

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

In the Matter of)
Margo Falls)
)
)
Administrative
Order #26-004

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Introduction

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) on February 4, 2026. It concerns a recommendation by the Board’s General Counsel that the Board take civil enforcement action against Margo Falls based on stipulated facts concerning her having erroneously voting a mail ballot issued to another voter. Chairman Gary Thompson and Board member Karyn Greenfield presided over the hearing. Ms. Falls and the Board’s General Counsel, Terri Stroud, were also present.

Background

As a result of a Voter Participation Project report issued by the Election Registration Information Center (“ERIC report”), the Board’s Office of General Counsel (“OGC”) became aware of evidence that ballots were cast in the same voter’s name in the D.C. 2024 General Election (“GE”) and in the 2024 GE in Maryland.¹ Based on the ERIC report findings, Board staff checked the ballot return envelope for the ballot that had been cast by mail in D.C. and saw that the signature on that envelope was reasonably decipherable as a name that was different from the printed name just below the signature of the voter to whom the ballot was issued.

¹ Such evidence of voting twice presented the prospect of, *inter alia*, violations of 52 (“Voting and Elections”) U.S. Code § 10307 (“Prohibited Acts”).

In response to this information, OGC launched an investigation into the 2024 D.C. GE ballot that was cast by someone other than the voter to whom it was issued. OGC was able to ascertain that the signature on the ballot return envelope was for Margo Falls and sent her notice of a pre-hearing conference in the matter. Ms. Falls appeared on January 15, 2026 at the pre-hearing conference and explained that she had no recollection of voting the ballot issued to another. Following the January 15, 2026 pre-hearing, the OGC attorney emailed Ms. Fall the image of the ballot return envelope. Ms. Falls promptly responded by return email that the signature on the ballot return envelope was indeed hers. A further prehearing was then scheduled and held on January 29, 2026 to discuss resolution of the case.

Following discussions at the pre-hearing conferences, Ms. Falls was sent a stipulated agreement in the matter and she later executed that agreement. By that stipulation, Ms. Falls acknowledged that the signature on the signature line appearing above another person's pre-printed name on the D.C. 2024 GE ballot return envelope was her signature. Ms. Falls agreed in the stipulation that she believed that she mistakenly voted a D.C. 2024 GE ballot that was issued to another voter.² She admitted that she failed to exercise care and caution in completing and returning the ballot to the Board. Ms. Falls further stipulated that she did not intend to vote a ballot issued to another voter.

At the February 4, 2026 Board hearing, the General Counsel requested that the OGC attorney who investigated the matter state the facts of the case. The OGC attorney reiterated the facts described above and that Ms. Falls had stipulated that she had erroneously voted the ballot

² The General Counsel's investigation did not reveal any evidence that a D.C. 2024 General Election ballot that had been issued to Ms. Falls had been voted. Accordingly, there is no evidence here of double voting in D.C.

of another in the 2024 GE. The attorney asked that the stipulation and supporting documents be accepted into the record and the Board Chair granted that request.

Ms. Falls was offered an opportunity to speak and she stated that did not realize that the 2024 GE mail ballot that she had cast was issued to another, and that she did not intend to vote that person's ballot. With this presentation of case and the evidence, the General Counsel made a recommendation that a civil fine of \$100.00 be imposed on Ms. Falls for unintentionally voting another's ballot.

After hearing from the General Counsel and her staff, and considering Ms. Falls' statement, the Board Chair made a motion that a civil fine of \$100.00 be imposed on Ms. Falls for her erroneously attempting to vote another person's ballot. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.

Discussion

The election laws provide that it is a crime to "make any false representations as to the person's qualifications for . . . voting" or to fraudulently cast a ballot.³ The Board can, upon the General Counsel's recommendation, initiate enforcement with respect to criminal matters by referral to the U.S. Department of Justice and/or to the Attorney General for the District of Columbia.⁴ We may also impose civil fines of up to \$2,000 for each election law violation upon the recommendation of the General Counsel.⁵ Our task, therefore, is to determine whether there

³ See D.C. Code § 1–1001.14(a) and § 1–1001.14(a-1)(1)(D), respectively. The penalty for violating either of those provisions is a fine up to a \$10,000 and/or a term of incarceration of up to 5 years. In addition, D.C. Official Code § 22-2405(b) criminalizes willfully making false statements to D.C. government entities. The penalty for that violation is a fine of up to \$1,000 and imprisonment of not more than 180 days, or both.

⁴ See D.C. Code § 1–1001.18(a)-(b). Civil penalties for voter fraud may be imposed in addition to criminal ones. See D.C. Code § 1–1001.14 (c) ("The provisions of this section shall be supplemental to, and not in derogation of, any penalties under other laws of the District of Columbia.").

⁵ *Id.* (authorizing such civil penalty for a violation of "any provision" of the election laws). See also D.C. Code § 1–1001.05(a)(16) (authorizing the Board to "[p]erform such other duties as are imposed upon it by this subchapter").

is sufficient proof of an attempt to vote falsely or fraudulently in violation of the election laws and, if so, to determine the appropriate enforcement action.

In this matter, the facts are undisputed. Ms. Falls has admitted that, contrary to the qualifications for voting specified in the instructions provided with the ballot, she signed a name on the ballot return envelope signature line that was not the “[s]ignature of voter to whom this ballot was sent[.]” She has acknowledged facts showing that she cast a ballot issued to another party.

That said, Ms. Falls has stipulated that her conduct was erroneous and that she did not intend to vote a ballot that was issued to another voter. Ms. Falls’ claim is supported by the fact that she did not sign the name of the intended recipient of the ballot or otherwise attempt to forge the name of the voter. Instead, the ballot return envelope evidence shows a hand-written signature that is reasonably decipherable as a name that differs considerably from the type-printed voter name appearing immediately below it, a fact which reasonably suggests Ms. Falls attempted to vote another’s ballot by mistake. Because Ms. Falls did not vote in her own name in the D.C. 2024 GE, Ms. Falls’ actions did not result in her casting more than one ballot. Thus, there is no evidence of anything nefarious here. Rather, the evidence is that, because Ms. Falls did not exercise care and caution in voting the ballot, she unintentionally completed and returned to the Board another voter’s ballot.

Based on the record before us, we decline to find that Ms. Falls had the level of intent required for a criminal conviction. That said, the General Counsel has recommended that a civil penalty be imposed. We concur that Ms. Falls’ conduct should have consequences. Under the circumstances, we believe that a fine of \$100.00 is appropriate.

Conclusion

For the reasons indicated above, it is hereby:

ORDERED that the recommendation of the General Counsel is **ACCEPTED**, and that

Ms. Falls is directed to pay a civil fine of \$100 by no later than no later than March 31, 2026.⁶

Date: February 4, 2026



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.