hearing

A representative of the Voter Services Division was present at the hearing and presented the Assistant Registrar's findings. The staff attorney from the Office of the General Counsel summarized the procedural history and the prehearing conference. He confirmed that the Candidate had received notice of the hearing on two occasions, including advisement of her right to counsel, right against self-incrimination, and the potential applicability of D.C. Official Code §§ 1-1001.14(b), 1-1001.18, and 22-2405. He noted that the Petition was not circulated by the Candidate but by Salim Adofo, and that the four non-forgery defects are each grounded in statute, non-waivable, and alone reduce the Petition to 24 valid signatures. With respect to the 13 forgery findings, the staff attorney noted that D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08(o)(3) requires that all signatures be made by the person whose signature it purports to be. The Challenger stated that ballot access should only be allowed when it is legitimate and asked that the Board accept the findings of the Registrar and deny ballot access.

The General Counsel recommended that the Candidate be denied ballot access. Member Greenfield moved to deny the Candidate ballot access. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Member Greenfield stated on the record that she assumed the Board would follow up on the forgery issue, and the General Counsel confirmed that the signature mismatches would be the subject of a later proceeding.

Discussion

The minimum number of signatures required to obtain ballot access for the office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for SMD 8C04 in the November 3, 2026 General Election is 25 signatures from registered qualified electors residing within the SMD. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08(i)(1)(E); 3 D.C.M.R. § 1603.7. The Petition contained 28 signatures. The Challenger

filed challenges to 19 signatures. The Registrar determined that 17 of the 19 challenges were valid, reducing the number of valid signatures to 11.

The Board upholds the finding of the Registrar that the petition contains 11 valid signatures. The Candidate has thus failed to submit a sufficient number of valid signatures for ballot access.

Conclusion

As a result of this challenge, the Board finds that the Petition contains 11 valid signatures – 14 signatures below the number required for ballot access. It is hereby:

ORDERED that challenge to the nominating petition of De'Ja Edmundson for the office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, Single-Member District 8C04 in the General Election is hereby **UPHELD**.

The Board issues this written order today, which memorializes its oral ruling rendered on September 3, 2026.

Date: September 8, 2026



Karyn Greenfield
Presiding Board Member