

GOVERNMENT  
OF  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

+ + + + +

FRIDAY

APRIL 17, 2026

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The District of Columbia Board of Elections convened via videoconference, pursuant to notice at 9:30 a.m. EDT, Gary Thompson, Chair, presiding.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS MEMBERS PRESENT:

GARY THOMPSON, Chair  
KARYN GREENFIELD, Member

BOARD OF ELECTIONS STAFF PRESENT:

TERRI STROUD, General Counsel  
MARISSA CORRENTE, Registrar of Voters  
MILLICENT GREEN-WRIGHT, Assistant  
Registrar of Voters  
CHRISTINE PEMBROKE, Attorney Advisor  
QUINN PHILBIN, Attorney Advisor  
JORGE QUINTANA, Attorney Advisor  
BERT RUSS, Attorney Advisor

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 9:31 a.m.

3 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, good morning,  
4 everybody. Happy Friday.

5 We have a long day ahead of us.

6 Thank you for being here.

7 My name's Gary Thompson, the Chair of the  
8 D.C. Board of Elections.

9 And to my right is Karyn Greenfield, my  
10 fellow Board Member.

11 We have a quorum, and we're here today for  
12 a special Board meeting to discuss a number of  
13 petition challenges. I think we have 16, 17 to get  
14 through, so bear with us. We'll go through them  
15 one at a time.

16 There's a lot of detail involved, a lot  
17 of things we have to read into the record with each  
18 challenge, but we're going to hear from everybody  
19 in a very orderly way.

20 Of course, the overall prevailing standard  
21 that we apply on the Board is to favor ballot access.

22 That's our default, that's our fallback. We want

1 to allow candidates access to the ballot.

2 But at the same time, we have very specific  
3 laws and regulations that govern how many signatures  
4 have to be gathered, what's a proper signature, and  
5 a whole lot of detail to that.

6 And of course, we have to follow letter  
7 of the law in that regard.

8 So, we're here today to strike a balance,  
9 hopefully a fair one, case by case.

10 So, with that, I move we'll adopt our  
11 agenda, which we've had a chance to look at, that  
12 lists all the different challenges that we're going  
13 to discuss today.

14 Is there a second?

15 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Second.

16 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, all in favor?

17 (Chorus of aye.)

18 CHAIR THOMPSON: The agenda is adopted.

19 Also, before we dive in, I just want to  
20 give an advanced thank you to everybody at the BOE  
21 who's worked so hard on this.

22 Obviously, General Counsel Terri Stroud,

1 everyone else in the legal group, probably nobody  
2 more so than Marissa Corrente, our Registrar, who's  
3 here, and her amazing team.

4 So, with that, I'll turn it over to General  
5 Counsel Stroud to guide us through the challenges  
6 one at a time.

7 MS. STROUD: Thank you, and good morning,  
8 everyone.

9 So, we have before the Board 13 petition  
10 challenges that have to be resolved today.

11 And so, how we're going to proceed is this,  
12 for each matter, we're going to have the parties  
13 state their names and addresses for the record.

14 Then, we're going to have Board staff state  
15 their names and titles for the record.

16 If a party's not present, we can proceed  
17 ex parte pursuant to 3 DCMR 403.4 which permits the  
18 Board to proceed ex parte if any person or party  
19 waives the right to be present at the hearing, or  
20 fails to appear at the hearing.

21 If a party does not appear, we'll have  
22 Board staff discuss the notice that was provided

1 to the parties with respect to them.

2 We're going to have the Registrar of Voters  
3 read the summary of her reports into the record.

4 And then, we'll have the representative  
5 from the Office of the General Counsel discuss what  
6 happened to this point procedurally and what issues  
7 remain for the Board to decide.

8 Then, we'll have the party who came out  
9 on the adverse side of the Registrar's findings  
10 respond to the Registrar's report.

11 Then, we'll hear from the other party.

12 And then, I will make a recommendation to  
13  
14

15 And then, the Board will make a  
16 determination, before which they can either, you  
17 know, they can rule from the dais or they can go  
18 into closed session to deliberate pursuant to D.C.  
19 Official Code 2-575(b)(4)(A) and (13) which  
20 provides that a meeting or a portion of a meeting  
21 may be closed to consult with an attorney to obtain  
22 legal advice and to preserve the attorney/client

1 privilege between the Office of the General Counsel  
2 and the Board, or to deliberate upon a decision in  
3 adjudication action or proceeding by the Board in  
4 its exercise of its quasi-judicial functions.

5 And depending on -- well, not depending  
6 on the Board's ruling, the party against whom the  
7 Board rules will have the opportunity to appeal to  
8 the D.C. Court of Appeals. And the last date to  
9 do so would be Monday, April 20th.

10 Okay, so, we will proceed with our first  
11 hearing, which is James Harnett v. Kathy Henderson,  
12 who is the candidate for the Mayor of the District  
13 of Columbia.

14 And I see if Ms. Henderson -- okay, she  
15 is present.

16 Ms. Henderson, if you could state your name  
17 and address for the record?

18 MS. HENDERSON: Kathy Henderson, 1807 L  
19 Street, Northeast, Washington, D.C., 20002.

20 MS. STROUD: And Mr. Harnett, if you  
21 would, if you can state your name and address for  
22 the record?

1 (No audible response.)

2 MS. STROUD: Okay, so, Mr. Harnett is not  
3 present but as I indicated, we can proceed.

4 And so, with that, would the Registrar of  
5 Voters read the report into the record?

6 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you and good morning.  
7 So, this report is --

8 MS. STROUD: I think the mic -- we have  
9 a mic issue, but we're also experiencing feedback.

10 MS. CORRENTE: Good morning, can you hear  
11 me?

12 MS. STROUD: Yes.

13 MS. CORRENTE: So, this is an updated  
14 report that was sent yesterday following some  
15 information that Ms. Kathy Henderson shared in the  
16 pre-hearing conference.

17 So, it's dated April 16th.

18 On March 18th, 2026, Kathy Henderson  
19 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
20 ballot as a candidate in the June 16th, 2026 primary  
21 election for the Office of Mayor for the Democratic  
22 Party.

1           The minimum signature requirement to  
2 obtain ballot access for this office is 2,000  
3 signatures.

4           The petition contained 2,125 signatures.  
5       The petition was posted for public inspection for  
6 10 days, as required by law.

7           The petition was challenged on March 27th,  
8 2026 by James Harnett, a registered voter in the  
9 District of Columbia.

10          Challenger Harnett filed challenges to 173  
11 of the 2,125 signatures submitted, enumerated by  
12 line and page number and individual challenge sheets  
13 filed for each petition page.

14          The signatures were challenged pursuant  
15 the Board's regulations and Title 3, Chapter 16 of  
16 the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
17 grounds.

18          The signer is not a registered voter in  
19 D.C. The signer, according to the Board's records,  
20 is not registered to vote at the address listed on  
21 the petition at the time the petition was signed.

22          The signature is a duplicate of a valid

1 signature.

2           The petition does not include the name of  
3 the signer and the signature is not sufficiently  
4 legible for identification, and the signer is not  
5 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
6 at the time the petition was signed.

7           My initial review of the challenges  
8 indicated that 151 of the 173 challenges were valid.

9           At the pre-hearing conference on April  
10 13th, 2026, Ms. Henderson highlighted 37 signers  
11 by page and line number for potential address cures.

12           Six of these forms resulted in address  
13 updates and were applied accordingly in my findings.

14           My updated review indicates that 145 of  
15 the 173 challenges are valid.

16           Forty-nine are valid because the signer  
17 is not registered to vote.

18           Forty-one are valid because the signer is  
19 not registered to vote at the address listed on the  
20 petition at the time the petition was signed.

21           Fifteen are valid because the signer's  
22 voter registration was designated as inactive on

1 the voter roll at the time the petition was signed.

2 One is valid because the signature is a  
3 duplicate of a valid signature.

4 Eleven are valid because neither the name  
5 of the signer, nor the signature are sufficiently  
6 legible for identification.

7 And 28 are valid because the signer is not  
8 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
9 at the time the petition was signed.

10 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
11 petition with 1,980 signatures, 20 signatures below  
12 the number required for ballot access.

13 MS. STROUD: Okay, and now, we'll -- now,  
14 we will have the representative from the Office of  
15 the General Counsel, Mr. Jorge Quintana, describe  
16 procedurally where we are and how we got to this  
17 point.

18 MR. QUINTANA: Thank you, Members of the  
19 Board.

20 As the Registrar indicated, the parties  
21 came together for a pre-hearing notice on April 13th  
22 after being duly notified.

1           The candidate raised several issues, one  
2 was the environmental impact of the snowcrete,  
3 snowpocalypse, whatever you want to call it, the  
4 bad weather that made it difficult for her to collect  
5 signatures.

6           The Board's addressed this issue recently  
7 in Harnett v. Sloan.

8           Secondly, she argued that changes in party  
9 representation should be allowed. Obviously, this  
10 is contrary to statute and rule. And she didn't  
11 provide any case law or any legal authority to allow  
12 us to do that.

13           She also argued that inactive voters  
14 should -- their signatures should count on the  
15 petition. And in support of this, she raised a case  
16 out of Montana, the District Court in Lewis and Clark  
17 County, the District Court is similar to our  
18 Superior Court here, where the Secretary of State,  
19 despite the generally accepted rule that clerks  
20 check inactive voters, and the longstanding  
21 practice in that office, decided to do it  
22 differently midway through the count and stopped

1 counting inactive.

2           There was an injunction brought, it was  
3 granted.

4           The parties actually agreed to it in the  
5 end and now, initiative follows the Montana law that  
6 says registered means inactive or active, and either  
7 one can sign the petition.

8           That's obviously different than D.C. law,  
9 which explicitly states that inactive voters, their  
10 signatures don't count on petitions.

11           But I do appreciate the chance to visit  
12 my old stomping grounds there. So, thank you, Ms.  
13 Henderson.

14           With that, she also filed a document today,  
15 some type of grievance. I glanced at it, but it's  
16 basically a more detailed explanation of the  
17 challenges faced due to the extreme weather in late  
18 January.

19           So, those are the issues in front of you  
20 and I guess that's all we have from the pre-hearing  
21 conference.

22           CHAIR THOMPSON: Well, that's a good

1 example of something where I think maybe inactive  
2 voters should be counted, but that's not our  
3 jurisdiction to decide.

4 The law written as it's written. That  
5 would be a D.C. Council-level change that, you know,  
6 we would follow.

7 So, you know, that's for the Council to  
8 think about, whether they want to ease some of the  
9 signature burdens by allowing inactive voters to  
10 count.

11 But it's obviously something we can't do.

12 MS. STROUD: And with that, we can hear  
13 from Ms. Henderson.

14 MS. HENDERSON: Good morning, again.  
15 Kathy Henderson, candidate for the District of  
16 Columbia Mayor.

17 I submitted a nominating petition  
18 containing 214 pages with a total of 2,129  
19 signatures. I collected these signatures in good  
20 faith.

21 I suffered the weather tremendously, as  
22 did most people in the District of Columbia.

1           And despite the extreme difficulty, I  
2 continued to gather my signatures in good faith in  
3 accordance with the rules that are established by  
4 the D.C. Council and adopted by the Board of  
5 Elections.

6           So, I suffered along with everyone else  
7 and gathered those signatures.

8           And I'm disappointed that there were no  
9 accommodations made for candidates like myself.  
10 There were other petition gatherers that also were  
11 out there suffering.

12           And it really -- I'm just disappointed that  
13 there was no relief granted, given that there is  
14 a precedented drop -- not only a drop in the number  
15 of signature required for a nominating petition,  
16 but there's also ongoing efforts to maintain COVID  
17 place rules.

18           In that I appeared for the hearing this  
19 morning. I'm actually outside the D.C. Board of  
20 Elections. And it is my understanding that,  
21 because of COVID, there's been a decision made that  
22 no one may enter the boardroom with the Board

1 Members.

2           So, and I -- and more issue regarding  
3 COVID, the weather event actually exacerbated, you  
4 know, there's -- you can make an argument that  
5 extreme weather conditions, which the City was not  
6 able to respond to.

7           There were multiple apologies from the  
8 Mayor, Department of Public Works, I mean, you know,  
9 the news captured it. It was well documented that  
10 this was really an intense, extreme, and horrific  
11 snow event, which can also negatively impact one's  
12 health.

13           Which, arguably, could make you  
14 susceptible to COVID.

15           So, again, I'm not understanding why no  
16 effort was made to address this prior to March 18th,  
17 which was the deadline for submitting signatures,  
18 especially given that the Board of Elections was  
19 closed during some of these days that everyone else  
20 was struggling, you know, to get around because of  
21 the snow event.

22           Regarding the actual challenges, I found,

1 you know, after I reviewed the Registrar's report,  
2 you know, I actually found people that were, in fact,  
3 registered. I found address changes.

4 And, you know, Mr. Quintana, I'm glad he  
5 is now interested in considering the inactive voters  
6 because, initially, his statement was, well, the  
7 fact that they haven't voted, you know, they  
8 invalidate themselves.

9 I don't feel that any vote should be --  
10 any voter should be disenfranchised. And if  
11 someone registers to vote, if they choose not to  
12 vote in every election, then that is their right.

13 It's a civil right, it's a basic right,  
14 and they should continue to have that right unless  
15 they withdraw it in writing.

16 So, I sent in a list of challenges,  
17 counter-challenges in that were address changes.

18 And it looks like only four were accepted.

19 And I do also think that the party changes  
20 should be -- that should be a remedy available to  
21 voters, especially given that many voters, when you  
22 ask them what their party is, the party affiliation

1 is, and because this is the Democratic Party, you  
2 know, I was obligated to ask everyone who signed  
3 my petition, you know, not only are they a registered  
4 voter, but also, are they a registered Democrat.

5 And everyone emphatically assured me that  
6 they are registered Democrats.

7 And the party changes, I think I submitted  
8 some of those as well. And those were not accepted  
9 because the thinking is that, well, the law says,  
10 you're supposed to be registered in the party.

11 But if the voter believes that they are  
12 registered in the party and that was their intent  
13 when they filled out their voter registration card,  
14 I don't think that there should be any effort to  
15 disenfranchise voters.

16 So, we could not resolve the hearings --  
17 I'm sorry, the challenges during the pre-hearing  
18 process which is why I'm here today.

19 I am not withdrawing, I am going to  
20 continue to put forth my good faith effort to gather  
21 petitions lawfully. I did them myself and I didn't  
22 pay for them. Maybe if I had paid for them, you

1 know, I might have had a different outcome.

2 The persons that challenged me, it appears  
3 may not have challenged me themselves. I believe  
4 that there was an effort to pay someone, a retired  
5 D.C. Board of Elections employee, to actually put  
6 forth the challenges, you know, which raises up a  
7 number of other issues.

8 And certainly about good faith and whether  
9 or not you can challenge someone by proxy.

10 So, that's where we are here. I'm -- I  
11 thank the Board for your time in hearing this matter  
12 and certainly open to any questions you might have.

13 I look forward to your favorable vote  
14 allowing me ballot access for the upcoming June 16th  
15 primary.

16 CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Ms.  
17 Henderson. I really appreciate you being here.

18 And I listened very closely and I really  
19 acknowledge how much work you put into gathering  
20 signatures and I know there was some -- time there  
21 where with -- difficult --

22 Another example of something that is above

1 our jurisdiction, it would be up to the D.C. Council  
2 to grant a reprieve in that regard.

3 They did that during the pandemic. They  
4 relieved the signature -- some of the  
5 signature-gathering burdens on candidates in the  
6 June 2020 primary cycle, for whatever reason, they  
7 didn't do that here.

8 I mean, I hear you and I completely  
9 understand and I feel the fairness issue that you're  
10 raising, but it's -- we, as the Board of Elections,  
11 are stuck, for better or worse, following the law  
12 as it's written for us.

13 And I'm looking down the various findings  
14 and it's hard -- a lot of these are -- most of these  
15 are uncurable, not a registered voter, et cetera.

16 And it's especially painful to see that,  
17 at least on this challenge, you're 20 votes -- 20  
18 signatures short.

19 Maybe some of that could be made up with  
20 the illegibility issue.

21 And unless there's anything else to hear  
22 on this one, I think it might make sense to just

1 defer ruling on this and hear the second challenge  
2 because it might make a more complete record that  
3 will allow us to -- broader picture of we're not  
4 stuck looking at just --

5 MS. STROUD: Yes, I'm just --

6 Okay, so, I think that procedurally, we  
7 might have to --

8 CHAIR THOMPSON: Well, it's just a  
9 question, you know.

10 MS. STROUD: Okay.

11 I think we should rule on this and then  
12 --

13 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, all right.

14 MS. STROUD: Yes.

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: I'll take General  
16 Counsel's recommendation.

17 Because I notice there's a second  
18 challenge that at least appears to confirm quite  
19 a few additional signatures that were not valid,  
20 causing the candidate to miss the ballot by, it  
21 appears, over 600 signatures.

22 But on this challenge alone, which results

1 in 20 signatures short, is there anything else  
2 before I move?

3 MS. STROUD: No.

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

5 At this time, I would move that we uphold  
6 the challenge and deny the candidate ballot access.

7 MEMBER GREENFIELD: I second.

8 MS. STROUD: And with that, we'll take a  
9 roll call vote on the motion to deny Ms. Henderson  
10 ballot access due to her nominating petition being  
11 short by 20 signatures.

12 And Mr. Chair?

13 CHAIR THOMPSON: Aye.

14 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

15 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

16 MS. STROUD: And with that, Ms. Henderson  
17 is denied ballot access due to an insufficient  
18 number of nominating petition signatures.

19 The amount required was 2,000 and her  
20 petition contained 1,980 presumptively valid  
21 signatures with respect to this challenge.

22 And with that, Ms. Henderson is denied

1 ballot access which, arguably, moots out the next  
2 issue, but I think we should hear it just in case,  
3 just for the record.

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

5 All right, I think that makes sense.

6 So, moving on to the second --

7 MS. STROUD: Yes.

8 CHAIR THOMPSON: -- challenge, which is?

9 MS. STROUD: The second challenge is  
10 Joseph Bishop-Henchman vs. Kathy Henderson,  
11 candidate for Mayor of the District of Columbia.

12 And we'll hear the Registrar's report with  
13 respect to that.

14 And I see Mr. Bishop-Henchman is present.

15 And Mr. Bishop-Henchman, if you could  
16 state your name and address for the record?

17 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Certainly.

18 Joe Bishop-Henchman, 415 W Street,  
19 Northeast.

20 MS. STROUD: Thank you.

21 And now, we'll hear from the Registrar.

22 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

1           This report was sent April 10th, 2026 in  
2 regards to Ms. Kathy Henderson, candidate for Mayor  
3 for the Democratic Party.

4           On March 18th, 2026, Kathy Henderson  
5 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
6 ballot as a candidate in the June 16th, 2026 primary  
7 election for the Office of Mayor for the Democratic  
8 Party.

9           The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
10 access for this office is 2,000 signatures. The  
11 petition contained 2,125 signatures.

12           The petition was posted for public  
13 inspection for 10 days as required by law.

14           The petition was challenged on March 29th,  
15 2026 by Joe Bishop-Henchman, a registered voter in  
16 the District of Columbia.

17           Challenger Bishop-Henchman filed  
18 challenges to 880 of the 2,125 signatures submitted,  
19 enumerated by line and page number on individual  
20 challenge sheets filed for each petition page.

21           The signatures were challenged pursuant  
22 to the Board's regulations and Title 3, Chapter 16

1 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
2 grounds.

3 The signer is not a registered voter in  
4 D.C. The signer, according to the Board's records,  
5 is not registered to vote at the address listed on  
6 the petition at the time the petition was signed.

7 The signature is a duplicate of a valid  
8 signature.

9 The signature is not dated.

10 The petition does not include the address  
11 of the signer.

12 The petition does not include the name of  
13 the signer and the signature is not sufficiently  
14 legible for identification.

15 The signer is not registered to vote in  
16 the same party as the candidate at the time the  
17 petition is signed.

18 My review of the challenges indicates that  
19 749 of the 880 challenges are valid.

20 Two hundred and eighty-six are valid  
21 because the signer is not registered to vote.

22 Two hundred and thirty-two are valid

1 because the signer is not registered to vote at the  
2 address listed on the petition at the time the  
3 petition is signed.

4 Fifty-three are valid because the signer's  
5 voter registration was designated as inactive on  
6 the voter roll at the time the petition was signed.

7 Three are valid because the signature is  
8 a duplicate of a valid signature.

9 One is valid because the signature is not  
10 dated.

11 Fifteen are valid because the signature  
12 does not include the address of the signer.

13 Fifty-three are valid because neither the  
14 name of the signer nor the signature are  
15 sufficiently legible for identification.

16 One hundred and six are valid because the  
17 signer is not registered to vote in the same party  
18 as the candidate at the time the petition is signed.

19 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
20 petition with 1,376 signatures, 624 signatures  
21 below the number required for ballot access.

22 MS. STROUD: Okay.

1 Mr. Quintana?

2 MR. QUINTANA: Members of the Board, the  
3 parties, after being duly notified, came together  
4 for a pre-hearing conference on April 13th, 2026.

5 During that conference, the Registrar read  
6 out her determinations.

7 The challenge -- the candidate provided  
8 examples of some signers who are registered District  
9 voters and properly signed the petition.

10 She also raised concerns alleging that the  
11 challenge was not brought in good faith and asserted  
12 that the challenge overlapped with challenges  
13 raised in another matter involving the candidate,  
14 the matter we just previously heard.

15 The candidate also stated an intent to  
16 raise at the hearing the argument that the  
17 unprecedented weather event and related closures  
18 impeded petition circulation and that the Board  
19 should consider whether any relief is available as  
20 a result, as was done during the COVID pandemic.

21 And as we discussed previously and in  
22 Harnett v. Sloan, that was done by the City Council

1 outside the Board's powers.

2 The challenger was there as well, and he  
3 stated that the Registrar's findings report were  
4 thorough and that even crediting the additional  
5 signatures referenced by the candidate during the  
6 conference, the petition would remain significantly  
7 below the signature requirement.

8 Those are the issues remaining and that  
9 brings us to today.

10 MS. STROUD: Ms. Henderson, do you wish  
11 to speak?

12 (No audible response.)

13 MS. STROUD: Ms. Henderson?

14 (No audible response.)

15 MS. STROUD: Mr. Bishop-Henchman?

16 Ms. Henderson?

17 MS. HENDERSON: (Audio interference.)

18 MS. STROUD: Okay.

19 Ms. Henderson, if you could --

20 MS. HENDERSON: (Audio interference.)

21 MS. STROUD: We're getting a lot of --

22 (Audio interference.)

1 MS. HENDERSON: -- on my end, the issues  
2 must be on your end.

3 Can you hear me?

4 MS. STROUD: Yes, now we can.

5 MS. HENDERSON: Again, I would like to --  
6 I collected signatures in good faith, despite the  
7 horrific weather event. I persevered just like  
8 everyone else, in terms of gathering signatures in  
9 the undue weather conditions.

10 The Board didn't make any accommodations  
11 for the unprecedented horrific, harsh weather  
12 conditions, and I believe they should have,  
13 especially since the Board was closed.

14 And given the previous accommodations made  
15 during COVID and the extreme weather conditions  
16 certainly operating outside during extreme weather  
17 conditions like that, also increase your  
18 susceptibility to getting COVID.

19 And the Board continued to adopt, well,  
20 not just the Board, but the Board of Elections  
21 continues to adopt those pre-COVID precautions and  
22 foreclosing upon the ability of candidates like

1 myself to appear in person today.

2 So, I'm actually sitting in my vehicle in  
3 front of the D.C. Board of Elections.

4 And moving -- us, Mr. Quintana correctly  
5 stated that I have submitted a grievance.

6 I also disagree with the Registrar's  
7 findings. My count, my multiple count of my  
8 petitions, in this case, I counted 2,129 signatures  
9 before any challenges.

10 I submitted 214 pages, the 214th page only  
11 has one signature, so clearly, that's misintent.

12 I found two other pages that were missing  
13 one signature each. So, I've noted that.

14 I disagree with the findings, the 286  
15 persons not registered to vote. That's not  
16 consistent with what I found.

17 And let me just say this, when you're  
18 asking voters, are they registered to vote, you're  
19 not just asking them to sign your petitions, you  
20 ask them, are they a registered voter in the District  
21 of Columbia and are they a registered Democrat.

22 And certainly, I just don't believe that

1 people -- that 286 persons knowingly signed a  
2 petition that -- and they were not registered.

3 So, these people believe they were  
4 registered, I believe they're registered. I found  
5 signatures -- I mean, we can go through the whole  
6 list that I found that were registered.

7 But obviously, I disagree with the  
8 Registrar's findings -- But in the interest of time,  
9 I don't know if you can get -- if the Board wishes,  
10 I can go through them each or not, it's your call.

11 But I do, again, assert that I followed  
12 the rules, I collected my signatures, I engaged with  
13 voters, I believe that every vote should count.

14 Those signatures that were designated from  
15 allegedly inactive voters, those should be counted  
16 as well. Every vote should count.

17 And I'll just -- and I shared this at the  
18 pre-hearing conference on the 13th, that it has been  
19 my experience, having served 11 terms as an  
20 award-winning advisory neighborhood commissioner  
21 in the city, and as an at-large member of the D.C.  
22 Democratic State Committee, it has been my

1 experience that people only -- a lot of people only  
2 vote for me.

3 And they feel that my platforms, my views  
4 resonate with their own. And I appreciate that.

5 So, if someone is based -- and a lot of  
6 people tell me, I only vote when I see your name  
7 on the ballot. If I don't see your name on the  
8 ballot, I don't vote. So, and that is their right.

9 But I've already addressed that case, the  
10 Montana, the Lewis and Clark County District Court,  
11 so Mr. Quintana's already put that on the record.

12 And finally, this petition was not -- this  
13 petition challenge was not made in good faith on  
14 its face.

15 I was at the D.C. Board of Elections on  
16 the 29th when Mr. Henchman submitted his petition  
17 challenge of me. He was not conducting any  
18 challenges at the time when I asked was there a  
19 challenge.

20 You know, there was the -- I got side  
21 glances and nothing.

22 And I think to preserve the integrity of

1 the process, a simple statement stating, well, we've  
2 received the challenge and we're evaluating whether  
3 or not to move forward. That's it.

4 No names have to be provided, no details  
5 have to be provided. I wasn't even given that and  
6 I assert that Mr. Henchman's challenge is actually  
7 -- he paid someone, a retired D.C. Board of Elections  
8 employee, to actually conduct the challenge by  
9 proxy.

10 So, with that, I rest. If the Board has  
11 any questions for me, I'm -- I remain here to answer  
12 them, but I have nothing else.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, Mr. Henchman?

15 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: There we go, thank  
16 you. Can you hear me okay?

17 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

18 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: All right, thank  
19 you.

20 The report of the Registrar is thorough  
21 and correct, and no actual evidence has been  
22 presented to show otherwise.

1           You know, Ms. Henderson just made some,  
2 you know, rather bizarre accusations about payments  
3 to a D.C. Board of Elections official or something.

4       I mean, I don't understand those, they're false,  
5 whatever they are.

6           As for the sufficiency of the petition,  
7 you know, whether it's 2,125 signatures, as the  
8 Registrar counted, or 2,129 signatures, as Ms.  
9 Henderson asserts, it's not much of a margin of  
10 error.

11           And you know, it's hard to get close to  
12 a 100 percent validity. People move and forget to  
13 update their address.

14           People don't want to say no and sign the  
15 sheet even though they're not registered or they're  
16 not registered in the same party.

17           People sign in a way that's hard to read  
18 and it gets ruled ineligible.

19           People write Jim instead of James and that  
20 has to be tracked down.

21           And I think the Board Chair, I think you've  
22 given good advice in the past that you should try

1 to get far more than the minimum because of how  
2 normal it is to have invalid signatures.

3 So, you know, I just wanted to say that  
4 because it doesn't take some conspiracy between me  
5 and some unnamed somebody to result in an  
6 insufficient petition.

7 The Board should adopt the Registrar's  
8 finding that the petition's numerically  
9 insufficient and not grant ballot access.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. STROUD: Thank you.

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, appreciate  
13 that.

14 And one thought occurred to me, for Ms.  
15 Henderson and anybody else that's listening, if you  
16 feel like there's something about these rules that  
17 should be changed, I urge you to speak to your  
18 Council Member.

19 I hadn't thought about it before this  
20 morning, but why, you know, about the inactive voter  
21 point. It's like, if I were a Council Member, I  
22 might think, okay, here's a person that was once

1 registered, still lives here, wants to engage in  
2 the political process, is willing to put their  
3 signature on a candidate's petition, sure, that  
4 should be counted.

5 I think I'd be persuaded as a Council  
6 Member to make that amendment.

7 Party affiliation, I might think, well,  
8 gosh, you know, people change their party  
9 affiliation, that, you know, there's some room  
10 there, I think, in the interest of favoring ballot  
11 access, I might change that.

12 Maybe a few other things, but I say all  
13 that, you know, on my own. You know, that's just  
14 me if I were a policymaker, how my sense of fairness  
15 might work.

16 But you know, those two things, among  
17 others, are not permissible. We have to invalidate  
18 inactive voters and non-party affiliated voters.

19 These are the very clear regulations.

20 So, it's not something we enjoy doing, I  
21 mean, it's just -- we just follow the law. We don't  
22 like to come to this conclusion that somebody who's

1 worked so hard to gather signatures is falling  
2 short, can't make the ballot.

3 But it's -- in this matter as well, it's  
4 undeniable and I thank the Registrar for her and  
5 her team's hard work on this.

6 So, with that, I'll file -- I'll make a  
7 motion that we also grant this challenge and deny  
8 the candidate ballot access on this alternative  
9 ground as well.

10 MS. STROUD: Okay, and with that, the  
11 Board, there's a motion -- the Board has moved to  
12 deny ballot access to Ms. Henderson due to her  
13 petition being 629 -- 619 signatures below the  
14 number required for ballot access as a result of  
15 additional materials being submitted by Ms.  
16 Henderson.

17 And so, we'll take a roll call vote with  
18 respect to the motion to deny Ms. Henderson ballot  
19 access and uphold the challenge filed by Mr. Joe  
20 Bishop-Henchman.

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: Aye.

22 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

1 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

2 MS. STROUD: And with that, Ms. Henderson  
3 has been denied ballot access in the contest for  
4 candidate for Mayor of the District of Columbia in  
5 the 2026 Democratic primary.

6 The next matter is Travon Hawkins vs.  
7 Democrats United to Free D.C. Slate, candidates for  
8 Ward 8 Committeeman and Committeewoman.

9 And is Mr. Hawkins present?

10 (No audible response.)

11 MS. STROUD: I do not see Mr. Hawkins.

12 Are there any members of the Free D.C.  
13 Slate present?

14 Michael Watts, Jr., Kelly Mikel Williams,  
15 Robin McKinney, and Regina Sharlita Pixley.

16 Okay, I see Ms. Pixley is present.

17 And with that, we'll hear from the  
18 Registrar with respect to this challenge.

19 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

20 So, this report was dated April 7th, 2026.

21 On March 11th, 2026, Michael I. Watts, Jr.,  
22 Kelly Mikel Williams, Robin McKinney, and Regina

1 Sharlita Pixley with the Democrats United to Free  
2 D.C. Slate submitted a nominating petition to appear  
3 on the ballot as a candidate in the June 16th, 2026  
4 primary election for the Office of Ward 8  
5 Committeeman and Committeewoman of the Democratic  
6 Party.

7 They submitted a supplemental filing on  
8 March 18th, 2026.

9 The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
10 access for this office is 100 signatures. The  
11 petition contained 168 signatures.

12 The petition was posted for public  
13 inspection for 10 days as required by law.

14 The petition was challenged on March 29th,  
15 2026 by Travon Hawkins, a registered voter in the  
16 District of Columbia.

17 Challenger Hawkins filed challenges to 83  
18 of the 168 signatures submitted, enumerated by line  
19 and page number on the individual -- on individual  
20 challenge sheets filed for each petition page.

21 The signatures were challenged pursuant  
22 to the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 17

1 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
2 grounds.

3 The signer is not a registered voter in  
4 D.C.

5 The signer, according to the Board's  
6 records, is not registered to vote at the address  
7 listed on the petition at the time the petition was  
8 signed.

9 The signature is a duplicate of a valid  
10 signature.

11 The petition does not include the address  
12 of the signer.

13 The petition does not include the name of  
14 the signer and the signature is not sufficiently  
15 legible for identification.

16 The signature is not made by the person  
17 whose signature purports to be.

18 The signer is not a registered voter in  
19 the Ward from which the candidate seeks nomination  
20 at the time of the --

21 (Audio interference.)

22 MS. CORRENTE: And the signer is not

1 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
2 at the time the petition was signed.

3 My review of the challenges indicates that  
4 45 of the 83 challenges are valid.

5 Eight are valid because the signer is not  
6 registered to vote.

7 Ten are valid because the signer is not  
8 registered to vote at the address listed on the  
9 petition at the time the petition was signed.

10 Six are valid because the signer's voter  
11 registration was designated as inactive on the voter  
12 roll at the time the petition was signed.

13 Four are valid because the signature is  
14 a duplicate of a valid signature.

15 Two are valid because neither the name of  
16 the signer nor the signatures are sufficiently  
17 legible for identification.

18 Seven are valid because the signer is not  
19 a registered voter in the jurisdiction from which  
20 the candidate seeks nomination at the time the  
21 petition was signed.

22 And eight are valid because the signer is

1 not registered to vote in the same party as the  
2 candidate at the time the petition is signed.

3 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
4 petition with 123 signatures, 23 signatures above  
5 the number required for ballot access.

6 MS. STROUD: Okay.

7 And we'll hear from Mr. Bert Russ regarding  
8 the matter's procedural history.

9 MR. RUSS: He alerted -- before that  
10 hearing, Mr. Hawkins, the challenger -- they're both  
11 in --

12 We did have --

13 I told the parties we would have to proceed  
14 with the pre-hearing conference, which we have with  
15 that form.

16 But we did have the pre-hearing conference  
17 here --

18 After the pre-hearing conference --

19 MS. STROUD: Thank you.

20 We have not -- we looked for Mr. Hawkins,  
21 but he does not appear to be here, but we can hear  
22 from Ms. Pixley.

1 MS. PIXLEY: Good morning.

2 MS. STROUD: And if you could state your  
3 name and address for the record, Ms. Pixley?

4 MS. PIXLEY: Yes, good morning.

5 I am Regina Sharlita Pixley, I am presently  
6 one of the Committeewomen for Ward 8.

7 My address is 3700 9th Street, Southeast,  
8 Apartment 1007, Washington, D.C., 20032.

9 MS. STROUD: Okay.

10 And would you like to make a statement for  
11 the record with respect to the challenge?

12 MS. PIXLEY: No, I thank you all for your  
13 hard work and I'm ready to move forward to victory.

14 MS. STROUD: Okay, thank you.

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, thank you, Ms.  
16 Pixley, thank you, everyone.

17 Speaking off the record here, a little  
18 today, I mean, this is one of those challenges where  
19 it's so obvious that the challenge is -- lacks merit.

20 This is somebody with a 123 signatures on  
21 a -- against a requirement of 100.

22 Really strong findings were presented to

1 the challenger, who did not withdraw. I mean, maybe  
2 it was just a failure to fill out a form, but, you  
3 know, if I were on the Council, I would consider  
4 something like awarding costs against the  
5 challenger that goes forward without basis, but  
6 that's just -- I'm just saying that ad hominem, but  
7 -- ad hoc, I mean.

8 But anyway, with that, my motion is that  
9 we deny the challenge and grant the candidate ballot  
10 access.

11 MS. STROUD: Okay, and with that, we'll  
12 take a roll call vote on the motion.

13 Mr. Chair?

14 CHAIR THOMPSON: Aye.

15 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

16 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

17 MS. STROUD: And with that, the Ward 8  
18 Committeeman, Committeewoman Slate, Dems United to  
19 Free D.C. is granted ballot access in the June 16th,  
20 2026 primary election.

21 The next matter is Sandra Seegars vs. Tim  
22 Durant, Jr., candidate for Ward 8 Committeeman.

1 I see Mr. Durant is present.

2 Is Ms. Seegars present?

3 (No audible response.)

4 MS. STROUD: Okay, okay, Ms. Seegars has  
5 raised her hand and if we -- we can have both parties  
6 state their name and addresses for the record before  
7 we hear from the Registrar?

8 MS. SEEGARS: I'm Sandra Seegars. What  
9 else do you need?

10 MS. STROUD: Your address, please, for the  
11 record?

12 MS. SEEGARS: 117 Savannah Street,  
13 Southeast, Washington, D.C. 20032, Ward 8.

14 MS. STROUD: Okay.

15 Mr. Durant, if you could state your name  
16 and address for the record?

17 MR. DURANT: Good morning, everyone, my  
18 name is Tim Durant, Jr., 210 Oakwood Street,  
19 Southeast, Washington, D.C.

20 MS. STROUD: Okay, and with that, we will  
21 hear from the Registrar of Voters.

22 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

1           This report was sent April 7th, 2026.

2           On March 18th, 2026, Tim Durant, Jr.  
3 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
4 ballot as a candidate for the June 16th, 2026 primary  
5 election for the office of Ward 8 Committeeman for  
6 the Democratic Party.

7           The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
8 access for this office is 100 signatures. The  
9 petition contained 106 signatures.

10           The petition was posted for public  
11 inspection for 10 days as required by law.

12           The petition was challenged on March 29th,  
13 2026 by Sandra Seegars, a registered voter in the  
14 District of Columbia.

15           Challenger Seegars filed challenges to 28  
16 of the 106 signatures submitted, enumerated by line  
17 and page number on individual challenge sheets filed  
18 for each petition page.

19           The signatures were challenged pursuant  
20 to the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 17  
21 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
22 grounds.

1           The signer is not a registered voter in  
2 D.C.

3           The signer, according to the Board's  
4 records, is not registered to vote at the address  
5 listed on the petition at the time the petition was  
6 signed.

7           The petition does not include the address  
8 of the signer.

9           The petition does not include the name of  
10 the signer and the signature is not sufficiently  
11 legible for identification.

12           And the signer is not a registered voter  
13 in the Ward from which the candidate seeks  
14 nomination at the time the petition was signed.

15           My review of the challenges indicates that  
16 23 of the 28 challenges are valid.

17           Seven are valid because the signer is not  
18 registered to vote.

19           Twelve are valid because the signer is not  
20 registered to vote at the address listed on the  
21 petition at the time the petition was signed.

22           One is valid because the signer's voter

1 registration was designated as inactive on the voter  
2 roll at the time the petition was signed.

3 One is valid because neither the name of  
4 the signer nor the signature is sufficiently legible  
5 for identification.

6 One is valid because the signer is not a  
7 registered voter in the jurisdiction from which the  
8 candidate seeks nomination at the time the petition  
9 was signed.

10 And one is valid because the signer is not  
11 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
12 at the time the petition is signed.

13 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
14 petition with 83 signatures, 17 signatures below  
15 the number required for ballot access.

16 MS. STROUD: Okay, Mr. Philbin, if you  
17 could state your name?

18 MR. PHILBIN: Yes, good morning, my name  
19 is Quinn Philbin, I work here at D.C. Board of  
20 Elections at 1015 Half Street, Southeast.

21 We notified both the candidate and the  
22 challenger that we'd have a pre-hearing conference

1 in this matter on April 13th, 2026.

2 Both appeared at that conference.

3 Ms. Seegars expressed her -- the  
4 challenger, expressed her concordance with the  
5 Registrar's ultimate findings and asked us to adopt  
6 it or asked the Board to adopt it.

7 Mr. Durant raised objections to a few of  
8 the findings, the findings that 12 were valid  
9 because the signer was not registered to vote at  
10 the address listed on the petition, that 7 were valid  
11 because the signatory was not a registered voter,  
12 and that 1 was valid because the signature was  
13 illegible.

14 At least at the pre-hearing conference,  
15 Mr. Durant wasn't able to present evidence to  
16 support his objections to those findings.

17 We -- because the parties weren't able to  
18 reach an agreement, we let them know about the  
19 hearing and provided them notice of the hearing  
20 electronically this morning.

21 And they are both here and that's the full  
22 presentation of the Office of General Counsel.

1 MS. STROUD: Thank you.

2 MR. PHILBIN: Thanks.

3 MS. STROUD: And so, we'll hear from Mr.  
4 Durant at this time?

5 MR. DURANT: Again, good morning, my name  
6 is Tim Durant, Jr. running for Ward 8 Committeeman.

7 So, when we had the hearing, prior to --  
8 one of the issues that was -- I presented to the  
9 Board, well, Quinn, Mr. Philbin, was that I was not  
10 privy to being able to gain access to the voters'  
11 registration for the Ward.

12 After I alluded that to Mr. Quinn -- Mr.  
13 Philbin, because I wasn't aware that I could present  
14 that at the pre-hearing.

15 He then said -- because in the email,  
16 because we had a conversation about that and the  
17 verbiage was that it basically stated, we can only  
18 talk about the challenge, we can talk about any  
19 issues that have occurred in between that.

20 And then, we had that conversation going  
21 to see Mr. Henchman, who challenged me for -- the  
22 second person who challenged me who's on the docket

1 for the next hearing, about that same exact issue.

2           When I did my further research, I saw that  
3 there were candidates who did receive the -- didn't  
4 request it, but still received the voter  
5 registration -- registered voters for the Ward --  
6 for Ward 8 without even requesting it.

7           So, for me, I feel like that's, to me, is  
8 unethical and is unfair for somebody who's just  
9 starting out trying to get into this field and in  
10 this realm.

11           Because if I would have had that, I would  
12 have easily gotten well over that amount of  
13 signatures.

14           Like I alluded to them, I presented myself  
15 in good faith to going to these different homes and  
16 not going in public spaces, but homes, and knocking  
17 on doors myself, no circulators, just myself, to  
18 get these voters.

19           And when I was presented with this issue,  
20 I was like, well, dang, I never knew that you could  
21 get access to the registered voters.

22           They then said, well, you checked off the

1 box, yes. But the issue was, for me, it was never  
2 alluded to me because if it was, I would have then  
3 got that list.

4 And then, also, if there are candidates  
5 who received it without requesting it, I feel like  
6 that's also unfair practices because, again, this  
7 is the first -- this is my first time.

8 I did as much research as I could and then,  
9 when asking the person who gave me my packet, I said,  
10 well, what if I go over? There wasn't like, well,  
11 this is something you could do blah, blah, blah,  
12 you can potentially just check -- fact check your  
13 voters based upon the registered voters for Ward  
14 8.

15 It was just get over the amount, which I  
16 did.

17 And so, my point to the Board is, is not  
18 that the challenges are not correct, my point to  
19 the Board is, is that there are some unfair -- I  
20 feel like it was unfair on my end, especially trying  
21 to do things the right way and the effective way  
22 of trying to go to people's doors, knock on their

1 doors, and get them to sign my petition.

2 And that's just my thoughts.

3 MS. STROUD: Okay.

4 MR. PHILBIN: Yes, thank you that, Mr.  
5 Grant.

6 Just to take a step back, I thought we might  
7 be addressing this in the next proceeding, but we  
8 can address it here, too, because I understand it's  
9 pertinent.

10 Mr. Durant had sent me an email that asked  
11 about the voter list and said he did not have one  
12 when he conducted his campaign.

13 We provided a response to him that  
14 explained that the voter list is available to anyone  
15 who's eligible to receive it, including him as a  
16 citizen of the District at any time and that the  
17 Board of Elections regularly responds to those  
18 requests promptly. And so, stated that first as  
19 a general matter.

20 And then, specifically explained to him  
21 that when the Registrar of Voters provides their  
22 ballot access package to any candidate, that ballot

1 access package specifically contains the form which  
2 any individual can submit to the Board of Elections  
3 asking for the voter list.

4           And that he -- when he received the ballot  
5 access package, filled out a form which certified  
6 that he had -- and certified with his signature that  
7 he had received that form.

8           I then forward -- because this came up in  
9 this process and I knew there was a second challenge,  
10 I wanted to put the other challenger on notice that  
11 this might be an issue.

12           And it was in that email, when my  
13 recollection is what I said was that, although for  
14 the Board of Elections, this may not be relevant.

15           I want to put you on notice that this may be an  
16 issue.

17           And I think Mr. Durant and I had a  
18 misunderstanding what I meant when I said it wasn't  
19 relevant. I said that -- what I meant was that might  
20 be our position, not that it wasn't something he  
21 could -- he was unable or that we would stop him  
22 or preclude him from raising.

1           So, it's definitely before the Board.

2           That's, I think, that's our response is  
3 that he received notice when he received his ballot  
4 access package that this was something he could  
5 request, certified that he had received that.

6           And it's unfortunate that he doesn't have  
7 it, but I believe that's our response.

8           MS. STROUD: And can you address, Ms.  
9 Corrente, the circumstances under which voters are  
10 provided with the voter file in the absence of  
11 requesting a data request form?

12           MS. CORRENTE: The voters?

13           MS. STROUD: The voter file? Yes, if they  
14 do -- do candidates get it without having to ask  
15 or is it simply pursuant to request by the candidate?

16           MS. CORRENTE: So, our practice is, at the  
17 end of each day, whoever picks up, we do send an  
18 email with the voter role from the initial opening  
19 of the petition pick up period. So, it's not always  
20 current, depending on when they pick up.

21           But just so that they have something in  
22 their hands as they get started.

1           With that, our practice is, because  
2 sometimes emails bounce back or, you know, some  
3 things whether that's because, you know, maybe we  
4 had a typo or we misinterpret handwriting or  
5 sometimes inboxes are full, and I don't know exactly  
6 what happened here in this case why it wasn't  
7 received.

8           But it can -- we do also, usually in our  
9 spiel, instruct the candidate that, if you don't  
10 get it, let us know, and here's a data form, as well,  
11 if you want more current versions of it.

12           So, I'm not entirely sure what happened  
13 in this case. And, you know --

14           MS. STROUD: But they are provided, as Mr.  
15 Philbin said, the data request form as part of their  
16 packet when they pick up ballot access documents?

17           MS. CORRENTE: Correct, yeah.

18           MR. DURANT: So, sorry to interject, I  
19 never received, again, I never received this. And  
20 again, the issue is, as well, is that what I'm  
21 hearing is, to this point, is there are candidates  
22 who received this without requesting it. I just

1 was not -- I just did not receive it.

2 Because I never received any email. I  
3 went back and looked at the email that the other  
4 candidate provided me with saying that, hey, this  
5 is where it came from. I went back and looked  
6 through all files and never received anything.

7 And again, if I had that information,  
8 because I did my due diligence of going to door to  
9 door and requesting these things, I would have  
10 gotten well over a hundred signatures.

11 I actually put myself more at jeopardy of  
12 going door to door without knowing if someone or  
13 was not a registered voter. And if this was alluded  
14 to me properly, which it was not, then I would have  
15 had a better fighting chance to ensure that I had  
16 got well over a 100 signatures.

17 Because for me to get a 106 signatures and  
18 83 to be valid, that says -- that speaks a testimony  
19 to my level of hard work and drive to get this done  
20 without any circulators.

21 So, my issue is, is that I'm not here to  
22 challenge whether there are valid or invalid, my

1 issue is that I was not given proper information  
2 to support me getting to my 100.

3 And then, I -- like I said, I alluded to  
4 that to Mr. Philbin. Mr. Philbin, what he alluded  
5 in his response and that's still left me no resolve,  
6 leaving me where I currently am.

7 Where I'm like, wow, I could have done  
8 more. I did what I could based upon what I knew.

9 So, all I'm saying is, is that I feel like  
10 there is a little unfairness in this play,  
11 especially when you're talking about candidates who  
12 received this without requesting it.

13 I don't know what the time line is, I never  
14 -- there was never a bounce back email. They had  
15 my email, so there's nothing in my file and I don't  
16 know if she can -- if the Registrar can show anything  
17 pulled that was sent to me or it was a bounced back  
18 email, but I don't have anything in my inbox stating  
19 anything for registered voters.

20 I did not receive the proper -- I did not  
21 receive the sheet that you're referring to.

22 Basically, when I got in there, it was

1 checking on boxes and here you go. It wasn't the  
2 -- it wasn't a lot of explaining going on in that  
3 process, especially for somebody who's a newer  
4 person running for this position.

5 So, that's it.

6 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, well, thank you so  
7 much.

8 I'm ready to make a motion.

9 This is one of those challenges that's very  
10 difficult to uphold, I'm sorry to say, because, Mr.  
11 Durant, I can see that you're a really good and  
12 credible candidate and it saddens me that you won't  
13 have ballot access here, at least this time.

14 I do think, and I do know that the voter  
15 registration lists are available to all candidates.

16 We'll, you know, we'll revisit what that looks like  
17 on the candidate's end to try to, you know, make  
18 sure it's clear to candidates.

19 I appreciate that as a new candidate, you  
20 know, some of this can be a little difficult.

21 I'll just say what I've said before which  
22 is, if you need a 100 signatures, submitting 106

1 is really on the line.

2 Experience shows that when you ask a person  
3 on the street, are you a registered voter in this  
4 Ward as a Democrat? A lot of people will say yes  
5 and sign your petition, but one of those three things  
6 may not be correct.

7 Maybe because they don't know or they  
8 forgot, or maybe they're just being polite, I don't  
9 know why, but it's about a 25 percent miss rate when  
10 you take all three of those things into account.

11 So, it's often said, you know, you need  
12 to be sure and gather more signatures to make sure  
13 you have enough valid ones.

14 So, easy for me to say as an ANC  
15 Commissioner once upon a time, but I needed 25 and  
16 I always got 50.

17 You know, so, unfortunately, 106 quickly  
18 fell below a 100 here because 12 alone were not  
19 registered to vote. So, it's -- I'm unhappy to have  
20 to make a motion to uphold the challenge and deny  
21 the candidate ballot access.

22 MR. DURANT: Quick question for the Board?

1 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah?

2 MR. DURANT: If -- is it typical practice  
3 for some candidates to receive it without requesting  
4 it and others to receive it -- to not receive it  
5 if they did not request it?

6 So, is that common? Because what I heard  
7 from the Registrar was basically that we do provide  
8 this to candidates during a certain time period of  
9 registering to -- well, to asking to get on the  
10 ballot for their positions.

11 So, if there are candidates who did receive  
12 it, through whatever time frame, I think there's  
13 some unfairness there, is it not?

14 And I get that you're presenting this to  
15 my Council, but I feel as though there's a certain  
16 level of just due process that needs to be completed,  
17 especially if you're sending it to one and not the  
18 other.

19 And so, that's where my issues lie here,  
20 because I'm like, well, where's the fairness in  
21 this? There's no fairness in this, it's  
22 inequitable.

1 CHAIR THOMPSON: I'm positive that all  
2 candidates are given the same information, the same  
3 direction, the same access to all the same  
4 materials.

5 MR. DURANT: That's not -- okay, I can't  
6 -- I know what was done and what not -- what wasn't  
7 done and the Registrar clearly stated that there  
8 are candidates who did receive the list of ballots  
9 -- the list of registered voters for the ward without  
10 requesting it.

11 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah, we've got to move  
12 on, we've got a lot of these challenges today.

13 MR. DURANT: And I'm the next one.

14 CHAIR THOMPSON: Oh, sorry about that.

15 MS. SEEGARS: I have a little statement.

16 Chairman, can you hear me?

17 CHAIR THOMPSON: Ms. Seegars, you're the  
18 challenger.

19 So, my motion's on the table, I guess --

20 MS. SEEGARS: I know, but like he said,  
21 so here we go again, breaking the rules.

22 CHAIR THOMPSON: Go ahead, Ms. Seegars,

1 we'll hear from you, sorry.

2 MS. SEEGARS: All right, thank you. I  
3 can't help if you have a whole bunch, people need  
4 to do what they're supposed to do.

5 But I just want to say thank you and, Tim  
6 Durant, you have my number, give me a call about  
7 your challenge or about your running the next time.

8 But thank you, Chair, I'm just going to  
9 say the same thing you said, and thank you for saying  
10 what you said.

11 CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you, Ms. Seegars.

12 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Second.

13 CHAIR THOMPSON: Second on the motion.

14 MS. STROUD: Okay, so, we will take a roll  
15 call vote with respect to the motion to deny Mr.  
16 Durant, Jr., ballot access in the contest for Ward  
17 8 Committeeman in the Democratic primary election  
18 due to his not meeting the minimum signature  
19 requirement for ballot access with a deficiency of  
20 17 signature with respect to the challenge filed  
21 by Ms. Seegars.

22 CHAIR THOMPSON: Chair votes aye.

1 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

2 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

3 MS. STROUD: Okay, and with that, Mr.  
4 Durant is denied ballot access in the contest at  
5 issue.

6 And the second challenge to Mr. Durant was  
7 filed by Joe Bishop-Henchman.

8 So, we will hear the Registrar's report  
9 with respect to that.

10 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

11 So, this report was sent April 7th, 2026  
12 to both parties.

13 On March 18th, 2026, Tim Durant, Jr.  
14 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
15 ballot as a candidate in the June 16th, 2026 primary  
16 election for the office of Ward 8 Committeeman for  
17 the Democratic Party.

18 The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
19 access for this office is a 100 signatures. The  
20 petition contained a 106 signatures.

21 The petition was posted for public  
22 inspection for 10 days as required by law.

1           The petition was challenged on March 29th,  
2 2026 by Joe Bishop-Henchman, a registered voter in  
3 the District of Columbia.

4           Challenger Bishop-Henchman filed  
5 challenges to 32 of the 106 signatures submitted,  
6 enumerated by line and page number on individual  
7 challenge sheets filed for each petition page.

8           The signatures were challenged pursuant  
9 the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 16 of  
10 D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
11 grounds.

12           The signer is not a registered voter in  
13 D.C.

14           The signer, according to the Board's  
15 records is not registered to vote at the address  
16 listed on the petition at the time the petition was  
17 signed.

18           Petition does not include the name of the  
19 signer and the signature is not sufficiently legible  
20 for identification.

21           The signer is not a registered voter in  
22 the Ward from which the candidate seeks nomination

1 at the time petition was signed.

2 And the signer is not registered to vote  
3 in the same party as the candidate at the time the  
4 petition is signed.

5 My review of the challenges indicate that  
6 29 of the 32 challenges are valid.

7 Six are valid because the signer is not  
8 registered to vote.

9 Ten are valid because the signer is not  
10 registered to vote at the address listed on the  
11 petition at the time the petition was signed.

12 Two are valid because the signer's voter  
13 registration was designated as inactive on the voter  
14 role at the time the petition was signed.

15 One is valid because neither the name of  
16 the signer nor the signature is sufficiently legible  
17 for identification.

18 And ten are valid because the signer is  
19 not registered to vote in the same party as the  
20 candidate at the time the petition was signed.

21 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
22 petition with 77 signatures, 23 signatures below

1 the number required for ballot access.

2 MS. STROUD: Okay.

3 Mr. Philbin?

4 MR. PHILBIN: Yes, thank you.

5 So, we notified the parties of the  
6 pre-hearing conference that was to be held on April  
7 13th.

8 Both attended.

9 The challenger did not attend himself, he  
10 had James Harnett attend on his behalf.

11 The -- I'm sorry, I take that back, that's  
12 a different case.

13 The challenger did attend the pre-hearing  
14 conference on his own behalf.

15 He -- the challenger noted that the  
16 Registrar's report was thorough and correct as  
17 presented. And I understood him to accept the  
18 findings and contend for their adoption by the  
19 Board.

20 The candidate challenged or objected to  
21 a couple of the findings of the Registrar that --  
22 the first that six signatories were unregistered

1 voters.

2 Secondly, that two were inactive voters.

3 Third, that one signature was illegible.

4 And the ten signatories that were found  
5 to be not registered to vote at the address on the  
6 petition.

7 I'm sorry, ten signatories not within the  
8 candidate's party.

9 The candidate, again, the candidate made  
10 these assertions, but at least at the time of the  
11 pre-hearing conference, didn't have facts to  
12 support them.

13 He subsequently expressed frustration  
14 related to not having a copy of the voter list.  
15 So, it was at this particular pre-hearing conference  
16 which that came up as an issue.

17 We discussed with the candidate the email  
18 exchange that we had had before in which he had  
19 raised this to me. And I had explained to him that  
20 that voter list is available for anybody eligible  
21 to seek it, which includes him.

22 And then, secondly, that when he came in

1 and obtained his ballot access packet from the  
2 Registrar of Voters' Office, he certified that he  
3 received the form that specifically allows a  
4 candidate to request that voter list.

5 The parties weren't able to resolve the  
6 issues, so we told them they could conduct a hearing.

7 We provided notice of that hearing and I  
8 understand that they're both here today.

9 MS. STROUD: Okay, we can hear from Mr.  
10 Bishop-Henchman and then, we can hear from Mr.  
11 Durant.

12 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Good morning, Joe  
13 Bishop-Henchman, 415 W Street, Northeast.

14 Do you want me to speak now?

15 MS. STROUD: Yes.

16 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Okay.

17 The Registrar's report is thorough and  
18 correct and no evidence has been presented to show  
19 otherwise, so the Board should adopt its finding  
20 that the petition's numerically sufficient and not  
21 grant ballot access.

22 I'll say one thing more that, since we're

1 on the record, I did say it in the pre-hearing  
2 conference, I think Mr. Durant appreciated that I  
3 said this.

4           There is no allegation from me of fraud  
5 in this petition, none at all. I certainly didn't  
6 see it, I think I can see it when I see it and it's  
7 not in here.

8           The Registrar certainly didn't see it.

9           It's just a case of just not enough  
10 signatures. So, yes, I just wanted to say that.

11           Thank you.

12           MS. STROUD: Thank you.

13           And Mr. Durant?

14           MR. DURANT: I want to first -- I'm aware  
15 of where I sit at this current time with, as far  
16 as the Board, the Chair, as well as my challenger.

17           And I want say this, I have no issue with  
18 due process. I have no issue with how things  
19 operate as far as the process, as far as the getting  
20 -- petitioning, getting on the ballot, all these  
21 different things.

22           I'm well aware now of exactly how things

1 operate.

2 My only issue is that, and I want to --  
3 I don't know if Quinn said this, I never said that  
4 I received that paper, that -- I never said I  
5 received it. I said, I checked off the box, I just  
6 want to state that.

7 Two, I want to make sure that -- and I'll  
8 make sure that I -- I'm an advocate in general for  
9 my personal career, but I make sure I advocate for  
10 when we do have potential candidates and newer  
11 candidates, younger candidates who are attempting  
12 to run for positions that they are offered the  
13 opportunity to get access to forms and documents.

14 And I get that it's stated that everyone  
15 has access, but sometimes, information is often  
16 guided to those who may have already had someone  
17 to educate them on it or they're just given to it  
18 because of whatever the reason may be.

19 But I think the big thing in here for me  
20 is, is that what I'm hearing from the Board and the  
21 Chair is that there is no thought here for that.

22 But I want to make sure that, moving forward, and

1 I'll have that conversation with whoever I need to  
2 have the conversation with, there is a level of due  
3 diligence.

4 I'll be back for sure to continue my race,  
5 but I think the thing is, is that we have to ensure  
6 that everybody is given information fairly and  
7 equally. If not, then, what happens is, we create  
8 a system of people who potentially could change and  
9 create agents of change for their Ward or their  
10 neighborhoods.

11 But we miss out on them strictly because  
12 of semantics of not -- somebody not having X, Y,  
13 Z amount of signatures, which I can respect that.

14 But you have to give everybody the same  
15 fighting change. I don't believe in equality, I'm  
16 strictly an agent for equity.

17 So, I yield the rest of my time and I thank  
18 you all for hearing my grievances.

19 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, thank you,  
20 again, Mr. Durant.

21 I was reminded that you can still run as  
22 a write in candidate. I think, you know, the Ward

1 Committee people seats don't get a lot of attention.

2 A lot of people, when they get to that part of the  
3 ballot, you know, historically under vote.

4 So, you know, if you want to run as a write  
5 in, think about that.

6 MS. CORRENTE: And if I may, I would just  
7 say, Mr. Durant, you have my emails, I'd be happy  
8 to make sure you have the correct forms and  
9 everything and work with you directly on that, if  
10 that's of interest to you.

11 CHAIR THOMPSON: So, that's a  
12 possibility.

13 So, turning to the challenge itself,  
14 again, unfortunately, I feel constrained to move  
15 to uphold the challenge and deny the candidate  
16 ballot access.

17 MEMBER GREENFIELD: I second.

18 MS. STROUD: And with that, we will take  
19 a roll call vote with respect to the motion.

20 Mr. Chair?

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: Aye.

22 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

1 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

2 MS. STROUD: And with that, Mr. Durant is  
3 denied ballot access in the contest at issue.

4 And we will now hear the matter of Joseph  
5 Bishop-Henchman vs. Democrats United to Free D.C.  
6 Slate, Candidates for Ward 1, Committeeman and  
7 Committeewoman.

8 Let's see, the members of that Slate are  
9 Stanley Mayes, who is see is present, Rebecca Ann  
10 Washington, E. Gail Anderson Holness, and that --  
11 those are the members of the Slate.

12 And so, we will hear from Ms. Corrente with  
13 respect to this challenge.

14 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

15 So, this is an updated report that was sent  
16 yesterday, April 16th, 2026 following some  
17 information that was provided in the pre-hearing  
18 conference and after.

19 On March 17th, 2026, the candidate,  
20 Stanley J. Mayes, Rebecca Ann Washington, and E.  
21 Gail Anderson Holness, that the Democrats United  
22 to Free D.C. Slates submitted a nominating petition

1 to appear on the ballot as candidates in the June  
2 16th, 2026 primary election for the offices of Ward  
3 1 Committeeman and Committeewoman for the  
4 Democratic Party.

5 The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
6 access for this office is 100 signatures.

7 In completing a preliminary review of the  
8 petition, it was determined that Page 3 was missing  
9 a circulator date and a circulator's affidavit and  
10 Page 14 was not on a form as provided by the Board.

11 It was improperly printed or copied with  
12 the top of the petition sheet missing.

13 Due to these defects, both sheets which  
14 -- each contained 20 signatures, 10 signatures per  
15 sheet were counted as zero.

16 As such, the petition contained 106  
17 signatures.

18 The petition was posted for public  
19 inspection for 10 days as required by law.

20 The petition was challenge on March 29th,  
21 2026 by Joe Bishop-Henchman, a registered voter in  
22 the District of Columbia.

1 Challenger Bishop-Henchman filed  
2 challenges to 48 of the 106 signatures submitted,  
3 enumerated by line and page number on individual  
4 challenge sheets filed for each petition page.

5 The signatures were challenged pursuant  
6 to the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 16  
7 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
8 grounds.

9 The signer is not a registered voter in  
10 D.C.

11 The signer, according to the Board's  
12 records is not registered to vote at the address  
13 listed on the petition at the time the petition was  
14 signed.

15 The signature is not dated.

16 The petition does not include the address  
17 of the signer.

18 The petition does not include the name of  
19 the signer and the signature is not sufficiently  
20 legible for identification.

21 The signature was not personally witnessed  
22 by the circulator.

1           The signer is not a registered voter in  
2 the Ward from which the candidate seeks nomination  
3 at the time the petition was signed.

4           And the signer is not registered to vote  
5 in the same party as the candidate at the time the  
6 petition is signed.

7           My initial review of the challenges  
8 indicated that 29 of the 48 challenges were valid.

9           At the pre-hearing conference on April  
10 13th, 2026 and afterwards over email, the candidates  
11 identified names of voters from various lines across  
12 the petition.

13           My updated review indicates that 26 of the  
14 48 challenges were valid.

15           Four are valid because the signer is not  
16 registered to vote.

17           Four are valid because the signer is not  
18 registered to vote at the address listed on the  
19 petition at the time the petition was signed.

20           One is valid because the signature does  
21 not include the address of the signer.

22           Five are valid because the signature was

1 not personally witnessed by the circulator as  
2 evidenced by the pre-dated circulator's affidavit  
3 on Sheet 2.

4 Three are valid because the signer is not  
5 a registered voter in -- excuse me. Three are valid  
6 because the signer is not a registered voter in the  
7 jurisdiction from which the candidate seeks  
8 nomination at the time the petition was signed.

9 And nine are valid because the signer is  
10 not registered to vote in the same party as the  
11 candidate at the time the petition is signed.

12 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
13 petition with 80 signatures, 20 below the number  
14 required for ballot access.

15 It should be noted that, in the past,  
16 circulators have been able to appear before the  
17 Board and rectify missing circulator dates or  
18 pre-date discrepancies.

19 If these 13 signatures related to the  
20 circulator discrepancies were credited back, three  
21 signatures from Sheet 2, without any other defects,  
22 and 10 signatures from Sheet 3, without any other

1 defects, the candidate's nominating petition would  
2 be at 93 signatures.

3           Additionally, at the pre-hearing  
4 conference, the candidates asked if the signatures  
5 without defects on the improperly copied sheet,  
6 which was Page 14, could be included.

7           Mr. Mayes highlighted that it was a  
8 photocopying error and that, while the top was  
9 missing, pertinent information like the candidate's  
10 information, the office titles, the election  
11 information, and the instructions to voters were  
12 all included.

13           I advised that the Board could hear that  
14 request and make a determination.

15           If the 16 signatures on Sheet 14 were  
16 reinstated, that nominating petition -- the  
17 nominating petition would be at 99 signatures, which  
18 is 1 signature below the number required for ballot  
19 access.

20           MR. RUSS: Hello, this is Bert Russ from  
21 the Office of General Counsel.

22           We notified the parties on April 13th of

1 a pre-hearing conference which both sides appeared.

2 At the pre-hearing conference, Mr. Mayes  
3 identified some individual lines where he thought  
4 the Registrar had made -- disagreed with the  
5 conclusion and the Registrar -- that's why we have  
6 an updated report, and she credited back a few votes  
7 because of that.

8 We also heard from one of the circulators  
9 -- let me make sure I get the name right -- Shelore  
10 Ann Cary Williams, who did Petition 3 and forgot  
11 to sign it, and there were 10 signatures on that.

12 She has since filed a notarized affidavit saying  
13 that she collected them and the dates in February  
14 within the range when she was allowed to collect  
15 that. And I think the Slate has requested that we  
16 credit that circulator petition despite the missing  
17 date.

18 For the other circulator petition error,  
19 we received a -- we received from Bobby Holmes an  
20 email -- it is not notarized but it does have his  
21 signature in it that he handwrote and then scanned  
22 -- stating that in that case, he pre-dated his

1 circulator form. And he pre-dated it. He said he  
2 signed it early. He then continued collecting  
3 signatures within the time period, and it was just  
4 an error. And he -- the Slate would like credit  
5 for that circulator petition as well.

6 And finally, as the Registrar noted, on  
7 page 14, a couple lines were cut off when they copied  
8 it, and the Slate would like credit for that. It  
9 does include the candidate names and what office  
10 they're running for, but it cuts off the date of  
11 the election.

12 But even with all of that, if the Board  
13 were to credit these three sheets as valid  
14 signatures on these sheets back, we're still at 99.

15 MS. CORRENTE: And if I could just say one  
16 clarifying thing?

17 The date of the election is on there still;  
18 it's just smaller. Like, we have a header at the  
19 top that makes the election that this is for, but  
20 the date and that it is for the primary election  
21 is still on the instructions part to the voter.  
22 So, technically, it is still there, if that changes

1 things.

2 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, do you want to --

3 MS. STROUD: Yes, we can hear from Mr.  
4 Mayes and then Mr. Bishop-Henchman?

5 MR. MAYES: Yes, this is Stanley Mayes.  
6 Can you hear me?

7 MS. STROUD: Yes, we can.

8 MR. MAYES: Okay.

9 First of all, the -- there are a number  
10 of issues here that I think are important, one of  
11 which is that we've -- we were at the Board and  
12 reviewed one of the signatures. I mean one of the  
13 challenged signatures that was not having the  
14 correct -- we looked it up, and it had the right  
15 -- but this person, for whatever the reason, or and  
16 I don't know if it's -- I couldn't exactly tell.

17 They have -- her apartment is -- I think the Board  
18 said it's 513. She could be on 518 or something.

19 So, I didn't know, or we didn't -- couldn't  
20 determine at that time.

21 The Board did, however, grant where people  
22 were -- where a couple of signatures, at least, where

1 people were using the address of their building  
2 without putting, for instance, Columbia Road down.

3 They just -- because, again, someone was in the  
4 building collecting signatures, and they just wrote  
5 down their building.

6 Those were accepted, but this -- there was  
7 no challenge to the fact that this person's  
8 registered at that address, only that they had 513  
9 versus 518 or something of that sort. And I can't  
10 -- I have not been able to determine which one is  
11 correct as of now because I don't know that person  
12 and haven't been able to gain access to the building  
13 to determine that.

14 The -- with regard to Mr. Holmes, Mr.  
15 Holmes was circulating his petition and asked that  
16 the -- and told me that because of the weather and  
17 all that he didn't think he'd be able to get any  
18 more signatures.

19 He gave -- he told -- so, he told me I could  
20 get the petition.

21 I said, well, the deadline's not up, you  
22 can continue to gather signatures if your pages are

1 full.

2 So, he said, oh, okay, well, then, I'll  
3 hold on to it and if I see people I know, I'll take  
4 care of it.

5 And at that point, I didn't -- I had not  
6 seen the petition and had no idea that he had already  
7 signed the bottom of the petition. I just thought  
8 he was just calling it a day and resolving it at  
9 that point.

10 But when I -- but when it was noted at the  
11 Board it was that he did not do that and nobody's  
12 challenged the signatures themselves, they just  
13 said, he did not -- he could not have witnessed them.

14 When, in fact, he did witness them because he  
15 collected all of them, and he -- and gave verbiage  
16 to that point.

17 But however, the Board staff initially  
18 told me that if somebody did that, that was -- that  
19 could not be cured or something. When, in fact,  
20 I now have reason to believe that it can be cured,  
21 that that could have been cured. But what we didn't  
22 do was to tamper with something that was already

1 done.

2           When I looked at the petition that I  
3 collected from him, it was signed, it was completed  
4 as best he could, it was signed, and I just put it  
5 in the stack of things to be turned in. I did not  
6 verify that, and I filed ahead of time. So, that  
7 easily could have been cured had we had -- it had  
8 been noticed. I did not notice it and I -- and those  
9 things that I do, I take full responsibility for.

10 I did not notice that.

11           Ms. Williams sent me a note well in advance  
12 saying that this petition was ready. I went by,  
13 I picked it up, and it was signed at the bottom and  
14 all, and I did not notice that the date was not on  
15 there. So, well, again, well in advance of the --  
16 and we filed a day earlier than we needed to file.

17 We could have probably taken the extra day, but  
18 it was so many people there when we were picking  
19 up, I was afraid it was going to be somewhat of a  
20 zoo to go -- come down on the final day of the  
21 campaign for filing for other offices, Council,  
22 Mayor, whatever. And I said, well, let's get our

1 things down until it's over with.

2 And I just think that -- and to then be  
3 told that we have 99 when it was a question of what  
4 this lady's apartment number is, right or wrong,  
5 just seems to me to have been an arbitrary and  
6 unclear impact on voters. People signed this  
7 petitions and all and I believe in good faith wanting  
8 to -- particularly for people they know. They  
9 wanted to support their person.

10 And to see you get ballot access and to  
11 be -- and for -- and then be tripped up in technical  
12 -- in minor technical things when there is no  
13 substantive issue saying this voter doesn't live  
14 at that address. And yes, he lives at that address,  
15 it's just, is that a three or an eight. And then,  
16 rule in favor of -- rule against the voter as opposed  
17 to honoring that, it just seems to be me to a bit  
18 unfair.

19 They're -- those are my principal things,  
20 and there's some other procedural things that I  
21 didn't -- again, I was listening to the earlier  
22 hearings and all. And when we were down picking

1 up our petitions as a part of a citywide or much  
2 larger slate than citywide slate, no one gave me  
3 voter lists.

4 Now, they have given it to the citywide  
5 slate, I don't know because I wasn't in that, I was  
6 in the Ward 1 section of that. And so, we ended  
7 up in a situation where we didn't have a voter list  
8 until we'd found out we were challenged and then,  
9 we had to come to the Board and look at the list  
10 down there.

11 Perhaps we could have and maybe should have  
12 requested that from them, but in my past experience,  
13 when you request a voter list, you had to pay for  
14 a voter list.

15 And that was something, also, that we had  
16 not done.

17 And so, since I had not planned to buy a  
18 voter list for Ward 1, I said, well, I've got to  
19 go to the Board to do this. And again, all of this  
20 time is of the essence when something like that comes  
21 up.

22 So, I just think, again, a lot of things

1 that should be looked at in terms of this process  
2 as to how this happened because I know that I did  
3 not get a list of voters. Because we could have  
4 been confirming these things before we even got to  
5 these things.

6 CHAIR THOMPSON: Right.

7 MR. MAYES: So, I will stop right there.

8 CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you so much.

9 And Mr. Bishop-Henchman, would you like  
10 to comment, as well?

11 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Yes, thank you, Mr.  
12 Chair.

13 Joe Bishop-Henchman, 415 W Street,  
14 Northeast.

15 The candidates here are asking you to do  
16 three different things. Let me take them in order  
17 of not unusual to very unusual.

18 So, the first request they have is to waive  
19 the formal error of a missing circulator affidavit  
20 date based on the testimony, I think I noted -- or  
21 excuse me, the submitted affidavit from the  
22 circulator.

1           And this relates to Sheet 3 to credit 10  
2 signatures.

3           As you know, the Board has often done this  
4 for the Board accepts the submitted affidavit or  
5 testimony. And in this case, it does seem in order.

6           The second request they have is a little  
7 different, it's to waive the pre-dated affidavit  
8 on Sheet 2, which would credit 3 signatures.

9           But this sheet is different from ones that  
10 the Board has usually done this with. The  
11 circulator of Page 2 gathered signatures, filled  
12 out the affidavit, and was done with it.

13           And then, several weeks later, the sheet  
14 was picked up again, and more signatures were added  
15 to it.

16           That's the evidence from the ink colors  
17 and from what was represented in the email sent this  
18 morning, and in what was just communicated by the  
19 candidates.

20           This is not a case where the circulator  
21 accidentally wrote 2/15 or they wrote it before any  
22 signatures were on it, it was 2/15 when they filled

1 it out, then they gathered more signatures and never  
2 did a fresh affidavit.

3 So, those five signatures have actually  
4 never had an affidavit filled out with them.

5 There's no testimony here, there's no  
6 affidavit, there is an email that arrived this  
7 morning.

8 And so, I would argue this actually goes  
9 beyond what the Board had done previously with  
10 respect to pre-dated affidavits.

11 The third request they have is the most  
12 unusual, Page 14 was -- as it appears in the record  
13 was not photocopied wrong on -- after the  
14 submission, that's how it appeared to the voters  
15 who were signing it.

16 I would note, it cuts off Democratic Party.

17 It cuts off the election day, although the  
18 Registrar said maybe that appears somewhere else.

19 The candidates say it still has all the  
20 vital information, but they cannot be the judge of  
21 that. If there was non-vital information on the  
22 sheet, it wouldn't be on the form.

1           To my knowledge, the Board has never waived  
2 this kind of error before where a candidate has their  
3 own form with some, but not all, of the information  
4 that's on the official form.

5           The candidates should have just gotten  
6 another form from the staff.

7           And if the Board opens this door, it will  
8 have to draw a line about what information is vital  
9 and what isn't.

10           And I would argue that party name is vital  
11 information for seats for the party committee.

12           In any event, even if the Board grants  
13 these requests or any accommodation thereof, the  
14 petition is still numerically insufficient.

15           Because of that, the Board not even need  
16 go there and should just adopt the Registrar's  
17 findings that ballot access not be granted in this  
18 case.

19           Thank you.

20           CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

21           MR. MAYES: May I speak again, please?

22           CHAIR THOMPSON: Sorry, I think we need

1 to move to motion on this.

2 I follow all this, what I'm hearing is that  
3 the candidates petition sheets had all -- a number  
4 of defects and issues, many of which are curable.

5 And I think it's really heartening to hear  
6 that our staff worked proactively with the candidate  
7 to find ways to cure what is curable. And they were  
8 able to get that number up, unfortunately, to 99,  
9 it sounds like.

10 That's like giving every benefit of the  
11 doubt on a lot of these issues.

12 And I appreciate Mr. Bishop-Henchman's  
13 sort of comments that some of this might start to  
14 fall into unprecedented territory, but -- and you  
15 could debate some of whether these cures were --  
16 should have been made or not.

17 But it still only adds up to 99, so I feel  
18 -- I mean, it's a number that's short of a 100, so  
19 again, with the caveat that the candidates, the  
20 Slate, can run as write in candidates and we'll  
21 assist them in that process, if that's their -- if  
22 they'd like to do that.

1 I have to make a motion at this time to  
2 uphold the challenge and to deny ballot access.

3 MS. STROUD: Yeah, but, before you do  
4 that, Mr. Chair, I just want to say that the actual  
5 signature count stands at 80, and that is, in the  
6 absence of the Board granting waivers with respect  
7 to that, so it's actually still at 80 unless the  
8 Board takes action to do that.

9 But like you said, with all of that being  
10 waived, the petition would still be numerically  
11 insufficient.

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

13 (Simultaneous speaking.)

14 CHAIR THOMPSON: We've heard suggestions  
15 that with, you know, all the work we could muster,  
16 we could maybe find 99, but it's actually 80.

17 So, I guess the motion stands.

18 MS. STROUD: Okay, with that, we'll take  
19 a roll call vote with respect to the motion.

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: The Chair votes aye.

21 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

22 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

1 MS. STROUD: And with that, the Dems  
2 United to Free D.C. Slate is denied ballot access.

3 (Off-microphone comments.)

4 MS. STROUD: And the Dems United to Free  
5 D.C. Slate is denied ballot access in the contest  
6 of Ward 1 Committeeman and Committeewoman.

7 The next matter on the agenda is Joe  
8 Bishop-Henchman vs. Arrington Dixon.

9 Is Mr. Dixon?

10 (No audible response.)

11 MS. STROUD: So, we will hear from the  
12 Registrar of Voters, it appearing that Mr. Henchman  
13 -- Mr. Dixon is not present, unless, Mr. Dixon, if  
14 you are one of the numbers, could you so indicate?

15 (No audible response.)

16 MS. STROUD: Okay.

17 Ms. Corrente?

18 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

19 So, this report was sent and is dated April  
20 8th, 2026.

21 On March 17th, 2026, Arrington Dixon  
22 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the

1 ballot as a candidate in the June 16th, 2026 primary  
2 election for the office of At-Large Committeeman  
3 for the Democratic Party.

4 The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
5 access for this office is 500 signatures. The  
6 petition contained 553 signatures.

7 The petition was posted for public  
8 inspection for 10 days as required by law.

9 The petition was challenged on March 29th,  
10 2026 by Joe Bishop-Henchman, a registered voter in  
11 the District of Columbia.

12 Challenger Bishop-Henchman filed  
13 challenges to 134 of the 553 signatures submitted,  
14 enumerated by line and page number on individual  
15 challenge sheets filed for each petition page.

16 The signatures were challenge pursuant to  
17 the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 16 of  
18 the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
19 grounds.

20 The signer is not a registered voter in  
21 D.C.

22 The signer, according to the Board's

1 records, is not registered to vote at the address  
2 listed on the petition at the time the petition was  
3 signed.

4 The signature is a duplicate of a valid  
5 signature.

6 The signature is not dated.

7 The petition does not include the address  
8 of the signer.

9 The petition does not include the name of  
10 the signer and the signature is not sufficiently  
11 legible for identification.

12 And the signer is not a registered -- is  
13 not registered to vote in the same party as the  
14 candidate at the time the petition is signed.

15 My review of the challenges indicates that  
16 116 of the 134 challenges are valid.

17 Twenty-two are valid because the signer  
18 is not registered to vote.

19 Thirty-three are valid because the signer  
20 is not registered to vote at the address listed on  
21 the petition at the time the petition was signed.

22 Nine are valid because the signer's voter

1 registration was designated as inactive on the voter  
2 roll at the time the petition was signed.

3 Two are valid because the signature is a  
4 duplicate of a valid signature.

5 One is valid because the signature is not  
6 dated.

7 Four are valid because the signature does  
8 not include the address of the signer.

9 Six are valid because neither the name of  
10 the signer nor the signature are sufficiently  
11 legible for identification.

12 And 39 are valid because the signer is not  
13 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
14 at the time the petition was signed.

15 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
16 petition with 437 signatures, 63 signatures below  
17 the number required for ballot access.

18 MS. STROUD: Ms. Pembroke?

19 MS. PEMBROKE: I'm Christine Pembroke,  
20 I'm with the Office of General Counsel and I was  
21 the attorney assigned to this matter.

22 The day after the challenge was received,

1 I sent out a notice to both parties to inform them  
2 that a pre-hearing conference would take place on  
3 April 13th.

4 For the purpose of sending that notice,  
5 we used the email address that the candidates and  
6 the challenger agree on their forms are the emails  
7 for communicating with them with respect to these  
8 matters.

9 I didn't hear anything from Mr. Dixon,  
10 which was a bit unusual. So, right before the  
11 pre-hearing conference, I did try to reach him by  
12 telephone. And the call went to voicemail. I left  
13 a message for him.

14 At the April 13th pre-hearing conference,  
15 Mr. Bishop-Henchman, the challenger, was present,  
16 but Mr. Dixon did not appear, which meant that we  
17 were sort of at an impasse. We didn't have any  
18 response from him to the Registrar's report. So,  
19 this matter had to be set for hearing before the  
20 Board.

21 I did notify the parties of the hearing.

22 And, again, I've not heard anything from Mr. Dixon.

1 MS. STROUD: Mr. Bishop-Henchman?

2 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Thank you. I have  
3 nothing to add.

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr. Dixon is not here?

5 MS. STROUD: He's not here.

6 CHAIR THOMPSON: Well, that's  
7 unfortunate. And it's unfortunate that Mr. Dixon  
8 caused us to utilize precious resources here. So,  
9 with that, I make a motion that we grant the  
10 challenge and deny the candidate ballot access.

11 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Second.

12 MS. STROUD: With that, we'll take a roll  
13 call vote with respect to the motion.

14 Mr. Chair?

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: Aye.

16 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

17 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

18 MS. STROUD: And, with that, Mr. Dixon is  
19 denied ballot access in the contest for at-large  
20 committeeman for the Democratic Party.

21 The next matter is Joe Bishop-Henchman vs.  
22 Calvin Gurley, candidate for Chairman of the

1 Council, District of Columbia.

2 It might be a number. In fact, let's see.

3 Mr. Gurley, are you present on the line?

4 (No audible response.)

5 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah, Mr. Gurley, if  
6 you're here, can you raise your Zoom hand? Because  
7 sometimes people are at a phone number and not --

8 MS. STROUD: And he did provide a phone  
9 number, but I don't see it.

10 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, well, we'll  
11 proceed.

12 MS. STROUD: Okay. Ms. Corrente?

13 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you. So, this  
14 report is dated April 11th, 2026. On March 18th,  
15 2026, Calvin Gurley submitted a nominating petition  
16 to appear on the ballot as a candidate in the June  
17 16th, 2026, primary election for the office of  
18 Chairman of the D.C. Council for the Democratic  
19 Party.

20 The minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
21 access for this office is 2,000 signatures. The  
22 petition contained 2,539 signatures. The petition

1 was posted for public inspection for 10 days, as  
2 required by law.

3 The petition was challenged on March 30th,  
4 2026, by Joe Bishop-Henchman, a registered voter  
5 in the District of Columbia.

6 Challenger Bishop-Henchman filed  
7 challenges to 1,256 of the 2,539 signatures  
8 submitted, enumerated by line and page number on  
9 individual challenge sheets filed for each petition  
10 page. The signatures were challenged pursuant to  
11 the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 16, of  
12 the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
13 grounds.

14 The signer is not a registered voter in  
15 D.C. The signer, according to the Board's records,  
16 is not registered to vote at the address listed on  
17 the petition at the time the petition was signed.

18 The signature is a duplicate of a valid signature.

19 The signature is not dated.

20 The petition does not include the address  
21 of the signer. The petition does not include the  
22 name of the signer and the signature is not

1 sufficiently legible for identification.

2           The circulator of the petition failed to  
3 complete all required information in the  
4 circulator's affidavit. The signature was not  
5 personally witnessed by the circulator.

6           The signer is not a registered voter in  
7 the jurisdiction, ward, or single member district  
8 from which the candidate seeks nomination at the  
9 time the petition was signed. And the signer is not  
10 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
11 at the time the petition is signed.

12           My review of the challenges indicates that  
13 1,182 of the 1,256 challenges are valid. 471 are  
14 valid because the signer is not registered to vote.

15       358 are valid because the signer is not registered  
16 to vote at the address listed on the petition at  
17 the time the petition was signed. 75 are valid  
18 because the signer's voter registration was  
19 designated as inactive on the voter role at the time  
20 the petition was signed. 55 are valid because the  
21 signature is a duplicate of a valid signature. 11  
22 are valid because the signature is not dated.

1           Eight are valid because the signature does  
2 not include the address of the signer. 27 are valid  
3 because neither the name of the signer nor the  
4 signature are sufficiently legible for  
5 identification. Three are valid because the  
6 signature was not personally witnessed by the  
7 circulator, as evidenced by the pre-dated  
8 circulator's affidavit. And 174 are valid because  
9 the signer is not registered to vote in the same  
10 party as the candidate at the time the petition is  
11 signed.

12           This leaves the candidate's nominating  
13 petition with 1,357 signatures, 643 signatures  
14 below the number required for ballot access.

15           MS. STROUD: Mr. Philbin?

16           MR. PHILBIN: Again, Quinn Philbin with  
17 the Board of Elections, assigned to this case.

18           So, on March 31st, the day after we  
19 received Mr. Bishop-Henchman's challenge, we  
20 notified the candidate of that challenge at the  
21 email address that the candidate had provided on  
22 his declaration of candidacy. We also included in

1 that notice, notice of the pre-hearing conference  
2 that we held in the matter on April 14th.

3 Mr. Gurley, the prospective candidate,  
4 attending that hearing. James Harnett attended the  
5 pre-hearing conference on behalf of Mr.  
6 Bishop-Henchman and was able to be there for about  
7 the first half-hour. He was able to say, Mr.  
8 Harnett, that he agreed with the Registrar of  
9 Voter's findings on behalf of Mr. Bishop-Henchman.

10 The candidate had an opportunity to  
11 present his positions. He initially offered three  
12 what I understand to be procedural objections at  
13 the pre-hearing conference. He first argued that  
14 he never received the March 31st, 2026, email  
15 notifying him of the challenge and the conference  
16 itself.

17 I stated to him what I stated a few moments  
18 ago, that we sent that to the email address that  
19 he provided on his declaration of candidacy, which  
20 is the same email address that the Registrar of  
21 Voters sent her findings to, and which he received.

22 So, I wasn't sure what may have happened there,

1 but that we had satisfied our notice obligation.

2 His second objection was that it was  
3 unreasonable to expect him to receive  
4 correspondence from the Board on a Saturday. It  
5 was a Saturday when the Board had sent their findings  
6 to him, when the Registrar of Voters had sent their  
7 findings to him. What we explained to him was that  
8 we have a very short amount of time in which to  
9 operate to conduct these proceedings and we get  
10 those findings out as quickly as we can to any  
11 candidate. Also noted that the pre-hearing  
12 conference wasn't actually until Tuesday, so even  
13 if he hadn't checked until Monday, he would have  
14 had about a day and a half to look at those findings.

15 And the third thing that he argued was that  
16 he understood that the cancellation of the  
17 pre-hearing conference in a different challenge to  
18 his petition might also apply to this challenge.

19 It was at that point that I told him -- or brought  
20 to his attention the email I had sent to him which  
21 explained rather explicitly that the cancellation  
22 of that particular challenge only applied to that

1 challenge, and, to the extent that there was any  
2 other challenge against his candidacy, that  
3 cancellation did not apply to that other challenge  
4 or those other challenges.

5           Regarding the findings themselves, it took  
6 us a long time to get to them, but when we did, I  
7 understood the candidate to assert that the 358  
8 signatures that were found not to qualify because  
9 the signer was not registered to vote at the address  
10 listed in the petition, he questioned that on the  
11 basis that that correcting the signatures required  
12 him, as the candidate, to change the address  
13 information within the voter registration system.

14       And I explained to him that that's not the case;  
15 that it's the voter, him or herself, who has to  
16 change their address.

17           He then challenged the finding -- both the  
18 findings of 471 signatories didn't qualify because  
19 they weren't registered and the 75 that didn't  
20 qualify because they were inactive, on the basis  
21 that signing the petition itself and/or  
22 participating as a juror rendered you -- this is,

1 at least, what I understand the argument to be --  
2 rendered you a registered D.C. voter as a matter  
3 of law. I explained to Mr. Gurley that that wasn't  
4 the case, that there are voter registration  
5 requirements that must be met for someone to be a  
6 registered D.C. voter.

7 The candidate stated he didn't accept the  
8 remainder of the Registrar's findings as well, but  
9 didn't articulate any specific basis on which he  
10 didn't accept those.

11 This morning, just about an hour or two  
12 ago, the candidate submitted a statement, as well,  
13 in which I understand him to raise -- to re-raise  
14 a couple of the arguments he raised at the hearing.

15 And I wish the candidate were here to specify  
16 exactly what he meant by some of these things,  
17 because they're new to me and I'm just trying to  
18 digest them.

19 The first thing he seems to say is that  
20 there was a lack of consideration given to his  
21 procedural arguments because I had sent him an email  
22 notifying him that I didn't perceive him as able

1 to get to get to the 2,000 vote threshold. And he  
2 interpreted that to mean that there was no  
3 consideration for his procedural objections.

4           What I'd say is that there was  
5 consideration and we articulated why in the  
6 pre-hearing conference and can articulate again why  
7 we don't find them -- didn't find the procedural  
8 objections to be compelling. And, you know, I  
9 hesitate to specify or to specify what this might  
10 mean without the candidate here. I think he's the  
11 person who should probably be making these  
12 arguments.

13           So, with that, I --

14           CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, well, thank you.  
15 I certainly find the procedural arguments to be  
16 unpersuasive. It's too bad Mr. Gurley isn't here.

17           This has taken a lot of our precious time. He's  
18 643 signatures short.

19           I think maybe we need to hear from Joe --  
20 the challenger, Mr. Bishop-Henchman again.

21           MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chair. Joe Bishop-Henchman, 415 W Street,

1 Northeast. The report of the Registrar is thorough  
2 and correct and the Board should adopt its finding  
3 that the petition is numerically insufficient.

4 I'll just say one thing more for the  
5 record, given Mr. Gurley's notice objections that  
6 he's raised. On April 6th, Mr. Gurley emailed me  
7 about the challenge, and I've forwarded -- I've  
8 supplied those emails to the General Counsel's  
9 staff.

10 So, he had actual notice about the  
11 challenge, at least as of April 6th, despite his  
12 claims on April 13th and thereafter that he was  
13 unaware of the challenge. Thank you.

14 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, thank you for adding  
15 that.

16 Obviously, when a candidate declares their  
17 candidacy, they're required to put down contact  
18 information that's active and that's -- we fulfilled  
19 our notice obligations in that regard by using the  
20 candidate's own email communication.

21 So, I think we've heard enough on this,  
22 so I'm comfortable moving that we uphold the

1 challenge and deny the candidate ballot access.

2 MEMBER GREENFIELD: I second.

3 MS. STROUD: Okay, and we'll take a roll  
4 call vote with respect to the motion.

5 Mr. Chair?

6 CHAIR THOMPSON: The Chair votes aye.

7 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

8 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

9 MS. STROUD: And, with that, Mr. Gurley  
10 is denied ballot access in the contest for Chairman  
11 of the D.C. Council in the Democratic primary  
12 election of 2026.

13 The next item on the agenda is Lauren  
14 Milord vs. Dyana Forester.

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: Maybe it's time for a  
16 break, too. I just note for the record that there  
17 were challenges against Kelly Mikel Williams that  
18 he withdrew.

19 MS. STROUD: And he withdrew.

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: So, yes, and I want to  
21 thank the candidate for that. I mean, sometimes  
22 the gracious thing to do is just withdraw instead

1 of forcing us to spend time on this. So, I  
2 appreciate that, to the Candidate Williams, if  
3 you're listening.

4 So, I think we've been going for two hours,  
5 so time for like a, I don't know, seven-minute break,  
6 eight-minute break, just enough time to use the  
7 facilities and clear your head out. It's 11:23,  
8 why don't we say 11:30?

9 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
10 went off the record at 11:23 a.m. and resumed at  
11 11:34 a.m.)

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right. We are back  
13 on the record. We've got three more challenges to  
14 go.

15 And the next one is?

16 MS. STROUD: Milord v. Forester, Candidate  
17 for At-Large Member -- sorry.

18 The next matter is Lauren Milord v. Dyana  
19 Forester, Candidate for At-Large Member of the  
20 Council of the District of Columbia.

21 And I see that both parties are present.

22 And if we could have them state their name and

1 address for the record?

2 First, Ms. Milord. And I don't know if  
3 I'm misspelling your name correctly.

4 MS. MILORD: You're close. Thank you.

5 Yeah, my name's Lauren Milord. And my  
6 address is 3318 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Apartment 22,  
7 in Washington, D.C. 20010.

8 MS. STROUD: And Ms. Forester?

9 MS. FORESTER: Yes. I'm Dyana Forester.  
10 My address is 1118 45th Place, S.E., Washington,  
11 D.C.

12 MS. STROUD: Thank you.

13 And we will hear from the representative  
14 from Voter Services, Millicent Green-Wright.

15 (No audible response.)

16 MS. MILORD: Sorry. I don't mean to  
17 interrupt, but I can't hear anything.

18 MS. STROUD: Is your mic on? Okay.

19 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Thank you.

20 So, once again, April 13th memorandum to  
21 Terri D. Stroud, General Counsel, through Monica  
22 H. Evans, Executive Director, from Millicent N.

1 Green-Wright, Assistant Registrar of Voters.

2 Subject: Challenge to petition of Dyana  
3 N.M. Forester, Candidate for At-Large Member of D.C.  
4 Council for the Democratic, Democratic Party.

5 On March 18, 2025, Dyana N.M. Forester  
6 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
7 ballot of candidates in the June 16, 2026, primary  
8 election for the office of At-Large Member of the  
9 D.C. Council for the Democratic Party. The minimum  
10 requirement to obtain ballot access for this office  
11 is 2,000 signatures.

12 The petition came -- contained 2,362  
13 signatures. It is important to note that when  
14 tallying the signatures for the preliminary,  
15 preliminary determination count of the petition  
16 sheets were discounted due to various incomplete  
17 circulator affidavit defects.

18 Sheet 112, no circulator date.

19 Sheet 113, no circulator date.

20 Sheet 119, no circulator date.

21 And Sheet 150, no circulator signature or  
22 date.

1           The petition was posted for public  
2 inspection for 10 days, as required by law. The  
3 petition was challenged on March 30, 2026, by Lauren  
4 Milord, a registered voter in the District of  
5 Columbia. Challenger Milord filed challenges to  
6 591 of the 2,362 signatures submitted, enumerated  
7 by line and page number on individual challenge  
8 sheets filed for each petition page.

9           The signatures were challenged pursuant  
10 to the Board's regulation in Title 3, Chapter 16,  
11 of the DCMR on the following grounds, and, with the  
12 review of the challenges, indicates that 395 of the  
13 591 challenges are valid.

14           One hundred eighteen are valid because the  
15 signer is not registered to vote.

16           Ninety-one are valid because the signer  
17 is not registered to vote at the address listed on  
18 the petition at the time the petition was signed.

19           Twenty-one are valid because the signer's  
20 voter registration was designated as inactive on  
21 the voter roll at the time the petition was signed.

22           Three are valid because the signature is

1 a duplicate of a valid signature.

2 Twenty-three are valid because the  
3 signature is not dated.

4 Five are valid because the signature does  
5 not include the address of the signer.

6 Seventy-four are valid because neither the  
7 name of the signer nor the signature is sufficiently  
8 legible for identification.

9 Sixty are valid because the signer is not  
10 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate  
11 at the time the petition is signed.

12 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
13 petition with 1,967 signatures, 33 signatures below  
14 the number of required for ballot access.

15 It should be noted that in the past, with  
16 Board approval, circulators have been able to appear  
17 before the Board and rectify missing circulator  
18 dates or pre-date discrepancies.

19 See, please see past Board Administrative  
20 Order.

21 If the signature related to the sheets was  
22 only circulator date discrepancies were credited

1 back, Sheets 112, 113, and 119, none of which were  
2 challenged, the candidate's nominating petition --  
3 the candidate would gain, would regain 29  
4 signatures, which would be 4 signatures below the  
5 number required for ballot access.

6 MR. QUINTANA: Thank you. Good morning,  
7 Members of the Board.

8 The parties were duly notified and a  
9 prehearing conference was held on April 15 of 2026.

10 Just before the prehearing conference commenced,  
11 the candidate provided sworn statements from the  
12 petition circulator, as well as four sworn  
13 statements from petition signers whose signatures  
14 were initially deemed ineligible -- I mean  
15 unreadable.

16 At the prehearing conference the candidate  
17 discussed those affidavits. And we would move for  
18 admission of those five affidavits. It's in your  
19 packet as Board Exhibits 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. So,  
20 that would consist of an affidavit, well, sworn  
21 statement/affidavit from the petition circulator,  
22 Sheets 112, 113, and 119.

1           And then the other four are from those four  
2 individual voters stating that they did, indeed,  
3 sign the petition to nominate Ms. Forester.

4           As we had only just -- the first one,  
5 Exhibit 5, does cure the 29 signatures that were  
6 mentioned on the various circulator sheets.

7           CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

8           MR. QUINTANA: And as the registrar noted,  
9 they weren't challenged.

10          CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. So, that's your 29.

11          MR. QUINTANA: Yep. And then --

12          CHAIR THOMPSON: So, only four short.

13          MR. QUINTANA: Exactly.

14          And there are four that, the other four  
15 are the signed statements from those signature  
16 gatherers which the registrar has determined would,  
17 if the Board was to allow them, then she would end  
18 up with one more than she needs. She would end up  
19 with 2,001 valid signatures.

20          As we discussed at the prehearing  
21 conference, it's up to the Board to make that  
22 determination to allow this extrinsic evidence to

1 make up those signatures and that were presented  
2 here today.

3 The challenger --

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: We have the discretion to  
5 do that?

6 MR. QUINTANA: May I?

7 CHAIR THOMPSON: We do have the discretion  
8 to recognize?

9 MR. QUINTANA: The Board has done it in the  
10 past. A couple of orders, Garnet v. Douglas,  
11 22-005, as well as 22-017 In re: Earle Douglas, where  
12 if the date was missing, for example, the rationale  
13 being that these petition sheets only existed during  
14 the time of period circulation. So, with the  
15 extrinsic evidence they were allowed back in.

16 And the same with the petition circulator  
17 who forgot to sign her affidavit.

18 So, if you, the Board, was to recognize  
19 that as formal error she would have one more valid  
20 signature than is necessary in order to be on the  
21 ballot.

22 As the challenger only received this

1 information just at the prehearing conference was  
2 beginning, the challenger indicated that she would  
3 need time to review these affidavits and then would  
4 either proceed or not. But here we are.

5 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: So, in addition to the  
6 one that -- well, whatever -- the additional ones  
7 are those that didn't date theirs, but signed them?

8 MS. STROUD: Correct.

9 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Didn't date them?

10 MS. STROUD: Did not date them.

11 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: So, they're confirming,  
12 they're signing an affidavit saying, yes, that's  
13 the date?

14 MS. STROUD: Yes.

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. So, who should we  
16 hear from next? I guess the candidate or the  
17 challenger?

18 MS. STROUD: You can hear from the  
19 challenger.

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. So, is the  
21 challenger --

22 MS. STROUD: Milord.

1 CHAIR THOMPSON: -- Lauren Milord  
2 present?

3 MS. STROUD: Yes.

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: Ms. Milord?

5 MS. MILORD: Thanks. Excuse me.

6 Thank you very much. Yeah, thank you to  
7 all parties here, truly, for all their time and due  
8 diligence to sustain the integrity of the process  
9 because I know it's been very laborious.

10 So, I, I understand, you know, we sent in  
11 a number of challenges, submitted a number of  
12 challenges. The Board overturned a few that were  
13 identified simply due to just the time constraints.

14 You know, there were a few that were  
15 identified as overturned by the Board but later it  
16 seemed that while we had said that these signatures,  
17 or I had said these signatures were illegible, the  
18 Board overturned them and okayed them.

19 However -- or the registrar overturned  
20 them. However, a couple of these particular  
21 signatures were folks that were not registered  
22 Democrats but were in fact registered as Other.

1           There also was three sheets that were  
2 challenged in their entirety due to the fact that  
3 the handwriting for every petitioner on those three  
4 sheets was clearly the same, both for the person  
5 and their signature line. There were a number of  
6 those that were also okayed by the Board -- or by  
7 the, the registrar after.

8           So, I just wanted to make sure that that  
9 was raised.

10           But, otherwise, I appreciate everyone's,  
11 everyone's hard work. So, just to make sure that  
12 the process maintains its integrity.

13           CHAIR THOMPSON: Well, thank you for that.

14           And, yeah, thank you for your challenge.

15           It was, obviously, very credible and reasonable  
16 for you to make the challenge. This was a close  
17 call.

18           And do we wanted to hear from the  
19 candidate?

20           MS. STROUD: Yes. We can hear from Ms.  
21 Forester now.

22           MS. FORESTER: Yes.

1           Thank you so much. This is my first time  
2 running for office, so I definitely understand the  
3 petition challenge and process plays an important  
4 role in our democracy, and respect the process and,  
5 you know, to ensure the integrity of our elections.

6           As I said, I'm a first time candidate.  
7 My team was made up of volunteers, family members,  
8 many folks that were involved in the election  
9 process for the first time. And I realize we made  
10 a lot of errors, a lot of them were, you know, missing  
11 information.

12           Also, realize you come into contact with  
13 people that tell you they're registered to vote,  
14 and they are not. And learned a lot of people that  
15 I thought were Democrats also were not.

16           With that being said, I will say I  
17 appreciate the Board of Elections helping us  
18 understand how to best respond in a timely manner.

19           This was not, our collection process was not done  
20 in a way, in a way to present false signatures, or  
21 in a way in a spirit of undermining the process.

22           So, we were a little caught off guard when

1 we first were presented with the challenge because  
2 we noticed that there were, like, active Democratic  
3 leaders. I'm including John Zottoli (phonetic),  
4 Estell Lloyd, candidates for Ward 1 Democratic  
5 Council, Aparna Raj and Miguel.

6 So, we were a little concerned when we  
7 first saw it. Was able to ask for clarification  
8 how to respond. There was some, a lot of  
9 information left off. And a lot of stuff was just  
10 not legible.

11 But with that, once we understood the  
12 process we immediately worked to, one, do our  
13 background to double check. And we also took  
14 advantage of when we noticed that were people that  
15 were registered at the wrong address, and helped  
16 folks to get registered.

17 But then we also appreciated looking at  
18 past decisions and orders to know that we could go,  
19 you know, when someone just left a date off, it was  
20 a page where the date was left off. It was a clear  
21 mistake, not presented to the Board in any way to,  
22 you know, disguise, you know, our intent.

1           So, we reconciled that by my campaign  
2 manager contacting those folks, asking them if they  
3 mind giving us a sworn statement saying that they  
4 signed the petition. And we were happy that we were  
5 able to find many people that thought they were,  
6 you know, just meeting us one time and signing the  
7 petition that were willing to do that.

8           So, with that being said, for that reason  
9 I respectfully ask the Board to consider our good  
10 faith effort and continue to allow us ballot access  
11 so we can focus on running a campaign.

12           MS. STROUD: Okay. Yeah, so just to be  
13 clear, I just want to confirm with both candidates,  
14 and the registrar, and the Voter Services  
15 representative that based on the submissions,  
16 including the affidavits that we received and  
17 accepted into the record, the candidate does have  
18 sufficient number of signatures for ballot access.

19           And what is the amount of signatures?

20           MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Two thousand and one.

21           MS. STROUD: Two thousand and one. Okay.

22           CHAIR THOMPSON: Wow. Well, finally we

1 come to a happy moment. Thank you to everybody  
2 involved in this.

3 And as you can see, our office works pretty  
4 hard to be proactive with the candidate to try to  
5 help the candidate cure what can be cured. Of  
6 course, you know, the candidate is her or his own  
7 best advocate. So, it's a credit to Ms. Forester  
8 and her staff that they took the time to find these  
9 affidavits and address this issue.

10 It's just, you know, this is all part of  
11 the process. I wouldn't call any of it error or  
12 anything like that. It's just, you know, you got  
13 to get down into the details sometimes. And, you  
14 know, sometimes it's just really, really close.  
15 You know, that tends to be the case on challenge  
16 day: the ones that are really, really close come,  
17 come to the mat like this.

18 So, I'm very pleased to be able to make  
19 a motion to deny the challenge; obviously, accept  
20 the affidavits that, that cure those signatures and;  
21 therefore, grant the candidate ballot access.

22 MEMBER GREENFIELD: And I second.

1 MS. STROUD: Okay. And with that we'll  
2 take a roll call vote.

3 CHAIR THOMPSON: Aye.

4 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield.

5 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

6 MS. STROUD: And with that, Ms. Forester  
7 is granted ballot access as a candidate for At-Large  
8 Member of the Council in the Democratic primary  
9 election of 2026.

10 MS. FORESTER: Thank you.

11 MS. STROUD: Our next matter is Hope Solomon  
12 v. Rini Sampath, candidate for Mayor in the 2026  
13 Democratic Party primary election.

14 And I understand that Ms. Sampath has  
15 counsel, J.P. --

16 MS. SAMPATH: My counsel is Mr.  
17 Bishop-Henchman.

18 MS. STROUD: Okay.

19 CHAIR THOMPSON: Can I just interject?

20 MS. STROUD: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: There was a matter that  
22 was on the agenda, Mark S. Lee v. Elissa Silverman.

1 Is that withdrawn?

2 MS. STROUD: Yes.

3 CHAIR THOMPSON: The challenge is  
4 withdrawn?

5 MS. STROUD: The challenge is.

6 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. All right.

7 So, yeah, I can see from the materials the  
8 candidate is well above the number of signatures  
9 required.

10 So, thank you to the challenger for  
11 graciously withdrawing and sparing us the time.

12 MS. STROUD: Yes. Okay, so we have the  
13 parties present, both of whom are represented by  
14 counsel. And so, we'll hear the registrar's report  
15 then from the Office of the General Counsel  
16 representative, and then from the parties either  
17 through or along with their counsel.

18 MS. CORRENTE: Thank you.

19 Okay. So, this is dated for today, April  
20 17, 2026. This is an updated report that was sent  
21 this morning following the materials that were  
22 provided in yesterday's prehearing conference.

1           Okay. So, on March 18, 2026, Rini Sampath  
2 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
3 ballot as a candidate in the June 16, 2026, primary  
4 election for the Office of Mayor of the District  
5 of Columbia for the Democratic party.

6           A minimum requirement to obtain ballot  
7 access for this office is 2,000 signatures. The  
8 petition contains 3,844 signatures.

9           The petition was posted for public  
10 inspection for 10 days, as required by law. The  
11 petition was challenged on March 30, 2026, by Hope  
12 Solomon, a registered voter in the District of  
13 Columbia. Challenger Solomon filed challenges to  
14 2,084 of the 3,844 signatures submitted, enumerated  
15 by line and page number on individual challenge  
16 sheets filed for each petition page.

17           The signatures were challenged pursuant  
18 to the Board's regulations in Title 3, Chapter 16,  
19 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations on the following  
20 grounds:

21           The signer is not a registered voter in  
22 D.C. ;

1           The signer's voter registration was  
2 designated as inactive on the voter roll at the time  
3 the petition was signed;

4           The signer, according to the Board's  
5 records, is not registered to vote at the address  
6 listed on the petition at the time the petition was  
7 signed;

8           The signature is a duplicate of a valid  
9 signature;

10           The signature is not dated;

11           Petition does not include the address of  
12 the signer;

13           The petition does not include the name of  
14 the signer, and the signature is not sufficiently  
15 legible for identification;

16           The circulator of the petition sheet was  
17 not a qualified petition circulator at the time the  
18 petition was signed;

19           The circulator of the petition failed to  
20 complete all required information in the  
21 circulator's affidavit;

22           The signature was not made by the person

1 who's signature it purports to be;

2           The signature was not personally witnessed  
3 by the circulator, and the signer is not registered  
4 to vote in the same party as the candidate at the  
5 time the petitioner signed.

6           The challenger also included a 7-page  
7 narrative statement.

8           My initial review of the challenges  
9 indicate -- indicated that 1,604 of the 2,084  
10 challenges were valid. At the prehearing  
11 conference on April 16, 2026, both the challenger  
12 and the candidate noted that there were various  
13 signer lines that they would like reviewed again.

14           My updated review indicates that 1,566 of  
15 the 2,084 challenges were valid.

16           589 are valid because the signer is not  
17 registered to vote.

18           207 are valid because the signer was not  
19 registered to vote at the address listed on the  
20 petition at the time the petition was signed.

21           32 are valid because the signer's voter  
22 registration was designated as inactive on the voter

1 roll at the time the petition was signed.

2 27 are valid because the signature is a  
3 duplicate of a valid signature.

4 28 are valid because the signature was not  
5 dated.

6 28 are valid because the signature does  
7 not include the address of the signer.

8 106 are valid because neither the name of  
9 the signer nor the signature is sufficiently legible  
10 for identification.

11 6 are valid because the circulator of the  
12 petition failed to complete all required  
13 information on the circulator's affidavit.

14 247 are valid because the signature was  
15 not made by the person whose signature it purports  
16 to be.

17 27 are valid because the signature was not  
18 personally witnessed by the circulator, as  
19 evidenced by the predated or date-related  
20 circulator affidavit sent.

21 And 269 are valid because the signer is  
22 not registered to vote in the same party as the

1 candidate at the time the petition was signed.

2 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
3 petition with 2,278 signatures, 278 signatures  
4 above the number required for ballot access.

5 It is also important to highlight that one  
6 circulator, Damon Jones (phonetic), who circulated  
7 a total of 26 sheets across the nominating petition  
8 had sheets with signer lines that appeared to be  
9 in the same handwriting and, in some instances,  
10 included deceased voters, i.e., sheet 358, line 3,  
11 and sheet 361, line 4.

12 MS. STROUD: Ms. Pembroke?

13 MS. PEMBROKE: Yes. So, again, my name's  
14 Christine Pembroke. I'm an attorney with the  
15 Office of General Counsel for the Board of  
16 Elections, and I was assigned to this challenge  
17 matter.

18 Following submission of the challenge, the  
19 parties were duly notified that there would be a  
20 prehearing conference on April 15. We did meet for  
21 that prehearing conference.

22 And before I get into the details of that

1 I just want to address a collateral issue because  
2 the registrar's findings indicated that there might  
3 be some fraud here.

4           So, when her report came out I also  
5 notified the candidate of her right against  
6 self-incrimination with respect to the prehearing  
7 conference. We also include in our notice of the  
8 challenge just general language about that, just  
9 so that candidates are aware that if fraud comes  
10 up in the course of reviewing petitions they  
11 appreciate that they should be cautious about what  
12 they say.

13           So, at the prehearing conference the  
14 candidate appeared and she had an attorney present.

15           And the challenger was there and had her attorney  
16 present.

17           And the attorney for the challenger  
18 objected to Ms. Sampath's attorney for the reason  
19 that he was not barred in D.C. So, he excused him  
20 -- Ms. Sampath's attorney excused himself from the  
21 proceeding.

22           And I had a discussion with Ms. Sampath

1 about her right against self-incrimination and her  
2 right to counsel. And she chose not to speak. And  
3 she later obtained the services of Mr.  
4 Bishop-Henchman to represent her.

5 But long story short, at the April 15  
6 proceeding since the challenger had not had much  
7 of an opportunity to review the registrar's report,  
8 we continued that proceeding to yesterday, the 16th  
9 in the afternoon.

10 And at that continued prehearing  
11 conference the challenger argued that there were  
12 at least 240 -- because at that point in time the  
13 registrar's findings was that the candidate Sampath  
14 was short, was, was -- her petition was valid by  
15 240 signatures.

16 So, the challenger argued that at least  
17 240 of the registrar's findings were incorrect.  
18 But she couldn't identify them because she couldn't,  
19 she didn't have time to do that.

20 And she also argued that in addition to  
21 Damon Jones, who she had specifically mentioned in  
22 her 7-page narrative that accompanied her

1 challenge, there were six other, I believe,  
2 circulator who she felt had engaged in fraud. And  
3 she wanted all of the petition sheets for those  
4 circulators struck.

5 But she didn't have a number with respect  
6 to the incremental signature difference that would  
7 make. Because given the number of challenges she  
8 was, she was making already, it was clear that there  
9 would be overlaps. In other words, the particular  
10 circulator sheet would have been challenged on other  
11 grounds besides fraud, and already reviewed by the  
12 registrar, and may have been struck already.

13 So, in light of that, I asked the  
14 challenger to have to us by 5:00 that afternoon a  
15 list of the incremental difference or a tally of  
16 the incremental difference that if he struck these  
17 other circulators what would it be.

18 And the challenger's counsel also  
19 explained his theory with respect to striking those  
20 sheets for fraud. Because at that point in time  
21 we didn't know exactly what her theory of fraud was  
22 with respect to the sheets. In other words, was

1 there a forged signature? Or was a signature  
2 tampered with because it was whited out and written  
3 over? It really wasn't possible to respond to the  
4 allegation of fraud without understanding the basis  
5 for it.

6 And the basis for the fraud allegation that  
7 was being made was this:

8 In the circulator's view, at least 15 to  
9 about 20 percent of the signatures on any one sheet,  
10 or those total signatures circulated by these  
11 individuals, were found to be invalid. And that  
12 suggested, or you could infer from that, that the  
13 circulator must not have asked each signer the  
14 questions they are required to ask under the  
15 statute, namely, are you a D.C. register voter?  
16 What party are you voted in -- what party you're  
17 registered in?

18 They didn't go through that. And the  
19 statute requires that you personally gather the  
20 signatures and you ask, inquire of each signer  
21 whether they meet those requirements.

22 Because of that level of invalidity their

1 theory was you could infer that the circulators did  
2 not follow the statute, and that that failure to  
3 follow the statute equates to fraud at a level that  
4 under Williams would authorize the discounting of  
5 those pages.

6           You can hear from counsel for the  
7 challenger, but I think that captures the argument  
8 that's being made here.

9           On the other side, the candidate's  
10 counsel, Mr. Bishop-Henchman, said he'd gone  
11 through the registrar's founding -- findings, and  
12 he felt that there were about 50 signatures that  
13 could be cured. And he -- so, I asked him to provide  
14 a list of those signatures so that the registrar  
15 could have an opportunity to go through and figure  
16 out whether or not they were curable.

17           And that's why she did her revised report.  
18 She, she looked at those, those.

19           And he also provided an affidavit from one  
20 circulator who had failed to date his, his page.

21           And the affidavit was -- I'm trying to remember  
22 now, the name for the circulator. It, but it was

1 provided in materials that went to the Board this  
2 morning.

3 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Circulator Durkin  
4 (phonetic).

5 MS. PEMBROKE: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
6 Bishop-Henchman.

7 CHAIR THOMPSON: And just a quick question.  
8 Earlier you said one of the lawyers was  
9 not a member of the D.C. Bar?

10 MS. PEMBROKE: He was not a member of the  
11 D.C. Bar. And Mr. --

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: Was that Mr.  
13 Bishop-Henchman?

14 MS. PEMBROKE: No.

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: Oh.

16 MS. PEMBROKE: This was, this was a another  
17 attorney, a Mr. Daas (phonetic).

18 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

19 MS. PEMBROKE: And that attorney stepped  
20 away when --

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

22 MS. PEMBROKE: -- his ability to practice

1 was being questioned.

2 CHAIR THOMPSON: Fair enough. I mean, we  
3 have a pretty lenient standard on --

4 MS. PEMBROKE: Yes. Yes.

5 And Mr. Bishop-Henchman said he was going  
6 to ask the Board to admit him pro hac vice,  
7 retroactively, so that anything he did at the  
8 earlier prehearing conference would not be a  
9 problem.

10 CHAIR THOMPSON: That's a no-brainer, of  
11 course.

12 MS. PEMBROKE: Right. Yes.

13 So, and in addition to that, Mr. Henchman  
14 responded to the position of the challenger with  
15 respect to this novel theory that a certain level  
16 of invalid signatures means you didn't follow the  
17 law.

18 And I'm sure he can speak to that further.

19 But we've heard today from candidate Henderson that  
20 she inquired of everyone. And she still had a lot  
21 of signatures that were invalid for the reason the  
22 signer wasn't registered, or the signer wasn't a

1 member of that party.

2 And other candidates, I think Ms.  
3 Forester, made the same comment.

4 That, that situation was underscored in  
5 the Jordan case, which you may remember Rondell  
6 Jordan (phonetic) argued that he made the proper  
7 inquiry of everyone that he approached for  
8 signature. And they all said they were duly  
9 registered. And so, he gathered their signature.

10 And then a significant number of the  
11 signatures were found to be invalid. And he argued  
12 that he should have been allowed to rely on the sign  
13 -- the signer's representation.

14 So, it's not uncommon, even when you do  
15 ask the question for -- and the chair has noted today  
16 -- that it's not uncommon and it seems to be a fairly  
17 high level of occurrence where the signer signs a  
18 petition and makes representations that it would  
19 be authorized, they would be authorized signers when  
20 in fact they are not.

21 And so, as a result of yesterday's  
22 prehearing conference, again the registrar updated

1 her report. Those are the findings that she just  
2 read into the record.

3 And early this morning -- I don't know if  
4 the Board has much time to look at it -- I sent  
5 supplemental materials which included a rather  
6 lengthy brief by the challenger, the affidavit that  
7 Mr. Bishop-Henchman sent in, and the registrar's  
8 updated findings.

9 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, we will do those.

10 MS. PEMBROKE: I don't think I have anything  
11 else.

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: And did you say the  
13 candidate has cleared the hurdle by 287 after some  
14 adjustments?

15 MS. PEMBROKE: I think that's right.

16 MS. CORRENTE: Two hundred and  
17 seventy-eight.

18 CHAIR THOMPSON: Two seventy-eight.

19 Okay. Who should we hear from first?

20 MS. STROUD: We should hear from Hope  
21 Solomon through counsel or herself.

22 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Good afternoon. My name

1 is J.P. Szymkowicz. I am an attorney-at-law in the  
2 District of Columbia, and I represent the challenger  
3 Hope Solomon.

4 This petition is rife with signatures that  
5 were not completed in the proper form that is  
6 sufficient to secure ballot access for the, for the  
7 candidate.

8 This race requires 2,000 valid signatures.

9 The candidate turned in, I believe, 3,800  
10 signatures, approximately. And we challenged  
11 approximately 2,000. Resulting in the registrar  
12 sustaining it per 1604. And, subsequently, this  
13 morning 1566 of those challenges.

14 That means that 76.9 under the old number,  
15 75.1 percent under the new number, were found, of  
16 the challenged signatures were found to be invalid.

17 In total, 41.7 of the old number, 40.7 of the new  
18 number of the petition was invalid.

19 That alone, in our opinion, believes that  
20 that number at 40 percent should disqualify the  
21 petition -- the candidate in full under the Williams  
22 case, where the Court -- where the Board has the

1 ability to dismiss the candidate from the ballot  
2 where the nominating petitions were tainted by fraud  
3 or the strong appearance of fraud. And the entire  
4 petition may be discounted in its entirety by the  
5 Election Board.

6           And this petition, containing  
7 approximately 3,800 signatures, was bad from the  
8 start.

9           First of all, and this is an important  
10 fact, we had it in our initial challenge to the Board  
11 that the candidate Rini Sampath posted on X that  
12 she completed 4,500 signatures. Now, that's an  
13 important number because -- and, of course, a  
14 Twitter feed does not relate necessarily to this  
15 proceeding, however, it shows her bad faith.

16           By posting that on a public forum it scared  
17 off candidates from wanting to challenge her  
18 signatures. Because it's very hard to knock off  
19 4,500 signatures because you have to personally,  
20 as a challenger, go down to the Board of Elections  
21 and, using their computers and using the voter roll  
22 that is provided outside of the computers, to go

1 on a line by line quest to knock off signatures.

2 Now, the difficult thing -- and this is  
3 more of a general practice -- is you can only invalid  
4 a signature if you go to the Board of Elections  
5 during working hours during the 10-day challenge  
6 period. At least two of those days are on weekends.

7 And the Board is open roughly from 8:30 to, I  
8 believe, 5:00 during those 10 days.

9 There's only four computers down there.

10 And if other people are waiting for the computers,  
11 there's a 2-hour time limit, you have to get back  
12 in line.

13 Validating signatures themselves as  
14 opposed to the voter roll is an extremely difficult  
15 task. And because of the structure of how  
16 challenges work, Hope Solomon did not have the  
17 opportunity to go through every signature as far  
18 as viewing the signatures on screen. She believes  
19 that if she had had more time she could have  
20 invalidated more signatures for not matching the  
21 signature on file with the Board of Elections.

22 But aside from that, she was able to go

1 through. And she did invalid, and the registrar  
2 accepted, I believe it's around 247 signatures. 246  
3 or 247 signatures were invalidated because they were  
4 not -- they were -- they did not match. And if they  
5 did not match, they were, obviously, stricken.

6 Many of those signatures came from one  
7 person, Mr. Hill. Now, the challenge, obviously  
8 we cannot go, because there is not enough time, on  
9 a line by line inquiry for the 278 signatures that  
10 the candidate currently has in excess of the 2,000.

11 Now, why is that impossible? We had our  
12 prehearing conference on Wednesday. We were given  
13 the registrar's report at the hearing conference,  
14 which I believe took place at 2:15 p.m. We did not  
15 have a chance to review those findings until the  
16 hearing, obviously, ended. It's not about 3:00,  
17 3:00 roughly, 3:15. And Hope spent a bulk of that  
18 night, going into the 4:00 in the morning hour, going  
19 through that report.

20 And we simply did not have enough time to  
21 present a line by line. Which I think is a  
22 structural problem, but, but I don't think we need

1 to get there because we are not going on a line by  
2 line, obviously. And, of course, we object for the  
3 record that we did not have enough time.

4           Moreover, the next day the office was  
5 closed for Emancipation Day, so we could not go and  
6 validate any signatures in this 278 that we needed  
7 to, to climb out of.

8           So, the structure was bad. But this isn't  
9 a, this isn't a case -- obviously I'm preserving  
10 my objection for the record -- this is a case where  
11 there was rampant fraud in the affidavit itself.

12          Discounting Mr. Hill, which 98 percent of his  
13 signatures were found to be bad, including the --  
14 I'm sorry, the fraudulent signatures. I'm sorry,  
15 Mr. Jones, not Mr. Hill.

16           Discounting those, the percentages of the,  
17 of the bad signatures -- and I'm using the old  
18 numbers. We're only 38 signatures off because  
19 there were some that changed this morning and added  
20 38 numbers to the 240 that we had yesterday that  
21 we needed to climb out of.

22           But the percentages are going to be

1 approximately the same.

2 For Ms. Sampath herself, as a circulator  
3 she had a 38.97 rejection rate.

4 For Andre Galowitz (phonetic) it was  
5 36.25.

6 For Tashima Barnes (phonetic) it was a  
7 shocking 61.39.

8 Dominic Hill (phonetic) was 41.31.

9 Yanick Vonderdom (phonetic) did the best,  
10 he was 27.37.

11 Of course, Mr. Jones was 98.35.

12 And Juliana Blanco Ramirez (phonetic) was  
13 38.12.

14 I believe in another case this morning the  
15 presiding chair said that there is approximately  
16 a 25 percent error rate in signatures. And I think  
17 that's probably close to, to correct, that some  
18 people say that they're registered, they're in the  
19 same party; the questions that you're required to  
20 ask.

21 Let's, let's give the 25 percent as the  
22 upper boundary of that, that number.

1           This candidate had such a horrific track  
2 record for the percentages that we believe meets  
3 the, the Anthony Williams threshold to throw the  
4 whole ballot off. There is, in our opinion, no way  
5 that you would hit these, these numbers if the proper  
6 question to which the affidavit is attested were  
7 asked.

8           Are you a resident of the District of  
9 Columbia?

10           Are you a registered voter?

11           Are you a registered Democrat?

12           The numbers are simply too high. And the  
13 Board can look at the credibility of these  
14 circulators and determine if there was fraud or an  
15 appearance of fraud that would be sufficient to  
16 throw the candidate off the ballot. We believe that  
17 it does.

18           And, in addition, the candidate paid the  
19 circulators -- and we, we found this in the campaign  
20 finance report -- so, she was employing these  
21 individuals for which she paid, the ones that we  
22 listed, approximately \$11,000 to do that. And

1 she's entitled to do that. There is nothing wrong  
2 with paying people to help collect signatures for  
3 you. But as an employer you have a duty to verify  
4 the work of your employees.

5 And these employees, like I said, you had  
6 Mr. Jones who was 98 percent bad. But you also has  
7 Tashima Barnes, 61 percent bad.

8 And the best one was Mr. Vonderdom at 27  
9 percent. So, that threw Mr. Vonderdom out.

10 There's enough signatures here that  
11 provides the, the Williams threshold of a taint of  
12 fraud. And if there's a taint of fraud, I think  
13 that the only solution for the Board is to throw  
14 the candidate off the ballot.

15 And that is our position.

16 We worked very hard, the Board of Elections  
17 works very, very hard to invalidate signatures.  
18 And we thank the Board of Elections employees who  
19 were extremely helpful during this process.

20 But let me explain why this is such a big  
21 deal.

22 When a candidate throws in what I call junk

1 signatures, you have to invalidate the junk. And  
2 each one of those signatures means you have to go  
3 to a voter roll or you have to go to the Board of  
4 Elections and do that. That takes an incredible  
5 amount of time.

6           And once the challenge is perfected, the  
7 Board of Elections has to go through every single  
8 one of those challenged signatures on the screen,  
9 and every one of those, the actual data inside the  
10 roll, the data of the party affiliation, the  
11 address, and all these things. Looking at  
12 handwriting that is very difficult to read. It  
13 takes a lot of resources by the Board of Elections  
14 primarily, and also the candidate.

15           And when a candidate says on Twitter that  
16 they received 4,500 signatures, that is a chilling  
17 effect for all the other candidates who say, I'm  
18 not going to waste my time going down there to try  
19 to invalidate this.

20           Hope went down there and determined the  
21 4,500 number was false. It was not even close to  
22 being true. There was really 3,800, roughly,

1 signatures.

2           And she then did the test of going through  
3 on the petitions -- I'm sorry, the voter roll itself,  
4 which is easier to do than looking at signatures.

5           She was able to get through the whole voter  
6 roll but she wasn't able to get through the  
7 signatures. This took probably, with in terms of  
8 the people that were down there helping her, over  
9 100 working hours to try to put this package  
10 together. And it still wasn't enough time to get  
11 through all of the signatures.

12           So, we believe that if we had gotten  
13 through more of the signatures, more signatures  
14 would have been disqualified. As it was, 247  
15 signatures were disqualified.

16           But we believe that there would have been  
17 more. And we believe that based on the fact that  
18 the percentages from what we did see would have  
19 verified that.

20           This took a lot of time. There is a  
21 penalty that should be given to candidates that  
22 provide junk petitions, junk signatures. And that

1 penalty should be being stricken from the ballot  
2 based on the percentages.

3 And this is a percentage case. Again, we  
4 can't, we don't have enough time to go through line  
5 by line. This is a percentage case. And that takes  
6 time from us, it takes time from the Board. And  
7 there should be a penalty for that behavior.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. STROUD: Okay, thank you.

10 Next we will hear from Ms. Sampath or her  
11 counsel, Mr. Bishop-Henchman.

12 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Thank you. Joe  
13 Bishop-Henchman, 415 W Street, N.E.

14 I'm representing Ms. Sampath but I am  
15 joined by her. And her address is 1939 12th Street,  
16 N.W.

17 If I could start with the procedural  
18 request, Mr. Chair, to, we asked to admit Mr. Daas  
19 pro hac vice. And his license information in New  
20 York is on file with the General Counsel.

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: So admitted.

22 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1           Let me start with circulator Jones.

2           The challenger flagged the circulator's  
3 26 sheets, and the registrar confirmed. And what,  
4 what happened there violates not only the laws of  
5 the District of Columbia, but violated the direct  
6 instructions from the Sampath campaign, and  
7 violated the contract the campaign had with  
8 circulator Jones.

9           Ms. Sampath will testify in a moment about  
10 the onboarding process the campaign had for  
11 circulators, the high standards that were set on  
12 lawful collection, and the process of checks and  
13 validations that were used. Unfortunately,  
14 sometimes a rogue circulator is creative enough to  
15 bypass those checks.

16           Ms. Sampath and her campaign will fully  
17 cooperate in any investigation that happens into  
18 circulator Jones.

19           The challenger has now made additional  
20 allegations against other circulators as of  
21 yesterday that were not in the original filed  
22 challenge. They do not allege fraud, per se, but,

1 rather, the application of a statistical analysis  
2 of invalidity rates that they believe is  
3 unacceptable.

4 I'll note they are not quite sure what that  
5 percentage should be. They said in their, in this  
6 morning in their file -- or in their filing last  
7 night it should be 67 percent. Elsewhere they say  
8 anything above 50 percent is unacceptable. In the  
9 conference they said it should be 85 percent. Now  
10 they say it's 75 percent. I'm not really sure what,  
11 what the standard they want the Board to apply is.

12 But I do have three thoughts on this:

13 First, it's untimely. After the  
14 registrar's report came out, the challenger came  
15 up with this argument, this statistical analysis  
16 argument and the identification of these additional  
17 circulators. This was long after the challenge  
18 filing deadline.

19 These things do not appear anywhere in the  
20 challenge itself. They are attempting to expand  
21 the scope of their challenge after the deadline,  
22 which not only violates several Board precedents,

1 like Graham, and Cohen, and French, it deprives the  
2 candidate of her due process rights.

3           If they had raised this allegation when  
4 they were supposed to, and not just yesterday, we  
5 could have brought in these circulators, or gotten  
6 statements from them. We could have done our own  
7 statistical analysis. We could have brought in an  
8 expert to testify how invalidity rates do not  
9 automatically mean fraud.

10           The Board should reject the challenger's  
11 argument in this scope as untimely.

12           Second, note that there is no actual  
13 evidence of fraud from the non-Jones circulators  
14 here. All they are alleging is a statistical  
15 analysis. Never before in any case I'm aware of,  
16 not just in the District of Columbia but anywhere,  
17 have petition sheets been struck without tangible  
18 evidence of fraud being presented.

19           They actually admitted in the conference  
20 that they hadn't done the analysis before they  
21 selected these circulators as the target of their  
22 request. I think what they did is they picked out

1 our largest circulators and said, well, we're going  
2 to do an analysis later and show that they're bad.

3 It's backwards and a fishing expedition.

4 Also, unlike previous cases, the  
5 registrar's report does not identify fraud with  
6 these additional circulators. Throwing out sheets  
7 for non-fraud reasons would be very new ground, and  
8 might even require revisiting many of the cases that  
9 have been already decided today.

10 Third, anyone who has collected petitions  
11 knows it's hard to get 100 percent validity without  
12 -- it's hard to get 100 percent validity. And, in  
13 fact, I would argue if somebody did turn in a sheet  
14 that had 100 percent validity, that probably was  
15 a fraudulent sheet because, you know, especially  
16 if it's got 3,000 signatures on it.

17 People move and forget to update their  
18 address. People sign and it's tough to read and  
19 it gets marked illegible. And we talked about all  
20 of this in several cases today.

21 These happen all the time.

22 The statute says 2,000 valid signatures.

1 It does not say 2,000 valid signatures and a  
2 validity rate of some indeterminate percentage of  
3 the raw signatures. If the challenger wants the  
4 law to say that, they should take it up with the  
5 D.C. Council.

6 The challenger raises some due process in  
7 their statement they submitted and then in their  
8 presentation. I mean, I will just say that this  
9 isn't the first case where someone has complained  
10 about how fast the process moves. But it must move  
11 fast, by statute. It's usually the candidate  
12 complaining. Challengers don't because they're  
13 here voluntarily. And they're usually ready for  
14 the fast pace and revelations of the registrar's  
15 findings.

16 The process takes 20 days from start to  
17 finish. And the starting point is the challenger's  
18 filing. So, the constant refrain from the  
19 challenger that they are not ready kind of rings  
20 hollow to us.

21 On Wednesday they asked for an extension  
22 to Thursday and said they would be ready then. We

1 agreed to that. And then on Thursday they said they  
2 still weren't ready.

3 Ms. Solomon keeps saying she's not ready  
4 and she, she needs more time. But she has had since  
5 March 21st, the first day of the challenge period,  
6 almost a month ago, to build her case. And that  
7 is sufficient time.

8 You know, in the statement today they said,  
9 oh, we've only had the registrar's report since 2:15  
10 p.m. Wednesday. I was hired at 3:53 p.m. on  
11 Wednesday on this matter, and I've had the time to  
12 go through the report twice, and do a line by line  
13 analysis, and get some signatures changed on the  
14 same holiday that they had.

15 So, there's no excuse and there's no due  
16 process violation here. You know, they said, oh,  
17 we could only identify three signatures in 24 hours.

18 That's ridiculous.

19 One further matter, Mr. Chair, and then  
20 I, I'll let Ms. Sampath speak.

21 Sheet 527 is invalidated, is invalid  
22 because circulator Durkin failed to date his

1 circulator affidavit. We have submitted a document  
2 from circulator Durkin where he attests that he  
3 circulated the sheet and provides the date that he  
4 should have -- that he filled it out and should have  
5 marked on the petition.

6 And we do request that in light of that  
7 evidence the lack of a date be waived as formal  
8 error, and those 10 signatures be credited back.

9 With that, Mr. Chair, I'd like to have Ms.  
10 Sampath speak.

11 CHAIR THOMPSON: Very well. Welcome, Ms.  
12 Sampath.

13 MS. SAMPATH: Thank you, sir. And thank  
14 you to the Board and the Registrar's Office for  
15 having us here today. I really appreciate it.

16 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Ms. Sampath, do you  
17 want me to ask questions or do you just want to speak?

18 MS. SAMPATH: You can ask questions, Mr.  
19 Henchman.

20 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Okay. I'll do that  
21 then.

22 MS. SAMPATH: Yes.

1 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Ms. Sampath, this is  
2 your first time running for office. You built up  
3 a campaign very quickly. What were some of the  
4 steps that you took to avoid, or at least minimize  
5 fraud in the petition circulation?

6 MS. SAMPATH: Absolutely.

7 I did just remember one thing I wanted to  
8 share, which is Mr. Bishop-Henchman has offered his  
9 services entirely voluntarily. We were scrambling  
10 to find representation by a D.C. barred attorney  
11 and, quite honestly, feel that this has been one  
12 of those moments I'm so grateful for community in  
13 general.

14 So, thank you, Mr. Bishop-Henchman, for  
15 your time today.

16 Yes, speaking to the question you just  
17 asked --

18 CHAIR THOMPSON: Can I just interrupt for  
19 a second?

20 MS. SAMPATH: Yes.

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: Sorry about that. I, it's  
22 my fault, I should have remembered this.

1           If you don't mind, can we just place you  
2 under oath very quickly to the extent you're  
3 entering into the record factual statements?

4           MS. SAMPATH: Yes, sir.

5           CHAIR THOMPSON: Is that okay?

6           MS. SAMPATH: Yes, sir.

7 WHEREUPON,

8           RINI SAMPATH

9 was called for examination by Counsel for the  
10 Candidate, and after having been first duly sworn,  
11 was examined and testified as follows:

12           DIRECT EXAMINATION

13           BY MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN:

14           Q    I can re-ask the question.

15                    What were some of the steps you took to  
16 avoid, or at least minimize fraud in the petition  
17 circulation?

18           A    Yes, Mr. Bishop-Henchman. This is my  
19 first time running for office. Really a big point  
20 of pride for my family as I've been an immigrant  
21 to this country and am embarking on something really  
22 meaningful.

1           And so, from start to finish we have done  
2 everything in our power as a small campaign team,  
3 entirely volunteer-based campaign team, to build  
4 out an operation of both circulators and volunteers  
5 who are very well-informed of both the Board of  
6 Elections statutes as well as the laws of the  
7 District of Columbia.

8           I'm actually looking at two documents  
9 currently. One is the contract that we gave our  
10 circulators that very clearly explained that fraud  
11 is unacceptable in multiple clauses.

12           And, also, holding expectations and  
13 guidelines document that we shared with our  
14 circulators repeatedly in multiple communications  
15 to reinforce the caliber of work that we were, were  
16 expecting when they returned their documents to us.

17           Our team is also fairly creative and very  
18 genuine in the way that we work. So, one of our  
19 team members built an app that took the voter file  
20 and created a space for us to verify each and every  
21 signature. And there were many nights where we  
22 spent in my home eating pizza, verifying petitions

1 as they came in. And we kept going until we knew  
2 we had over 2,000 solid signatures.

3 At one point there's even a video of us  
4 from that night where we celebrate when we hit the  
5 number of 2,200 solid petition signatures. And we  
6 had thousands more left in our pile. And we were  
7 just grateful to, to achieve that milestone that  
8 night.

9 And we had a lot of circulators, yes, over  
10 20 in a compressed time frame.

11 Q Thank you.

12 What is your reaction to the registrar's  
13 report that found evidence of fraud on circulator  
14 Jones' 26 sheets?

15 A Absolutely, Mr. Bishop-Henchman.

16 As I just said, it goes against the  
17 training that we gave our -- both volunteers, our  
18 circulators. I had very high standards for this  
19 campaign from the beginning. In every communication  
20 we shared out to the team, we had talked about this  
21 expectations and guidelines document.

22 I, you know, was working with many of the

1     circulators at multiple locations, from Mount  
2     Pleasant to Columbia Heights, the Metros, outside  
3     the Metro stops, talking with residents.

4             And, frankly, I will fully cooperate in  
5     the investigation of this matter. I have done  
6     everything in my power to ensure that we did what  
7     we can to make sure our circulators had the  
8     information as contractors to do this work with the  
9     utmost integrity.

10            Q     Now, you gathered many of the signatures  
11     yourself. I guess, at least according to the  
12     challenger you had a 61 percent validity rate. Not  
13     the best, not the worst.

14                    What were your observations from doing  
15     this both yourself and with the other circulators,  
16     especially in light of what the challenger is --  
17     asserted today?

18            A     Yes, sir. The process itself has been  
19     extremely humbling from the start. I think perhaps  
20     when we started the 2,000 number seemed within  
21     reach. And as, you know, every single day went by  
22     and we were spending hours out in the sun, or the

1 snow, or the rain collecting signatures we saw  
2 firsthand that validity can be tough.

3 But we were trying everything that we  
4 could. We would have conversations asking people  
5 their party, they're a D.C. voter, their current  
6 address. I would actually go an extra step by  
7 asking voters myself what is one problem you want  
8 to see fixed in the city, because that is the reason  
9 I'm running. I'm running to make meaningful  
10 changes to D.C. Government to benefit residents.

11 And I remember having great conversations,  
12 along with confirmation about their party, and D.C.  
13 voter information, and their current address, about  
14 what they wanted to see changed in our community.

15 And so, yes, I think that, you know,  
16 sometimes people would forget, or they'd just want  
17 to maybe say yes because I was standing in front  
18 of them. Or maybe our circulators were quite, you  
19 know, charming in their ways. But everyone was  
20 trying to get good signatures. And we certainly  
21 had many wonderful conversations out of those  
22 moments.

1 Q Thank you.

2 The challenger mentioned a discrepancy  
3 between, kind of what was announced on social media  
4 versus what's here in the record. And in footnote  
5 1 of the registrar's report the registrar notes that  
6 there is a pagination discrepancy, there is a gap  
7 in the pagination.

8 Did you file all the sheets that were  
9 turned in to your campaign by the circulators?

10 A Thank you for that question, sir.

11 One, I'll start with a discrepancy on, on  
12 any social media post. So, I will just say that  
13 we had turned in about 500-something pages, so in  
14 good faith made an estimate that we had about maybe  
15 4,500 signatures. Because some were single sheets  
16 that were digital petitions that we very creatively  
17 ended up utilizing through a digital portal on our  
18 website. And so, we went ahead and made an estimate  
19 that 4,500 signatures is what we had out of the  
20 530-plus that we turned in.

21 There was a discrepancy because I imagine  
22 while we were numbering the sheets there may have

1 been a mistake, or there might have been the case  
2 that some of those sheets were lost in transit.

3           So, some explanations to your mentions  
4 there in your question.

5           And then for that third component of your  
6 question I'll say, no, not all of the sheets were  
7 filed. In fact, through this extremely diligent  
8 process that we had in place between multiple  
9 volunteers of our campaign going through the sheets  
10 in my home, multiple nights, using the app that we  
11 built, one of my staffers identified that there were  
12 several sheets from the petitioner that looked  
13 questionable. And they looked like they were in  
14 the same handwriting.

15           And so, we inspected it, and we ended up  
16 not filing those sheets.

17           And so, if I had seen petitioner Jones'  
18 sheets, and if I had known, you know, what I know  
19 now, I wouldn't have filed his sheets either. We  
20 absolutely contracted him believing him to be a good  
21 faith actor. And I'm quite disappointed in what  
22 has happened here today. And as I mentioned

1 previously, I'm completely willing to cooperate  
2 with any investigations that may happen into  
3 petitioner Jones' activity.

4 Q I didn't use the phrase rogue circulator  
5 to describe it. Would you say this is a case of  
6 a rogue circulator?

7 A Yes, sir.

8 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: All right. Thank  
9 you, Ms. Sampath.

10 That's all my questions. I'll just  
11 conclude by saying our, our position is that the  
12 petition is numerically sufficient. The registrar  
13 agrees. And, actually, the challengers, if you  
14 listen closely, they agree, too, in that they offer  
15 no evidence that there are -- there is less than  
16 2,000 valid signatures beyond their novel and  
17 untimely statistical theory.

18 We, therefore, ask that you grant ballot  
19 access.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. Unless the staff  
22 has anything else to ask.

1 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: I have a few questions  
2 after the Board.

3 CHAIR THOMPSON: You know what, counsel --  
4 yeah, why don't, why don't I permit you a brief  
5 reply. If you could maybe try to keep it to 2  
6 minutes or.

7 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Well, these are questions  
8 for, for the candidate who got up and testified just  
9 now.

10 CHAIR THOMPSON: Hold on a sec.

11 All right. I'll withhold my motion.

12 And, counsel, yeah, you -- Ms. Sampath,  
13 I guess when you testify the other counsel has a  
14 right to cross-examine you.

15 MS. SAMPATH: Yes, sir.

16 CHAIR THOMPSON: You're represented, of  
17 course, by counsel. He has a right to object.

18 So, we're going to let -- this is permitted  
19 by our rules and it's a fair request -- so, we'll  
20 let Mr. Szymkowicz proceed. If you could -- we'd  
21 really appreciate it if you could try to be cognizant  
22 of time, sir.

1 MS. SAMPATH: Of course. Of course, Mr.  
2 Chairperson.

3 In addition to asking the candidate  
4 questions, my client, Hope Solomon, would like to  
5 testify in rebuttal to what Ms. Sampath just  
6 testified to. Again, we did not know what she was  
7 going to be testifying to today, so, you know, we're  
8 getting this just like the Board is.

9 CROSS-EXAMINATION

10 BY MR. SZYMKOWICZ:

11 Q The first question I have is, Ms. Sampath,  
12 you testified that you found evidence of forgeries  
13 in your packet; is that correct?

14 A We identified that one of our sheets had  
15 some questionable handwriting. So, we threw out  
16 those sheets.

17 Q And who was the circulator for that?

18 A I am -- sure, I believe it's Tashima  
19 Barnes.

20 Or, I actually cannot remember which,  
21 which circulator it was. I don't want to share the  
22 wrong answer here. I'd have to go back to the team

1 to verify.

2 I also don't want to mention someone's name  
3 and, yeah, put the blame on them. So, yeah, I'd  
4 have to go back and take a look.

5 Q So, you believe that Tashima Barnes had  
6 a sheet that the signatures looked suspicious to  
7 you; is that correct?

8 A No, sir.

9 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Objection, Mr.  
10 Chair. That's not what Ms. Sampath just said. She  
11 said she doesn't remember who it was.

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah.

13 BY MR. SZYMKOWICZ:

14 Q Did you submit any other petitions by that  
15 circulator or did you strike all of their signatures  
16 and not file any of those petitions that the other  
17 circulator that had a page of suspicious signatures  
18 provided?

19 A I don't recall which circulator it was,  
20 sir. So, I'd be willing to go back and take a look  
21 with my team at which circulator. And then have  
22 that discussion to verify if they had submitted

1 additional sheets.

2 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Well, that's an important  
3 thing to do, Mr. Chairperson. Because if she  
4 submitted additional petition sheets by the  
5 circulator that she suspected of forgery, that would  
6 go --

7 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Objection, Mr.  
8 Chair. This is not a question.

9 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah. Okay, so the  
10 witness says she doesn't recall as she sits here  
11 today. And that's all that's relevant right now.

12 BY MR. SZYMKOWICZ:

13 Q You stated that you did training. Was  
14 this training in writing?

15 A We had two documents, sir. One was our  
16 contract. We had an expectations and guidelines  
17 document. And then we would also provide a verbal  
18 training to the team members that we onboarded.

19 Q And what did they say, verbally?

20 A They would agree to the terms and  
21 conditions.

22 One, they would sign the contract.

1           Two, would read the expectations and  
2 guidelines document.

3           And, three, would concur verbally that  
4 they understood the expectations set forth, the  
5 guidelines, and the standards that we had for the  
6 campaign.

7           Q    And what were those guidelines and  
8 standards?

9           A    We can pull them up here for a moment, if  
10 you'd like me to read them verbatim.

11          Q    Yes, I would.

12          A    One second. Give me one second.

13                Oh, sorry. Yes, sir?

14                I'm looking at this 4-page document here.

15                And among petition collection rules it says, when  
16 collecting signatures, only collect signatures from  
17 eligible D.C. registered Democrats. Ensure each  
18 signer fills out all required fields, including  
19 address, signature, and date.

20                Do not fill out voter information yourself  
21 unless specifically permitted by law.

22                Do not misrepresent campaign, Rini, or the

1 purpose of the petition.

2 Never pressure, mislead, or argue with  
3 voters.

4 There is also another section, roles and  
5 responsibilities. As a petition circulator your  
6 responsibilities include collecting valid  
7 signatures from registered D.C. Democrat voters,  
8 in accordance with campaign instructions and local  
9 D.C. election laws.

10 Conducting yourself professionally and  
11 respectfully at all times.

12 Ensuring all petition sheets are completed  
13 and submitted.

14 Following all campaign procedures  
15 outlined.

16 Failure to follow these guidelines may  
17 result in rejected signatures or removal from the  
18 team.

19 There is also a --

20 Q Okay.

21 A Yeah, there are other pages if you'd like  
22 me to keep going.

1           There's a daily submission requirement.

2       All petitioners are required to submit photos.

3       And I've got a few clauses there: petition handling,  
4       talking about making sure sheets are clean and  
5       undamaged. Do not fold, alter, or mark sheets  
6       unnecessarily. And not leaving any petition sheets  
7       unattended. Returning original sheets within 48  
8       hours of completion.

9           Outreach team will either come collect the  
10       documents from you or you can stop by to drop them  
11       off yourself.

12           And then there's some more information  
13       here.

14           I can also read the section which is the  
15       professional conduct, which says, all petitions are  
16       expected to be respectful and professional with the  
17       public, follow local D.C. laws and location rules,  
18       represent the campaign positively at all times,  
19       avoid confrontations or political arguments.

20           Please remember that Rini's campaign and  
21       its staff price themselves on respect, kindness,  
22       and inclusivity. We want those who join Rini and

1 the team to reflect those same values.

2 This statement warrants repeating.

3 We are incredibly grateful for all of your  
4 hard work and effort, and for ensuring you are  
5 committed to what this campaign stands for. Thank  
6 you so much. Let's get Rini Sampath on the ballot  
7 for D.C. Mayor.

8 That's document number one. I would like  
9 to read our contracts document number two, which  
10 all circulators signed, if I'm permitted.

11 Q Sure.

12 A One moment, please.

13 This is the field petitioner contract.  
14 It begins with the contract agreement is between  
15 Rini for D.C. Mayor political campaign effective  
16 blank. It asks them to fill out the position role  
17 -- excuse me, time commitment.

18 And then it says, the field canvasser  
19 ballot access will support the Rini for D.C. Mayor's  
20 political campaign through their responsibilities  
21 outlined below.

22 Sorry, my allergies are really bad.

1           Independent contractor relationship.  
2 The field petitioner is engaged as an independent  
3 contractor and not as an employee, agent, or  
4 representative of the campaign.

5           And there's some more information there.

6           Then it goes into the responsibilities  
7 where we share responsibilities include supporting  
8 Rini for D.C. Mayor's petitioning operations by  
9 collecting signatures in order to get Rini Sampath  
10 on the ballot for D.C. Mayor.

11           The petition documents will be shared by  
12 the outreach team, and a brief training will be  
13 provide to the field petitioners on the first day.

14           The outreach team will be responsible for  
15 collecting the petition documents and entering them  
16 into the voter registration database, which is what  
17 we did.

18           But unless further interest is expressed  
19 by the field petitioner, the commitment does not  
20 exceed hours. And it says a little bit more there.

21           And then there's a section that talks about  
22 qualified signatures, which is they have to be

1 legible, contain complete required information,  
2 belong to an eligible registered Democrat voter as  
3 defined by D.C. election law, and not be duplicated  
4 or fraudulent.

5 Determination of validity will be made by  
6 the campaign through internal verification and  
7 applicable election authority standards.

8 Some more information on payment.

9 And then a legal compliance section that  
10 talks about the field petitioner agrees to comply  
11 with all applicable D.C. election laws and  
12 regulations governing petition circulation,  
13 including truthful representation of the campaign,  
14 and prohibition of fraudulent or misleading  
15 practices.

16 And then it just goes on to talk about  
17 professional conduct.

18 The field petitioner agrees to conduct  
19 this professionally --

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: Ms. Sampath.

21 MS. SAMPATH: Yes?

22 CHAIR THOMPSON: You really don't have to

1 read it all.

2 MS. SAMPATH: Okay.

3 CHAIR THOMPSON: I think we got the gist.

4 MS. SAMPATH: Okay.

5 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah.

6 MS. SAMPATH: Okay. Thank you, sir.

7 BY MR. SZYMKOWICZ:

8 Q Ms. Sampath, I noticed that you didn't have  
9 any statement that you read to the Board about the  
10 specifics and the requirements of what a circulator  
11 has to ask to the potential signer of the petition,  
12 specifically that they personally inquire from each  
13 signature whether a signature -- a signer is a duly  
14 registered vote in the District of Columbia.

15 Is that true?

16 A That's incorrect, sir. I read the clause  
17 3 in our contract that I just read out loud.

18 Q And what does it say?

19 A Bullet point number 3 says it must belong  
20 to an eligible registered Democrat as defined by  
21 D.C. election law and not be duplicative or  
22 fraudulent.

1           And in the 4-page expectations and  
2 guidelines document that I read previously I had  
3 mentioned in several clauses very clearly about  
4 taking the time to share that that was an absolutely  
5 expectation to have our petitioners inquire from  
6 voters.

7           Q     And you said that there was an expectation,  
8 but you didn't actually tell them that, did you?

9           That they actually ask the voter if they are  
10 registered Democrats in D.C.?

11           MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Objection, Mr.  
12 Chair. This has been asked and answered.

13           MR. SZYMKOWICZ: I don't think it has.

14           CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah, Mr. Szymkowicz, I'm  
15 not interested in rhetorical or argumentative  
16 questions. I mean, I'm certainly interested in  
17 facts. If you could try to limit your questions  
18 to, you know, confirming or denying certain basics.

19           MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Well --

20           CHAIR THOMPSON: I mean, I really I hear  
21 you're making a lot of argument to your questions,  
22 and I get it.

1           But and I'm also concerned about the time  
2 here. I don't want to give you a cutoff, but.

3           MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Well, she's testifying and  
4 we have the right to cross-examination about the  
5 specific issues, what did she tell the circulators?

6           Did she tell them, specifically tell them to ask  
7 the signers are you a registered voter in D.C. that's  
8 a Democrat?

9           CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. I --

10          MR. SZYMKOWICZ: And I don't think she  
11 answered that question.

12          CHAIR THOMPSON: Hold on. Hold on.

13          She has.

14          And, also, as the chair I certainly have  
15 the discretion to limit and control the manner and  
16 the timing of cross-examination. You don't, even  
17 in court you don't get unlimited amount of time to  
18 ask cross-examination questions, especially if  
19 they're essentially just argumentation. So what  
20 --

21          MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Okay. I'll move on.  
22 I'll move on.

1 (Simultaneous speaking.)

2 CHAIR THOMPSON: -- of leeway.

3 Please don't talk over me.

4 I can give a couple more minutes of leeway  
5 to focus on your actual questions, please.

6 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Okay.

7 BY MR. SZYMKOWICZ:

8 Q You testified earlier today, and correct  
9 me if I'm wrong, that your campaign is  
10 volunteer-based; is that correct?

11 A That's incorrect, sir. I said it's a mix  
12 of both the volunteers and the paid contractors per  
13 my previous answers regarding the contractors.

14 Q Did you have a contract with your  
15 contractors who were circulators to be paid by the  
16 signature or were they paid by the hour?

17 A Sir, we had a --

18 MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Chair, what's the  
19 relevance of this question?

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: I don't know what the  
21 relevance is. It's certainly not persuading me.

22 But, yeah, I mean, I'll -- why don't you

1 take one more minute, sir, and then we'll hear from  
2 your client, as well, under her oath.

3 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Did she answer the  
4 question?

5 MS. SAMPATH: Sir, it's in the documents  
6 I just read out loud to you, as well. I'm looking  
7 at the portion that speaks to the structure we had  
8 for payment.

9 We had some who chose to take -- because  
10 we believe in paying our circulators a livable wage  
11 of \$30 an hour. And some others who took a decision  
12 to be paid by signature.

13 And we left that entirely up to our  
14 contractors because we want to make sure we had  
15 quality contractors on the campaigns.

16 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Was Mr. Jones --

17 CHAIR THOMPSON: It's not relevant. I  
18 mean, the chair is ruling your line of inquiry is  
19 just not relevant.

20 MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Okay.

21 BY MR. SZYMKOWICZ:

22 Q Did you take BOE training?

1           A    I do not recall taking my BOE training,  
2 yet.

3           Q    Do you know if anyone on your team took  
4 the BOE training?

5           A    I'm pretty sure that they did. I believe  
6 my campaign manager and a couple of others may have.

7           MR. SZYMKOWICZ: Okay. I don't have any  
8 other questions.

9           I'm going to have Ms. Solomon testify now.

10          CHAIR THOMPSON: So, just to be clear, Ms.  
11 Solomon as the challenger, she's welcome to make  
12 a statement as the challenger. If she's going to  
13 testify as to facts, then, of course, she has to  
14 be under oath, as well.

15          And I once again ask everybody to be  
16 cognizant of time here.

17          MS. SOLOMON: Sure. Thank you for allowing  
18 me the opportunity to testify.

19          Hope Solomon. My address is 1717 20th  
20 Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

21          CHAIR THOMPSON: And do you want to make  
22 a statement or go under oath?

1 MS. SOLOMON: Yeah, I just wanted to make  
2 a statement under oath.

3 WHEREUPON,

4 HOPE SOLOMON

5 was called for examination by Counsel for the  
6 Challenger, and after having been first duly sworn,  
7 was examined and testified as follows:

8 MS. SOLOMON: Am I free to begin?

9 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah, go ahead.

10 MS. SOLOMON: Okay. I just wanted to say,  
11 first-off, thank you for allowing me the opportunity  
12 to speak.

13 BOE was incredibly helpful going down  
14 there all the days that we were challenging Ms.  
15 Sampath.

16 I also just wanted to say I've never run  
17 for office. And there are no paid people, it's  
18 completely volunteer, on my staff.

19 I have to give a little context as to why  
20 even, you know, somebody off the street is even  
21 challenging who's never run before.

22 I encountered Ms. Tashima Barnes, one of

1 the circulators, while I was out circulating my own  
2 petitions. She came up to me, asked me to sign hers.

3 She did not ask if I was a resident or any of the  
4 criteria, if I was registered as a Democrat, if I  
5 was a D.C. resident.

6 She then asked, when she found out that  
7 I was circulating, she found out that I was actually  
8 running as a candidate, she asked if she could come  
9 work for me after I had witnessed her out on the  
10 street just getting signatures. And she had told  
11 me a little bit about her background, and that she  
12 needed money, and this was how she was going to make  
13 some extra money.

14 I was actually shocked at all the  
15 information she gave me, and then wanted to come  
16 work for me.

17 I declined. And then when I went down and  
18 Ms. Sampath said she had turned in over 4,500, I  
19 thought, she should be mayor if she can get that  
20 amount in the time that we were allotted. I was  
21 impressed.

22 So, the whole point of me going down was

1 to start looking through to see how did she do it?

2 When I came across Tashima Barnes I thought, huh,  
3 that's interesting because I remember her as a  
4 petitioner.

5 And that's when I started working and I  
6 started finding fraud.

7 Then when I crossed over to Damon Jones  
8 and I saw -- in my, I'm not an expert by no means  
9 in signatures and handwriting, but when I started  
10 looking I went, this looks odd, too.

11 So, that's what tipped me off.

12 I just wanted to say that I'm not a serial  
13 challenger. I've never challenged. And I just  
14 wanted to give you some of my character and my  
15 integrity.

16 So, with that I say, thank you for all of  
17 your hard work. I know today was long. I know the  
18 last, like, 20 days were long, and this election  
19 is long. But I sincerely, just everyone down the  
20 Board of Elections they always had a smile on their  
21 face and greeted me so warmly. Thank you to  
22 everyone.

1           And I will conclude there.

2           CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you, Ms. Solomon.

3           Mr. Bishop-Henchman, do you want to ask  
4 any questions?

5           MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: Yes. Just two.

6           CROSS-EXAMINATION

7           BY MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN:

8           Q    Ms. Solomon, you're also running for mayor  
9 in this election against Ms. Sampath; correct?

10          A    Correct.

11          Q    You'd probably do a little bit better on,  
12 on your vote total if she wasn't on the ballot;  
13 right?

14          A    I don't believe so. I can't answer that.

15          MR. BISHOP-HENCHMAN: All right, thank you.

16          That's all the questions I have, Mr. Chair.

17          CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you. Certainly not  
18 germane.

19          But I think the record is closed on this.

20          Hearing from nobody else, I'm going to go ahead  
21 and make a motion that we deny the challenge and  
22 grant the candidate ballot access.

1           I just have a few comments in line with  
2 my motion.

3           First, a small procedural thing. Maybe  
4 not so small.

5           I take Mr. Bishop-Henchman's procedural  
6 point that we should decline to consider the new  
7 challenges that were just raised, I think today or  
8 yesterday, beyond the deadline that the challenger  
9 had. So, whatever that supplemental information  
10 was, it's not something that is properly within the  
11 scope of the challenge. It's certainly not outcome  
12 determinative.

13           I mean, even if it was, I think I would  
14 still say the next thing. And the next thing maybe  
15 is, is the most important thing, that I find no  
16 evidence whatsoever of any fraud or wrongdoing by  
17 the candidate, Ms. Sampath, or her campaign.

18           I've heard some reasonable questions about  
19 I think what somebody called rogue circulators.  
20 When you're trying to gather this many signatures  
21 and you've got a lot of circulators out there I  
22 certainly understand the, the dynamic where several

1 of your circulators may not do such a great job.

2 May even forge signatures or write down incorrect  
3 information.

4 That's not something that, without any  
5 evidence, you put onto the candidate's shoulders.

6 I'm hearing that this candidate took all the right  
7 steps to train and prepare her circulators, and took  
8 steps not to submit certain sheets, and accepted  
9 certain sheets that were invalidated.

10 So, I just want the record to be clear that  
11 our Board is finding no such evidence of fraud or  
12 wrongdoing.

13 And having testified, I find the candidate  
14 Ms. Sampath to be credible and honest, and to have  
15 displayed a lot of candor and integrity here today.

16 So, I just wanted to make sure the record  
17 is clear in that regard, at least from my  
18 perspective. You know, for whatever that's worth.

19 And the point that a certain number of  
20 percentages of the signatures were invalid is, is  
21 completely irrelevant to me. I mean, we've seen  
22 30, 40, even 50 percent. It doesn't matter.

1 There's no inference that can be made from that.

2 If you have enough signatures, you've got them.

3 And here the candidate clears the hurdle  
4 by 278. The concept that you would make other  
5 inferences in the absence of evidence that would  
6 deprive a candidate of ballot access is completely  
7 unpersuasive to me.

8 You know, we all know about the Williams  
9 case precedent. It's a very unique case that  
10 involved very different circumstances. So, it's  
11 just not applicable here.

12 So, I mean, that's -- all right, so that's  
13 all. Those are my comments and my thinking.

14 So, I wanted to thank everybody for their  
15 time in bringing this to our attention. And my  
16 motion stands to deny the challenge and grant the  
17 candidate ballot access.

18 MS. STROUD: We'll take a roll call vote  
19 with respect to the motion.

20 Mr. Chair?

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: Chair votes aye.

22 MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

1 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

2 MS. STROUD: Okay. And with that, the  
3 Board has voted to uphold -- or deny the challenge  
4 and to uphold the registrar's findings and grant  
5 ballot access to Ms. Sampath.

6 And the final matter on our agenda today  
7 is the challenge to the petition of Markus  
8 Batchelor, candidate for United States Senator for  
9 the Democratic Party which was brought by Cory  
10 Ellis, a registered vote in the District of  
11 Columbia.

12 And we will hear from Mrs. Green-Wright  
13 with respect to the challenge, and then the  
14 representative from the Office of the General  
15 Counsel, and then from the parties.

16 And I see that Mr. Batchelor is present.

17 And challenger is Cory Ellis, and I believe  
18 that counsel for Mr. Ellis is present. I believe  
19 that is Mr. Naughton.

20 And I believe counsel -- I think that Mr.  
21 Naughton is counsel for Mr. Ellis.

22 And, Mr. Batchelor, is your counsel

1 present?

2 MR. BATCHELOR: Yes. Lorelie Masters. It  
3 might be under Hunton. She's --

4 MS. STROUD: Okay, yes. I see. The firm  
5 that Ms. Masters is affiliated with.

6 Okay, so we will now hear from Mrs.  
7 Green-Wright.

8 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: All right.

9 As of April 17th today, 2026, this is a  
10 memorandum to Terri D. Stroud, General Counsel,  
11 through Monica H. Evans, Executive Director, from  
12 me, Millicent Green-Wright, Assistant Registrar of  
13 Voters.

14 Subject being the challenge to the  
15 petition of Markus Batchelor, candidate for United  
16 States Senator for the Democratic Party, updated.

17 On March 18th, 2026, Markus Batchelor  
18 submitted a nominating petition to appear on the  
19 ballot as a candidate in the June 16th, 2026, primary  
20 election for the Office of United States Senator  
21 for the Democratic Party.

22 The minimum requirement to obtain ballot

1 access for this office is 2,000 signatures. The  
2 petition contained 2,749 signatures.

3 This petition was posted for public  
4 inspection for 10 days, as required by law.

5 The petition was challenged on March 30th,  
6 2026, by Cory Ellis, a registered voter in the  
7 District of Columbia. Challenger Ellis filed  
8 challenges to 1,359 of the 2,749 signatures,  
9 submitted enumerated by line and page number on  
10 individual challenge sheets filed for each petition  
11 page.

12 The signatures were challenged pursuant  
13 to the Board's regulation in Title 3, Chapter 16,  
14 of the DCMR.

15 Our review of the challenges indicated  
16 that 904 of the 1,359 challenges are valid.

17 161 are valid because the signer is not  
18 registered to vote.

19 163 are valid because the signer is not  
20 registered to vote at the address listed on the  
21 petition at the time the petition was signed.

22 35 are valid because the signer's voter

1 registration was designated as inactive on the voter  
2 roll at the time the petition was signed.

3 112 are valid because the signer is a  
4 duplicate of a valid signature.

5 39 are valid because the signature is not  
6 dated.

7 13 are valid because the signature does  
8 not include the address of the signer.

9 70 are valid because neither the name of  
10 the signer nor the signature is sufficiently legible  
11 for identification.

12 10 are valid because the circulator of the  
13 petition sheet was not the qualified petition  
14 circulator at the time the petition was signed.

15 22 are valid because the signature is not  
16 made by the person whose signature it purports to  
17 be.

18 21 are valid because the signature appears  
19 on a sheet that was not personally circulated by  
20 the circulator.

21 183 are valid because the signer is not  
22 registered to vote in the same party as the candidate

1 at the time the petition was signed.

2 This leaves the candidate's nominating  
3 petition with 1,918 signatures, 82 signatures below  
4 the number of required -- required for ballot  
5 access.

6 Historically, though, with Board  
7 approval, signatures that have been discounted due  
8 to circulator affidavit dates defects can be cured,  
9 see past Board administration orders. Based on  
10 affidavits submitted by the candidate for  
11 circulator Jamal Holtz (phonetic) for 78 sheet --  
12 for sheet 78; and circulator John Capozzi (phonetic)  
13 for sheet 114.

14 If the circulator affidavit defective date  
15 signatures were credited back, the candidate's  
16 nominating petition will receive an additional 17  
17 signatures.

18 The candidate also provided an affidavit  
19 from a voter Monica Moran (phonetic) affirming her  
20 signature on a petition which, if accepted by the  
21 Board, would add an additional signature to the  
22 candidate's nominating petition.

1           As such, that would be 18 additional  
2 signatures credited back to the candidate's  
3 nominating petition.

4           CHAIR THOMPSON: Which would bring the  
5 valid signatures up to what number? If you add the  
6 18, what does the number become?

7           MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: That would bring them  
8 to 1,936.

9           CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, who should we hear  
10 from next?

11           MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Mr. Russ.

12           MR. RUSS: Mr. Russ, for the Office of  
13 General Counsel. The parties were duly notified  
14 about a pre-hearing conference on April 15, and each  
15 side presented some additional arguments. I would  
16 note, for the last couple of days we received a very  
17 large volume of materials from both sides, which  
18 we have incorporated into the -- the Registrar has  
19 incorporated into the findings here.

20           At the pre-hearing conference, the  
21 candidate asked -- gave us a list earlier that day  
22 of potential valid signatures they'd asked us to

1 revisit, and the Registrar's office did go through  
2 those, that list of voters, by the deadline. They  
3 were also filed, a number of address changes, I  
4 believe it was 39, and those were -- also have been  
5 counted towards the Registrar -- I'm sorry, towards  
6 the Registrar's account.

7           The candidate raised an argument that she  
8 felt the challenge was not made in good faith,  
9 because there were a number of challenges where  
10 multiple grounds --

11           (Simultaneous speaking.)

12           MR. RUSS: Where multiple grounds --

13           MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Go ahead, Bert.

14           MR. RUSS: Right. Because, on certain  
15 challenges multiple grounds, in the view of the  
16 candidate, were contradictorily made. Voter  
17 services looked at this and, of 596 challenges based  
18 on multiple grounds, the voter services did uphold  
19 499 of those challenges.

20           The candidate also asked some questions  
21 to make sure we were, with duplicate signatures,  
22 at least counting one of them, and we assured them

1 that that is correct.

2 Mr. Ellis has raised a number of issues,  
3 his representative. One is that the candidate has  
4 not met the threshold, he believes that the  
5 Registrar credited back too many signatures to the  
6 candidate. He objects to the late filing of the  
7 line by line, but we have gone through that. He  
8 also is raising some questions about fraud, and has  
9 a handwriting expert that is available.

10 In his initial challenge, the issue of  
11 fraud was raised but it was more line by line. In  
12 materials submitted yesterday, he has requested  
13 that the first 61 pages of the petition sheets be  
14 struck for fraud, but that was not a request in the  
15 original challenge.

16 CHAIR THOMPSON: So, it sounds like that  
17 was an untimely supplemental challenge.

18 MR. RUSS: Yes.

19 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

20 MR. RUSS: In terms of what we received  
21 from the candidate yesterday, we received a number  
22 of affidavits, mostly from circulators. We did

1 receive one affidavit from a voter whose signature  
2 had been challenged, and she said, I really did sign  
3 it. And, so, the Registrar has credited that --  
4 that's already reflected in the 18 that the  
5 Registrar's office has mentioned.

6           The other circulator -- the other  
7 affidavits were from circulators, a number of them  
8 said, the voter whose signature is being challenged  
9 as not matching the voter's signature on file, we  
10 did actually -- they're saying that that is actually  
11 the voter. But, this is the circulator saying it,  
12 not the voter themself.

13           The circulators also mentioned some  
14 additional addresses they want us to look at. If  
15 you add all these up, though, I think we're talking  
16 about maybe 19 signatures, so not -- I mean, if we  
17 were to credit the circulators, saying yes, this  
18 voter, that's really their signature, which is not  
19 something, I think, the General Counsel has done  
20 before, it's still not enough.

21           CHAIR THOMPSON: So, it would be 1,936  
22 plus 19, is that what you're saying?

1 MR. RUSS: Yes, if all -- and then if --  
2 and that includes some address issues, which we --  
3 I don't know if we had a chance to look at -- no.  
4 That's already incorporated?

5 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: That's already  
6 included, the address changes.

7 (Simultaneous speaking.)

8 MR. RUSS: So, I'm sorry, it would just  
9 be three, then, that were signatures that didn't  
10 match, if we credited those.

11 MS. STROUD: So, at most, if everything  
12 were credited, what would be the signature amount?

13 MR. RUSS: If we add the three plus your  
14 18, that would be 21, that would be 1,939.

15 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Yeah, 19. That's it,  
16 yeah.

17 MR. RUSS: Finally, there is one more  
18 category. So, circulator Jamal Holtz did not  
19 include a date on his circulator petition, and John  
20 Capozzi, his date was unclear what it was. And they  
21 both have done notarized affidavits, that would add  
22 17 if the Board overlooked the date error that they

1 had. That would be, 1,939 plus 17 would be --

2 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: 1,956.

3 MR. RUSS: Yeah, 1,956. Kemry Hughes  
4 (phonetic) -- he gave us an affidavit, he had defects  
5 on his circulated petition but it's not just the  
6 date, he forgot to sign two pages. And, based on  
7 our decision in re: Calvin Gurley Board Order  
8 2022-016, we -- the Board says, never sanction the  
9 acceptance of petition sheets where the circulator  
10 affidavit is unsigned. And, so, based on our prior  
11 precedent, we wouldn't consider what Mr. Hughes has  
12 said in his affidavit.

13 And that, I believe, is all the materials  
14 that were provided to us to try to make up the  
15 difference, but at best we're still at 1,956.

16 MS. STROUD: And, do you have any  
17 questions for either the voter services or --

18 CHAIR THOMPSON: Say that again about  
19 Kemry Hughes, he wouldn't?

20 MR. RUSS: So, Kemry Hughes provided us  
21 with an affidavit yesterday, just that he was  
22 collecting the signatures. But on page -- sheet

1 106 and sheet 114, he did not sign it, and he did  
2 not date it.

3 And, so, this Board in 2022, Board Order  
4 22-016, in re: Calvin Gurley said, do not accept  
5 the petition sheets where the circular -- circulator  
6 affidavit is unsigned. Those two sheets, it's six  
7 signatures on sheet 106 and five signatures on 114.

8 And, again, not many with prior precedent.

9 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. So, on the  
10 affidavit, Kemry Hughes states he or she, I don't  
11 know, personally circulated the sheets, is that  
12 sufficient to --

13 (Simultaneous speaking.)

14 MR. RUSS: I can look and see what he said.

15 CHAIR THOMPSON: To qualify as a dating  
16 or a signing?

17 MR. RUSS: I personally circulated sheet  
18 107 and personally witnessed Bianca Johnson  
19 (phonetic) sign, I personally circulated sheet 106  
20 and 114. And, it was 106 and 114 where he forgot  
21 to sign and date it. So, he does, in his notarized  
22 affidavit, say that he personally witnessed --

1 personally circulated petitions.

2 CHAIR THOMPSON: That's pretty close,  
3 right?

4 MR. RUSS: What --

5 CHAIR THOMPSON: I mean, it might have  
6 been drafted to say, I signed it on such and such  
7 date, but that -- doesn't that meet the -- doesn't  
8 that satisfy the circulators affidavit standard?

9 MR. RUSS: I defer to the General Counsel,  
10 she --

11 MS. STROUD: I don't think it would.

12 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. Well, anyway --  
13 (Simultaneous speaking.)

14 MS. STROUD: So -- So, let's -- I would  
15 say no, but I also would want to know whether --  
16 what difference that would make in terms of the  
17 impact, you know, just --

18 MR. RUSS: If those 11 signatures on those  
19 two pages were added back, we are at 1,967.

20 MS. STROUD: Yeah.

21 MR. RUSS: I'm not aware of other matters  
22 that --

1 CHAIR THOMPSON: Right, and we skipped a  
2 lot of maybes and hypotheticals of would we allow  
3 the extra signatures to be counted, and I don't know  
4 if we have to go through each one of those. I mean,  
5 I hope everybody that's watching this can see how  
6 we do try to work very positively and proactively  
7 to find valid signatures, we want candidates to make  
8 it.

9 We -- so, we skipped a lot of whether we  
10 would, in fact, grant it, and we can skip this one  
11 too, but I -- assuming it all, it looks like we're  
12 still only getting to 1,967, so --

13 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: At best.

14 CHAIR THOMPSON: I mean, of course  
15 candidate or his counsel can enlighten us on other  
16 things, so why don't we -- who should we hear from  
17 next?

18 MS. STROUD: We should hear from the  
19 candidate.

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: The candidate?

21 MS. STROUD: Yes.

22 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. Mr. Batchelor or

1 counsel?

2 MS. MASTERS: It's Lorelie Masters, I will  
3 open for Mr. Batchelor.

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: Hello, Ms. Masters,  
5 thank you so much for being here.

6 MS. MASTERS: All right, can you hear me  
7 now?

8 CHAIR THOMPSON: We sure can.

9 MS. MASTERS: Okay, apologies, I was  
10 talking but down to the -- I'm in a conference room  
11 and, I must say, this new system, I'm not entirely  
12 comfortable with. So, I apologize for that. I'm  
13 opening for Mr. Batchelor, as I think you'll  
14 appreciate, Lorelie Masters. I really appreciate  
15 everyone's time on this, I know this is a lot to  
16 handle in a short period of time.

17 Apropos of that, we received this -- the  
18 decision, the updated recommendation from the  
19 Registrar within the last, I think, the last hour,  
20 and I would respectfully request at least some time  
21 to sit in a room and read this, so that I can respond  
22 appropriately. I don't -- I feel at a disadvantage

1 at this point, because I was trying to do this, I  
2 guess, on a multitasking basis while listening to  
3 the last presentation, but I don't feel that I  
4 adequately prepared to really address this.

5 We have a specific -- a couple of specific  
6 things I would like to ask. So, we're specifically  
7 asking for an extension of time, whatever that might  
8 be, an hour, 4:00 this afternoon, first thing Monday  
9 morning, whatever works for Board, in order to give  
10 us some time to review the decision which came in  
11 after noon, meaning after 12:00 noon. And, I would  
12 like a chance to be able to confer with my client,  
13 I really haven't had a chance to do that given the  
14 timing here. So that's my first request.

15 If I might just say before -- because I  
16 don't want this point to be lost, I want to make  
17 sure this is on the record. The Board may not, at  
18 the end of the day or maybe even the beginning of  
19 the day, address the additional arguments that the  
20 challenger has raised in the latest submission, but  
21 I would respectfully request.

22 Because it attacks directly the integrity

1 of both, my client Markus Batchelor but also one  
2 of our circulators, Andre Galowitz, who, as he said  
3 to me this morning, I'm a college student, I cannot  
4 afford to have this kind of allegation of fraud  
5 against me left uncorrected in the record. So, we  
6 would like a chance to certainly, affirmatively  
7 disagree with all of the allegations attacking --  
8 I would say it's an attack on the integrity of Mr.  
9 Batchelor, but also our circulator, Andre Galowitz.

10 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, well, number one,  
11 as the Chair has already indicated, we do not, and  
12 are not, considering any aspect of the late-filed  
13 challenge that goes to allegations of fraud and  
14 integrity, we've rejected them as untimely. You  
15 are certainly willing to enter into the record  
16 anything you'd like in order to, you know, address  
17 your client's integrity on the public record.  
18 You're welcome to do that. So -- but I did want  
19 to make clear, the only thing we're looking at is  
20 this line by line challenge, as it was initially  
21 filed.

22 So, if there's -- I don't know if that

1 changes your request about needing more time. I'm  
2 sensitive to that. If you do need more time, I think  
3 we're willing to grant it to you. And, we can resume  
4 by Zoom later today at 4:00 p.m. or, if you think  
5 we can go ahead and just -- limiting ourselves to  
6 the line by line aspect, if we can do it now, it  
7 might be good to get out of the way so we can start  
8 heading towards the 5:00 p.m. hour.

9 MS. MASTERS: Well, I appreciate that,  
10 Chair Thompson. I would appreciate the time to have  
11 -- I'd like to be able to sit down and read the  
12 decision without -- I need to compare to the original  
13 and see the changes.

14 We would note that we don't see a line by  
15 line comparison on some of these issues, for example  
16 the address changes. As I'm recalling -- although,  
17 again, this gets to the point where I don't feel  
18 like I've had much time to let this sink in. There  
19 were 39 that were accepted in the preliminary and  
20 there are 24 in this, so we may request an  
21 opportunity to go line by line on those to make sure  
22 that we understand what the decision is and can get

1 an affirmative response from the Board.

2 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, we can do that.

3 I will forewarn you that I think Board member  
4 Greenfield and I will both have to dial in by Zoom.

5 We may be a little bit encumbered by, you know,  
6 acoustics and screens. But we have all the  
7 materials with us, so we can do that line by line  
8 as needed. And, so, I accept your request. I've  
9 already checked, I think 4:00 p.m. works, so we'll  
10 setup a Zoom line for that.

11 And in the meantime, I don't know if  
12 there's more communication that might facilitate  
13 your understanding of things, but I think we have  
14 to finish by today, right?

15 MS. STROUD: We do not have to finish by  
16 today, but we do need to finish by today in terms  
17 of finalizing the ballot, being ready for the ballot  
18 lottery. If we finished on Monday, then the appeal  
19 would be due on the 23, and that's -- we need to  
20 -- we should finish today.

21 CHAIR THOMPSON: We have to finish today,  
22 we're on a really, almost immoveable time clock that

1 has to do with the public lottery and the printing  
2 of ballots to go to overseas voters. So, we'll  
3 resume at 4:00 p.m. on this issue, spend about an  
4 hour or so together if needed, and make our  
5 determination.

6 And, thank you, Ms. Masters. And hearing  
7 no objection to that.

8 MS. MASTERS: Thank you very much for the  
9 accommodation.

10 CHAIR THOMPSON: So, is there anything --

11 MS. STROUD: No, we're just continuing the  
12 proceeding until 4:00.

13 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay. So we'll leave  
14 the proceeding open, we'll resume at 4:00, and I'll  
15 --

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 MR. NAUGHTON: Sir, I'm sorry, we were --  
18 I don't mean to interject, this is Justin Naughton  
19 on behalf of Cory Ellis here. It seems like we were  
20 muted where we thought we were not muted, and we  
21 were trying to get the Board's attention. We were  
22 just -- we want to just enter on the record just

1 an objection to continuing this matter too far into  
2 the future. But to the extent that the Board may  
3 consider maybe reconvening at 3:00 instead of 4:00,  
4 that would kind help us move forward.

5           What we do anticipate to the extent that  
6 there are challenges and we end up going line by  
7 line, we think the ones -- the 1,967 number in best  
8 case scenario, if everything is accepted, is  
9 including, potentially, duplicates. We also have  
10 a handwriting expert that we've proffered, which  
11 we believe will, you know, could spend considerable  
12 time, if necessary, to the extent that the Board  
13 is not willing to accept its own Registrar's reports  
14 or fully adopt that as it is now, that we would  
15 require some extensive time to present this expert  
16 witness and go additionally line by line.

17           So, if we're pushing to 4:00, you know,  
18 we could be here, you know, conceivably until much  
19 later in the evening. So we just wanted to be clear  
20 on that matter. To the extent that there's the  
21 ability to come -- move it a little to the left,  
22 I think that would be appreciated.

1                   CHAIR THOMPSON: I believe the  
2 handwriting expert has to do with the untimely  
3 supplemental challenge?

4                   MR. NAUGHTON: No, in fact it would just  
5 be in support of, I guess, reconsideration of  
6 challenges that were overruled, which we believe  
7 should have been sustained.

8                   CHAIR THOMPSON: Is 3:30 okay? I mean,  
9 I want to give Ms. Masters the time she needs, in  
10 fairness. And when we -- if Ms. Masters is okay  
11 with 3:30, maybe we will need an hour and a half,  
12 I don't know. So, we'll resume at 3:30.

13                   But I want to be clear with counsel for  
14 Mr. Ellis, to please limit your arguments to the  
15 original line by line challenge. I don't want to  
16 spend time having this handwriting expert do a  
17 little bit of that but then drift over into the new  
18 sets of allegations that have to do with allegations  
19 of fraud. So, really, think hard about the scope  
20 of your presentation later. And, obviously we'll  
21 hear from you later about whether you think there's  
22 some duplication in the count up to 1,967, what you

1 call the best case scenario.

2           Maybe there's a better case scenario, so  
3 I'd like to give Ms. Masters time to find it if there  
4 is one. So with that we'll temporarily, I guess  
5 I shouldn't use the word adjourn, take a break.  
6 We'll continue and resume at 3:30.

7           MS. MASTERS: Chair Thompson, may I ask  
8 a question before we adjourn?

9           CHAIR THOMPSON: Sure.

10           MS. MASTERS: Is there a line by line  
11 analysis? I think -- we're assuming that we have  
12 what we will -- what you've been able -- or, what  
13 you have put together to provide to us, but we were  
14 wondering about a specific line by line analysis.

15           MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: I can provide -- this  
16 is Millicent, I can provide you with that, just allow  
17 me time to scan the document to you. As you stated,  
18 it was sent to you around noon today, and with that  
19 I was trying to get everything over in a timely  
20 fashion. But, I will provide you the updated  
21 version of the challenge documents, I will provide  
22 that information to --

1 (Simultaneous speaking.)

2 MS. MASTERS: We appreciate that.

3 MR. NAUGHTON: Ma'am, could I just ask one  
4 question on that as well? Is this referring to --  
5 I think we received the challenge sheets with your  
6 adjudication marks in the right column, is there  
7 maybe a way to either use a different pen color or  
8 something, just so we'll know any changes that may  
9 have been made from your original submissions?  
10 That would be extremely helpful.

11 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: In the interest of  
12 time, I don't think that that's available to you.

13 What is available is, simply, the changes that we  
14 made based on the documentation that was provided  
15 to us. And, with not, of course, not having a  
16 forensic signature person here, we based it on the  
17 historical signatures that we have, and we adjusted  
18 those as necessary.

19 MR. NAUGHTON: Very well, thank you.

20 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, thanks  
21 everybody. We'll see you back here at 3:30.

22 MS. MASTERS: Thank you.

1           (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
2 went off the record at 1:21 p.m. and resumed at 3:30  
3 p.m.)

4           CHAIR THOMPSON: Good afternoon.

5           MEMBER GREENFIELD: Good afternoon.

6           CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, we made it.

7           PARTICIPANT: We're here.

8           MEMBER GREENFIELD: We did.

9           (Simultaneous speaking.)

10          CHAIR THOMPSON: Let me --

11          PARTICIPANT: Can you hear us?

12          MS. MASTERS: Yes, I can.

13          CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah, yeah.

14          PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

15          CHAIR THOMPSON: Just give me -- this is  
16 Gary Thompson, the Chair. Give me just one minute,  
17 please.

18                 All right, good afternoon, everybody.  
19 This is Gary Thompson, the Chair.

20          OPERATOR: Recording in progress.

21          CHAIR THOMPSON: Oh, sorry. Good  
22 afternoon, everybody. This is Gary Thompson, the

1 Chair, and I see Karyn Greenfield's on, so we have  
2 our quorum and we are resuming the meeting on the  
3 very last issue.

4 And we just went through a whole lot of  
5 facts. We heard from the Registrar and the General  
6 Counsel's Office, so I'll ask Terri Stroud now to  
7 guide us on what's next.

8 MS. STROUD: Okay, so when we left off,  
9 we had given the opportunity for counsel for the  
10 candidate, Lorelie Masters, to review the materials  
11 and to address the updated findings, and so that's  
12 where we are right now. So, we'll hear from -- I  
13 think it's appropriate to hear from Ms. Masters now.

14 MS. MASTERS: Thank you very much. I  
15 really appreciate, as I said before, the  
16 accommodation. I note that there was something  
17 else that just came in from the challenger and we  
18 have not had a chance really to look at that.

19 So, this is our view, if you accept all  
20 of our challenges, except for signatures that don't  
21 match, we should have 2,003 signatures. And then  
22 with regard to the signatures that don't match, we

1 think that those or -- we have some questions and  
2 we also think those should be accepted for several  
3 reasons, or a couple of reasons, which I can go into.

4 So, that would bring us up to 2,025 signatures  
5 total.

6 So, it may make sense for us to go through  
7 these different categories of our issues. Is that  
8 kind of the preferred way to do it?

9 MS. STROUD: Well, let's see. I want to  
10 hear from our Voter Services and Counsel in terms  
11 of where we stand right now, so Mr. Russ?

12 MR. RUSS: This is Bert Russ for the  
13 General Counsel's Office. I wanted to correct  
14 something I said earlier. We were doing some quick  
15 math. We have, of course, the report is 1,918, and  
16 then we --

17 MS. MASTERS: I'm sorry, could you repeat  
18 that, sir?

19 MR. RUSS: The initial report, or the  
20 report that was issued today was 1,918.

21 MS. MASTERS: Right.

22 MR. RUSS: And we were discussing earlier

1 if certain things were credited, if the Board made  
2 decisions to credit certain things, I did some  
3 double counting earlier and it looks like the best  
4 case scenario is 1,950.

5 The way the math works, so 1,918, there  
6 were 17 signatures that we credited for Jamal Holtz  
7 and John Capozzi if the Board overlooked a potential  
8 date error with their circulator petitions, which  
9 the Board has done in the past.

10 We have, so that 17, plus one for Monica  
11 Moran, who had a signature mismatch potentially,  
12 but she has signed an affidavit that is, in fact,  
13 her signature, so 1,918 plus 18 gets us to 1,936.

14 I saw three potential signatures  
15 mismatches that were mentioned in the Batchelor  
16 affidavit. Now, he -- these aren't the voters  
17 themselves asserting that these are their  
18 signatures. It's Mr. Batchelor saying yes, these  
19 are the people. If the Board were inclined to count  
20 those, 1,936 plus three is 1,939.

21 And then the last category would be the  
22 Kemry Hughes petition sheets 106 and 114. There,

1 both the signature and the date are missing.

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 MR. RUSS: That, you know, in 2022, we did  
4 not count that situation, but if the Board were  
5 inclined to count it, 1,939 plus 11 is 1,950, so  
6 I just wanted to correct. As we were looking at  
7 the different potential outcomes, we sit at 1,950.

8 MS. STROUD: And that's assuming that the  
9 11 signatures that the Board has no precedent for  
10 granting were granted?

11 MR. RUSS: Yes.

12 MS. STROUD: So, if the Board did not do  
13 that, we would be at 1,939?

14 MR. RUSS: Yes.

15 MS. STROUD: Okay, and so I guess, Ms.  
16 Masters, if those are the Registrar's findings, that  
17 is the number that we would get if the Board waived  
18 all signatures that, waived defects with respect  
19 to all signatures that it has previously, that there  
20 is precedent for it waiving defects for, and that  
21 would bring us to 1,939. And so, you, as the  
22 candidate, Mr. Batchelor as the candidate, would

1 have to demonstrate that there are --

2 MR. RUSS: 61?

3 MS. STROUD: -- 61 signatures that should  
4 be found valid contrary to the Registrar, to the  
5 Voter Services' findings. And what signatures are  
6 you saying should be reconsidered, I guess, is the  
7 question?

8 MR. BATCHELOR: Yeah, I'll just say we  
9 sent a log just recently of the line by line that  
10 we'd like to review about -- there are about 50 in  
11 there for direct line by line, and then I think  
12 including the other numbers you included would get  
13 us to a sufficient amount, I think just a little  
14 over 2,000. I'm doing the math in my head.

15 MS. STROUD: So, the number is actually  
16 61 in light of the fact that the Board would not  
17 credit the 11, so it would be 61 signatures that  
18 are needed.

19 MR. BATCHELOR: Also, plus --

20 (Simultaneous speaking.)

21 MR. BATCHELOR: Plus an additional  
22 review, apologies, of potential address changes

1 that we'd also like reviewed.

2 MR. RUSS: The deadline for submitting  
3 address changes has passed.

4 MR. BATCHELOR: Yes, no, we were looking  
5 to review just to ensure that they were counted.  
6 We believe that they were already changed.

7 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Yes, they were  
8 accounted for. Approximately 39 were accounted for  
9 out of the 180-plus that you submitted.

10 MR. BATCHELOR: Yes, ma'am. I think on  
11 our count, in terms of the difference between the  
12 original report and the final report, I think we  
13 only found 24, so we were just wondering about the  
14 discrepancy.

15 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: No, I recognize that  
16 you came in earlier this week and you provided them  
17 to me directly and we processed those immediately.  
18 Some of those applications were actually  
19 overlapping with the initial Excel spreadsheet that  
20 included all of those address updates as well, so  
21 it came to a total of 39 updates overall for  
22 addresses, address changes, excuse me.

1 MS. STROUD: So, in light of that, as you  
2 would need the 61 because all the changes of address  
3 have been taken into account, and I think your  
4 spreadsheet indicates that you wanted to have  
5 another look at 51 signatures, if we granted all  
6 of those to the 1,939, that would be 1,990.

7 CHAIR THOMPSON: Maybe it would help,  
8 General Counsel Stroud, if you could address the  
9 11 signatures that relate to both missing dates and  
10 signatures that I think we heard there's no  
11 precedent for?

12 MS. STROUD: Yes, because they were not  
13 signed and not dated, and so in the past, the Board  
14 has allowed for waiver of the missing date, but not  
15 for the missing signature, and that is the Gurley  
16 challenge that was referenced previously, so --

17 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, so just for  
18 the record, I would follow your recommendation on  
19 that.

20 MS. STROUD: And then, so without that,  
21 we would be at 1,939 as opposed to 1,950, and then  
22 there are 51 signatures in the spreadsheet that was

1 sent at approximately 3:30 that they would like to  
2 revisit, but even adding those, that would get us  
3 to 1,990.

4 So, we would be ten below even accepting  
5 all of the submissions in terms of affidavits, and  
6 some of which, you know, I would probably recommend  
7 not accepting since one of them is not the direct  
8 testimony, oral or written, from the signers  
9 themselves, so there would be a question there, but  
10 even if we did accept those, we're still looking  
11 at a shortfall of ten signatures by my count.

12 MS. MASTERS: Hi, can you hear me?

13 MS. STROUD: Yes.

14 MS. MASTERS: Sorry about that. The mute  
15 keeps -- well, you may be muting me, actually, but  
16 anyway, I don't quite understand our new video  
17 system here, so I apologize.

18 In any event, a couple of things that we'd  
19 like to put forward with regard to what you just  
20 said. There were address, 22 instances where the  
21 addresses didn't match. We have been credited, as  
22 I understand it, with three of those. That leaves

1 19 where they have not been credited.

2 We believe, and this may have been what  
3 you were just referring to, but I'm actually not  
4 clear on this, we believe that the affidavits that  
5 we have put in address those issues by talking about  
6 the fact that the circulators have personally  
7 witnessed the signers signing those petitions, so  
8 we would like to have that issue addressed.

9 And for example -- I'm looking through  
10 these updates here. Well, there's the one we  
11 submitted from, Ms. Bianco Ramirez, I think, is her  
12 name. That's one of those that we think falls into  
13 that category. I'm sorry, I'm just referring to  
14 the affidavit.

15 So, for example, this affidavit, and this  
16 was signed yesterday on D.C. Emancipation Day, it  
17 talks about personally witnessing the signing of  
18 all of the signatures on her petition sheet and  
19 specifically references two of these signatures  
20 which I think are subject to challenge.

21 So, our argument is that on these  
22 affidavits where the circulator has said that

1 they've personally witnessed the signature, then  
2 these signatures should be counted, and that would  
3 be a total of 19 signatures.

4 Do we have another argument or two that  
5 we'd like to address? I don't want to just keep  
6 plunging forward without you telling me to proceed,  
7 I guess.

8 MR. RUSS: So, on that point, I mean, the  
9 one thing about the circulator saying that, yes,  
10 these are the voters, I mean, we don't know from  
11 the voters themselves that they are the voters who  
12 actually completed this, and so, I mean, I certainly  
13 defer to the General Counsel.

14 It seems not sufficient to say that these  
15 voters actually filled it out when all we have is  
16 the circulator making that statement and making  
17 statements about people's addresses and other  
18 things when we have our own records we've already  
19 checked about what the addresses are and what the  
20 signatures look like on file.

21 I mean, all of these have already been  
22 checked and rechecked, so certainly I don't think

1 that is sufficient to credit the statements of the  
2 circulators about what voters are doing.

3 MS. STROUD: I would agree, and also, is  
4 it not the case that even counting those, that would  
5 still get us -- were those the signatures that would  
6 --

7 MR. RUSS: Some of those signatures were  
8 counted. I mean, one of the problems with these  
9 last-minute -- some of these were rejected or  
10 potentially rejected for other reasons. I mean,  
11 getting a whole bunch of signatures at the eve of  
12 the hearing, it's very difficult to go through them  
13 again.

14 I mean, at some point, we have to cut it  
15 off. We've done our due diligence. We've checked,  
16 and checked, and checked, looking to see if there  
17 are valid signatures, and going through another 50  
18 at the last minute, our Registrar has done an amazing  
19 job, and I think they've already checked these  
20 things that everyone is asking us to check again.

21 MS. STROUD: Okay, and so the number is  
22 still 1,950 all accounted for?

1 MR. RUSS: That would be my  
2 recommendation.

3 MS. STROUD: Okay.

4 MS. MASTERS: With respect, I understand  
5 the point. I would just like to say that these  
6 affidavits do include the voter's address and then  
7 the BOE listed address. So, sometimes it's a very  
8 --

9 I'm looking at one now for Padgett, with  
10 Padgett on the affidavit. There's a space between  
11 two, two, and six on the street address. So, the  
12 correct street address, of course, is 226 Emerson  
13 Street, but -- and I did look at this directly.

14 You know, that one, she wrote it as, it's  
15 Veronica Reardon, Patricia Veronica Reardon  
16 (phonetic), wrote it as two, two, space, 6 Emerson  
17 Street. So, our view is that there's sufficient  
18 indicia of correctness of the signature to allow  
19 for this to be counted, or I should be a little more  
20 precise. I'm sorry.

21 On these, on circulator affidavits where  
22 they say they personally witnessed, we did try to,

1 and did in most cases, I think, identify the specific  
2 voter and how they put their address and then  
3 compared it to the BOE address, and there is a sheet  
4 that Markus Batchelor submitted that gives the  
5 petition sheet and line references for all of those  
6 addresses.

7 MR. RUSS: I would say that the  
8 Registrar's practice is to credit addresses  
9 whenever they can identify the address. They're  
10 able to do searches that the general public can't  
11 do and they really do make efforts to find people,  
12 and so, a two, two, with a space and a six, I mean,  
13 unless we know that that was rejected, you know,  
14 the practice of the Registrar would be to count  
15 something like that.

16 MS. STROUD: And Ms. Green-Wright, how  
17 would you respond?

18 MS. MASTERS: I'm sorry, was that a  
19 question to me?

20 MS. STROUD: No, it was for Ms.  
21 Green-Wright.

22 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: I apologize.

1 MS. STROUD: Millicent Green-Wright.

2 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: I'm in agreement. I'm  
3 in agreement with what Mr. Russ has said, and in  
4 stating that, we spent a lot of time and put a lot  
5 of effort into ensuring that what we're reading is  
6 correct.

7 And with the spreadsheets that you all  
8 provided us with, we were able to discern what we  
9 possibly could not make out, and we also looked at  
10 our historical documents to confirm and verify the  
11 signatures that we had, along with the spellings  
12 of names, nicknames.

13 For instance, I'll use myself as an  
14 example. My name is Millicent, but everyone here  
15 calls me Millie. I may sign a petition Millie  
16 Green-Wright. If I can look at the signature style  
17 and I can also confirm my address, then that would  
18 be seen as acceptable, okay?

19 We do take the time to ensure that what  
20 we're reading, it goes beyond just my eyes. It goes  
21 to the Registrar's eyes and some of the lead  
22 specialists here as well, so we work hard on behalf

1 of the candidates to ensure that this is done fairly.

2 MS. STROUD: Okay.

3 CHAIR THOMPSON: So, this is Chair  
4 Thompson. It sounds to me like the woman who lives  
5 at 226 Emerson Street was, in fact, counted?

6 MS. STROUD: Is that the case?

7 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: I would need to know  
8 that line number so that I can reference it and  
9 confirm. If you all can provide that to me? I have  
10 the list in front of me that you all emailed.

11 MR. RUSS: It might be page 230.

12 MS. MASTERS: I do have it. I hope you'll  
13 give me just a moment. I must say, I have too many  
14 papers spread out here. I think it's probably --

15 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Page 230? And I'm  
16 sorry, if you don't mind, the line number? Because  
17 I'm here looking at page 230.

18 MS. MASTERS: 230, line five, yes, you're  
19 correct.

20 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Okay, so in that case,  
21 we found that the signature did not match what was  
22 on file.

1 CHAIR THOMPSON: It was a different issue?

2 MS. GREEN-WRIGHT: Correct.

3 MS. MASTERS: I know that you have reached  
4 your conclusion, and we do respect your opinion,  
5 of course, but we felt that there were two different  
6 issues in the affidavit. I take your point on the  
7 address, but we had the personal witness to 22.

8 I don't want you to think that we're trying  
9 to waste your time. That's partly why I'm saying  
10 that, that we thought that that was a valid point  
11 to raise in terms of the circulators personally  
12 witnessing the signatures.

13 CHAIR THOMPSON: Yeah, and I'll just say,  
14 and I said this earlier, in the context of many of  
15 these challenges, obviously our team works really  
16 hard to be positive and proactive in addressing  
17 signatures and trying to help the candidate find  
18 as many valid signatures as possible, helping with  
19 curing anything that can be cured.

20 Because we favor ballot access, and it's  
21 painful when somebody's coming up short by, you  
22 know, ten, or 20, or 30, and it just looks like,

1 based on the Registrar's solid and meticulous work,  
2 that that's where we are and --

3 But, of course, you know, I certainly want  
4 to hear more from the candidate and Ms. Masters about  
5 how specifically we might get past 2,000.

6 And then obviously, if that transpires,  
7 we have to give the challenger plenty of time to  
8 counter that, or they may have evidence about things  
9 that should be subtracted, something about a  
10 handwriting expert, so I'm not forgetting about you,  
11 Challenger.

12 I'm just trying to narrow it down to what's  
13 outcome determinative so maybe we, you know, don't  
14 necessarily have to hear everything that might  
15 pertain to -- whether the final number is 1,930,  
16 or 1,960, or 1,990, it may just not matter at the  
17 end of the day unless we first can see our way to  
18 confirming more than, at least 2,000 valid  
19 signatures.

20 MS. MASTERS: Well, we appreciate that.

21 I have -- you won't be surprised perhaps, to know,  
22 I had a chat with my client, who would like to make

1 a statement. I would like to say, and I guess this  
2 is maybe a point of personal privilege, but I'm not  
3 positive, I asked him if I could make this statement  
4 first.

5 I alluded to this earlier. I would ask  
6 -- there are, in my view, significant allegations  
7 against both my client and this petitioner  
8 circulator, who is a college student as I said  
9 earlier -- and perhaps I feel this strongly because  
10 I had this conversation with him early this morning.

11 I'm a parent. I would not want my child  
12 to feel like they are being disadvantaged by  
13 something where they thought they were doing  
14 something for the good of the community by, you know,  
15 performing in a role like this.

16 And so, I think both of their integrity  
17 has been attacked, and I don't think it's fair to  
18 leave that unaddressed because those kinds of things  
19 can have negative consequences, and that separate  
20 and apart from the signatures and all of that --

21 And you all can be free to tell me that  
22 I am out of line, and possibly I am, but I feel

1 strongly that these allegations of fraud, I don't  
2 think there's any basis for them, and I don't think  
3 it's fair to have my client somehow potentially  
4 negatively impacted, and our circulator, Andre  
5 Galowitz, who is at the beginning of his life and  
6 his career, to have some of this come back and  
7 somehow in the future potentially be cited against  
8 him.

9           So, I feel fairly strongly about that.  
10 I'm not certain you'll feel that there's a remedy  
11 for that, but I wanted to express that opinion.

12           CHAIR THOMPSON: Well, thank you. I  
13 appreciate that. And I have seen, we have seen no  
14 such evidence of fraud or wrongdoing in any way,  
15 shape, or form by the circulator or the candidate.

16           It's just -- no evidence has been presented that  
17 has been persuasive in that regard.

18           This really, this line by line thing, it  
19 relates entirely to, you know, these normal, routine  
20 situations where somebody who signs a petition turns  
21 out to not be registered, or turns out to not live  
22 at the address that's listed, and so on and so forth.

1           These are everyday occurrences with all  
2 of these petitions, and sometimes a candidate just  
3 comes up short when you look at the, drill down on  
4 these details, and that's what I'm seeing here.  
5 And, you know, for what it's worth, your comments  
6 are well-taken.

7           MS. MASTERS: I appreciate that.

8           MS. STROUD: I will say to the candidate  
9 and counsel that however many signatures were  
10 alleged to be signature mismatches, the Voter  
11 Services team only found 22 instances of potential  
12 signature mismatches throughout a petition that  
13 contained 2,700 signatures.

14           So, there is, you know, no basis for, at  
15 least with respect to Voter Services' findings, for  
16 allegations of widespread fraud with respect to this  
17 petition.

18           MS. MASTERS: I appreciate that. Mr.  
19 Batchelor?

20           MR. BATCHELOR: Yeah, thank you, Ms.  
21 Masters, obviously, for your representation today,  
22 and for years, for your friendship. I wanted to

1 thank you, Chair Thompson, and Members of the Board,  
2 as well as the Registrar's team, for all that you've  
3 done this cycle.

4 I know between the way we're voting and  
5 I think what sounds like an unprecedented number  
6 of challenges, you got everything thrown at you this  
7 season, and I think in a microcosm, I think this  
8 challenge threw everything at us and then some.

9 And I think, while we still maintain that  
10 there were far more than 2,000 well-intentioned,  
11 D.C. democratic voters who wanted us to appear on  
12 the ballot on June 16, you know, I think both the  
13 work you've been able to do and I think what you've  
14 said today I think makes clear that, by your  
15 determination, we're not going to make that amount  
16 according to your determination.

17 And so, you know, without belaboring the  
18 point, I wanted to thank you for your service to  
19 the residents of the District. Thank you for your  
20 patience and your engagement with us over what I  
21 know was a lot of communication back and forth.

22 And I just wanted to express, given that

1 circumstance, my intention to withdraw, but thank  
2 you all. And I want to also thank on the record  
3 everybody who supported this effort to get me on  
4 the ballot. It definitely wasn't in vain. Thank  
5 you all.

6 MS. STROUD: And Mr. Chair, if I could,  
7 I would remind every candidate that was unsuccessful  
8 in their attempts at ballot access that the  
9 opportunity to file an affirmation of write-in  
10 candidacy prior to the third day after the election,  
11 on or prior to the third day after the election,  
12 is available. That option to be a write-in  
13 candidate for the election is still an option.

14 MR. BATCHELOR: Thank you.

15 MS. STROUD: As is the option to appeal  
16 the Board's determination, any adverse  
17 determination by the Board, within three days after  
18 the Board issues its ruling.

19 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, well, let me go  
20 ahead and make the motion then to grant the challenge  
21 and deny the candidate ballot access. It's painful  
22 for me to make that motion.

1           And I thank Mr. Batchelor for all of his  
2 hard work and his nice words, but I don't find it  
3 relevant to hear from the challenger any further  
4 because we're granting the challenge.

5           And so, barring some objection from the  
6 challenger that they would nevertheless like to be  
7 heard, and I'll pause for a moment there, I would  
8 ask for a second and then a vote.

9           MR. NAUGHTON: No objection. We thank  
10 the Board for its diligence.

11          MEMBER GREENFIELD: And I second your  
12 motion. This is Karyn.

13          MS. STROUD: And so, we will take a roll  
14 call vote with respect to the motion. Mr. Chair?

15          CHAIR THOMPSON: Chair votes aye.

16          MS. STROUD: Member Greenfield?

17          MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

18          MS. STROUD: And with that, the challenge  
19 is upheld and Mr. Batchelor is denied ballot access,  
20 and so that closes that matter.

21           And Mr. Chair and Member Greenfield, if  
22 I might, I just want to say how amazing both the

1 Voter Services Division and the Office of the  
2 General Counsel attorneys have been, not knowing  
3 weekends, not knowing holidays, just an amazing,  
4 amazing job just processing the volume of  
5 challenges.

6           Because we actually were scheduled to have  
7 about 20 today, but then withdraws came in from  
8 candidates and challengers, and so we were able to  
9 get down, but we still had to work them before they  
10 were withdrawn, and so they did that, and, you know,  
11 just kudos to this amazing, amazing team, and that's  
12 all I had to say.

13           CHAIR THOMPSON: Apologies for some  
14 background noise. Thank you for that. I certainly  
15 join in those comments, and that includes you too,  
16 Terri Stroud, so, yeah, incredible work.

17           And with a lot of these challenges, there's  
18 a pretty compressed process for hearing the  
19 challenge and going through the lines, but there's  
20 time through the prehearing conference to sort it  
21 out, but nevertheless, there's a lot of last-minute  
22 activity.

1           So, I think we got it right in every case  
2 today and, you know, onward to the next step in this  
3 process, which is soon enough, the public lottery  
4 and the creation of a formal ballot, so thank you.

5           MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

6           MS. STROUD: Thank you.

7           CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, is there anything  
8 else we need to cover or may we adjourn?

9           MS. STROUD: No, we can adjourn. I just  
10 want to say that the Board has rendered oral rulings  
11 with respect to all matters that came before it  
12 today, and so the time for appealing is tolling.

13           Written orders will issue, but because the  
14 Board ruled today, Monday is the deadline for any  
15 appeals. And so, everyone can expect written  
16 orders, but any appeals to the D.C. Court of Appeals  
17 will have to be filed on Monday, and that's all.

18           CHAIR THOMPSON: And it looks like the  
19 written orders are in the works already. Yeah,  
20 another herculean task by the General Counsel's  
21 staff to now go finalize written orders in all 13  
22 of these cases.

1 PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

2 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

3 PARTICIPANT: Thanks.

4 CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, with that, I'd move  
5 that we adjourn.

6 MEMBER GREENFIELD: And I second.

7 CHAIR THOMPSON: All right, we're both in  
8 agreement.

9 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yes.

10 CHAIR THOMPSON: Everybody have a  
11 fabulous weekend, hopefully, especially for all of  
12 the staff at the BOE. If you can squeeze a few  
13 hours, I hope you get to enjoy it, so thank you,  
14 everybody.

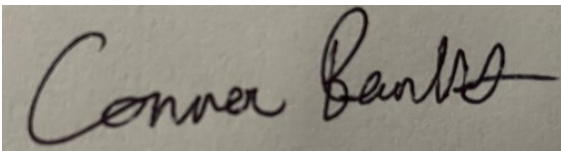
15 MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
17 went off the record at 4:04 p.m.)  
18  
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20  
21  
22

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 This is to certify that the foregoing transcript  
3 was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under  
4 my direction; further, that said transcript is a  
5 true and accurate record of the proceedings; and  
6 that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor  
7 employed by any of the parties to this action in  
8 which this matter was taken; and further that I am  
9 not a relative nor an employee of any of the parties  
10 nor counsel employed by the parties, and I am not  
11 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome  
12 of the action.

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Connor Banks

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