

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

In the Matter of)	
Ashlynn Fields)	Administrative
)	Order #25-007

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Introduction

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) on March 3, 2025. It concerns a recommendation by the Board’s General Counsel that the Board take civil enforcement action against Ashlynn Fields based on stipulated facts concerning Ms. Fields’s erroneously voting a mail ballot issued to another voter. Chairman Gary Thompson and Board member Karyn Greenfield presided over the hearing. The Board’s General Counsel and Ms. Fields 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. 2022 General Election (“GE”) and in the 2022 GE in Colorado.¹ Based on the ERIC report findings, Board staff checked the ballot return envelope for the ballot cast in D.C. and saw that the signature on that envelope was reasonably decipherable as 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 2022 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 Ashlynn Fields. While initial attempts to notify Ms. Fields of a pre-hearing conference in the matter were unsuccessful, OGC was able to contact voter whose name appeared on the ballot and he provided a written sworn statement that he moved to Colorado well before the 2022 GE. Unfortunately, that voter did not cancel his D.C. voter registration, which meant that a 2022 GE ballot made out to him was automatically sent to his former D.C. address. When, subsequently, notice to Ms. Fields of a further pre-hearing conference was successful, Ms. Fields promptly reached out to OGC and acknowledged that she had resided at the former D.C. address of this voter and that she likely inadvertently cast the ballot issued to him.

Ms. Fields appeared at a February 21, 2022 pre-hearing conference and cooperated fully in OGC's investigation. Following discussions at the pre-hearing conference, Ms. Fields was sent a stipulated agreement in the matter and she later executed that agreement. By that stipulation, Ms. Fields acknowledged that the signature on the signature line appearing above another person's pre-printed name on the 2022 General Election ballot return envelope was her signature and she stipulated to the admission into evidence of the scanned image of that ballot return envelope. Ms. Fields agreed in the stipulation that she erroneously voted a D.C. 2022 General Election 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. Fields further stipulated that she did not intend to vote a ballot issued to another voter.

² The General Counsel's investigation did not reveal any evidence that a D.C. 2022 General Election ballot that had been issued to Ms. Fields had been voted. Accordingly, there is no evidence here of double voting.

At the March 3, 2025 Board meeting, the OGC attorney who investigated the matter briefly stated the facts of the case and explained that the stipulation had been offered for entry into the record and that the matter was being submitted to the Board for enforcement subject to the recommendation of the General Counsel. Before hearing from the General Counsel, the Board Chair invited Ms. Fields to speak. Ms. Fields reiterated to the Board that her conduct was unintentional. The General Counsel noted that, while Ms. Fields did not intend to vote the ballot of another voter, some action should be taken. Accordingly, she recommended that a \$100.00 civil penalty be imposed.

After hearing from the General Counsel and Ms. Fields, the Board Chair made a motion that a civil fine of \$100.00 be imposed on Ms. Fields for her 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. Fields 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. Fields has stipulated that her conduct was erroneous and that she did not intend to vote a ballot that was issued to another voter. Ms. Fields’ 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 “Ashlynn Fields” immediately over an entirely different type-printed voter name; a fact which reasonably suggests Ms. Fields attempted to vote another’s ballot by mistake. Because Ms. Fields did not vote in her own name in the 2022 General Election, Ms. Fields’ 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. Fields 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. Fields 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. Fields’ 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. Fields is directed to pay a civil fine of \$100 by no later than April 30, 2025.⁶

Date: March 7, 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.