

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

In the matter of)	
Samante Baldwin)	Administrative Order #25-020
)	

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Introduction

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) at a hearing convened on December 3, 2025. It is an enforcement proceeding with respect to two signatures, one in the name of Samante Baldwin, entered in the same handwriting on a nominating petition submitted by a candidate in the 2025 Special Election for Ward 8 Councilmember (“Special Election”). Chairman Gary Thompson and Board member Karyn Greenfield presided over the hearing. The Board’s General Counsel was also present.

Background

On April 17, 2025, Kenneth Diggs submitted a nominating petition to appear on the ballot in the contest for the office of Ward 8 Councilmember (“the Petition”) in the 2025 Special Election. After the Petition was accepted by the Board’s staff and posted as required by law, a D.C. voter submitted a timely challenge to the Petition’s signatures. As a result, the Registrar for the Board reviewed the challenged signatures and, on May 1, 2025, issued a report of her findings. In that report, the Registrar found, among other things, signatures that were made in the same hand. Specifically, on sheet 64 of Mr. Diggs’ Petition, at lines 5 and 6, there were signatures for Samante Baldwin and another individual that were written in the same hand and were for voters residing at the same address. Signatures made in the same hand indicated that someone other than the person whose name was associated with the signature signed the Petition in violation of D.C. Official

Code § 1-1001.08(b)(3) (“[a]ll signatures on a petition shall be made by the person whose signature it purports to be and not by any other person”) as well as other possible violations of law. In response to the Registrar’s findings, the Office of General Counsel advised candidate Diggs of election law violations indicated by the Registrar’s findings.¹ Subsequently, candidate Diggs withdrew from the race.

After the Special Election was conducted, the Board’s Office of General Counsel (“OGC”) launched an investigation into the suspect signatures. One of the names associated with these suspect signatures was Samante Baldwin. Mr. Baldwin and the voter whose name appeared on the Petition as the other signer of the suspect signatures appeared at a pre-hearing conference on November 18, 2025. As a result of claims made by these voters at the pre-hearing conference,² OGC examined the voter files for those two individuals and determined that the Petition signature for Samante Baldwin was consistent with other signatures on file for Mr. Baldwin and was consistent with the other suspect signature. Further, OGC concluded that the other suspect signature did not match the signatures on file for the other voter.

As noted, the Registrar had concluded in the challenge process that the signatures at issue were written in the same hand. Accordingly, OGC notified Samante Baldwin that a Board hearing in an enforcement matter with respect to his signing the Petition in the name of another voter would be held on December 3, 2025.³

¹ As Mr. Diggs was the circulator of sheet 64, the signatures in the same hand indicated that Mr. Diggs had not complied with a statutory requirement that he personally witness each signer sign his Petition. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08. The Board has addressed Mr. Diggs’ non-compliance with that circulator requirement in a separate opinion issued concurrently with its written order here.

² Mr. Diggs was also present as he was under investigation with respect to his role as a circulator of the Petition sheet with evidently forged signature(s). He did not, however, provide information that would shed light on who signed the Petition twice.

³ Mr. Baldwin was notified via email at the address that he agreed, during the pre-hearing conference, to use for purposes of communicating in this matter.

Mr. Baldwin did not appear at the December 3, 2025 hearing.⁴ The Board Chair requested that the OGC attorney investigating the matter present the case against Mr. Baldwin. The attorney summarized the facts and proceedings for the Board and asked that the Board accept into evidence Petition sheet 64 and signature samples for Mr. Baldwin. The offered evidence was accepted into the record.

After hearing the case evidence, the Board Chair then asked the General Counsel for her recommendation. The General Counsel recommended that the Board find that Mr. Baldwin had signed Mr. Diggs Petition for another person without wrongful intent. She recommended a \$50.00 civil fine be imposed. The Board's Chair made a motion that the General Counsel's recommendation be adopted and that Mr. Baldwin be fined \$50.00. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Discussion

The law requires that each petition signature be made by the person whose signature it purports to be and not by any other person. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08(b)(3). The evidence conclusively shows that Mr. Baldwin signed Mr. Diggs' Petition for another person. We are authorized upon the recommendation of the General Counsel to impose civil penalties of up to \$2,000 for each violation of such election law. D.C. Official Code §1-1001.18(a)-(b).

Given the facts and circumstances here, however, the General Counsel has recommended enforcement action consisting of only a civil fine of \$50.00. We recently imposed a \$25.00 fine in a similar case.⁵ In that case, the fine was based on a stipulated agreement in which the offending petition signer took responsibility for her actions, her family members corroborated her claim that

⁴ Parties are routinely advised (and were in this case) that the pre-hearing conference and Board hearing will proceed in their absence. See 3 DCMR §§ 403.4, 415.2, and 418.1.

⁵ *In the matter of: Lakeshia Lloyd Lee*, DC BOE Case No. 25-003 (issued 3/7/2025).

she entered their signatures on the petition with their permission, and she was remorseful. Here, the culprit did not appear and did not provide any facts that might mitigate the fine. Accordingly, we conclude that a higher fine is appropriate.

Conclusion

In light of the General Counsel's recommendation, it is hereby:

ORDERED that the recommendation of the General Counsel is **ACCEPTED**, and that Mr. Baldwin is directed to pay a civil fine of \$50.00 by no later than January 30, 2026.⁶ The Board issues this written order today, which is consistent with its oral ruling rendered on December 3, 2025.

Date: December 4, 2025



Gary Thompson
Chairman
Board of Elections

⁶ **Payment must be made by check or money order made out to the "D.C. Treasurer."** It may be mailed to the attention of the General Counsel at the Board's offices (1015 Half Street, Suite 750, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003) or hand delivered at that address.