

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

In the Matter of	)	
Antonio Watkins	)	Administrative
	)	Order #25-017

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Introduction

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) on November 5, 2025. It concerns a recommendation by the Board’s General Counsel that the Board take civil enforcement action against Antonio Watkins based on stipulated facts concerning his having erroneously voted a mail ballot issued to another voter. Chairman Gary Thompson and Board member Karyn Greenfield presided over the hearing. Mr. Watkins and the Board’s General Counsel, Terri Stroud, were also present.

Background

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

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

In response to this information, OGC launched an investigation into the 2024 D.C. GE ballot that was cast by someone other than the voter to whom it was issued. OGC was able to ascertain that the signature on the ballot return envelope was for Antonio Watkins and sent him notice of a pre-hearing conference in the matter. Mr. Watkins responded to OGC's efforts to reach him and he cooperated fully in the investigation. He appeared at the September 9, 2025 pre-hearing conference and explained that the individual to whom the ballot was issued had resided at Mr. Watkins' apartment for a time prior to the 2024 GE when Mr. Watkins was assisting that individual with getting back on his feet.

OGC's investigation confirmed that the voter whose D.C. 2024 GE ballot was cast by Mr. Watkins had registered to vote in D.C. in 2018 and had identified as his voter registration address the same address that was being used by Mr. Watkins. That individual had not cancelled their voter D.C. registration when they voted in the 2024 GE in Georgia.

Following discussions at the pre-hearing conference, Mr. Watkins was sent a stipulated agreement in the matter and he later executed that agreement. By that stipulation, Mr. Watkins acknowledged that he voted a D.C. 2024 GE mail ballot that was issued to another voter and that, in addition, he had also voted his D.C. 2024 GE mail ballot and that the ballot return envelope that he had signed with respect to each ballot instructed that only the person to whom the ballot was issued should vote the ballot and provided for the voter to attest that they would not vote more than once. Mr. Watkins agreed in the stipulation that he, without wrongful intent, voted, in addition to his own ballot, a D.C. 2024 GE ballot that was issued to another voter. He admitted that he failed to exercise care and caution in completing and returning the ballot to the Board.

Mr. Watkins was duly notified that this matter would be presented to the Board on November 5, 2025. At the hearing, the OGC attorney assigned to the matter presented a

chronology of the case and stipulation to the Board and she requested that the stipulation (which had appended to it images of the ballot return envelope evidence) be entered into the record. The Board Chair granted admission of the stipulation into the record. At that point, it was determined the Mr. Watkins had not yet joined the Zoom proceedings, and the matter was tabled until he could join. When Mr. Watkins appeared, the OGC attorney summarized the prior presentation of the case and the Chair asked Mr. Watkins if he agreed to the stipulation. Mr. Watkins confirmed that he did. Following that confirmation by Mr. Watkins, the Chair requested that the General Counsel provide the Board with her recommendation as to the enforcement action to be taken in this matter. The General Counsel recommended that Mr. Watkins be civilly fined \$150.00 as that was the amount of the fine recommendation she had adopted under the stipulation.

After hearing from the General Counsel and her staff, and considering Mr. Watkins' remarks, the Board Chair made a motion that a civil fine of \$150.00 be imposed on Mr. Watkins for his casting another person's ballot and voting twice in the 2024 GE. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.

Discussion

The election laws provide that it is a crime to "make any false representations as to the person's qualifications for . . . voting" or to fraudulently cast a ballot.² As noted above, it is also a crime to vote twice in the same election.³ The Board can, upon the General Counsel's recommendation, initiate enforcement with respect to criminal matters by referral to the U.S.

² See D.C. Code § 1-1001.14(a) and § 1-1001.14(a-1)(1)(D), respectively. The penalty for violating either of those provisions is a fine up to a \$10,000 and/or a term of incarceration of up to 5 years. In addition, D.C. Official Code § 22-2405(b) criminalizes willfully making false statements to D.C. government entities. The penalty for that violation is a fine of up to \$1,000 and imprisonment of not more than 180 days, or both.

³ See 52 U.S. Code § 10307. See also D.C. Code § 1-1001.09(g) (prohibiting voting more than once without specifying a penalty) and D.C. Code § 1-1001.18(a) (allowing civil penalties for any violation of the election laws).

Department of Justice and/or to the Attorney General for the District of Columbia.⁴ We may also impose civil fines of up to \$2,000 for each election law violation upon the recommendation of the General Counsel.⁵ Our task, therefore, is to determine whether there is sufficient proof of an attempt to vote falsely or fraudulently or to vote twice in violation of the election laws and, if so, to determine the appropriate enforcement action.

In this matter, the facts are undisputed. Mr. Watkins has admitted that, contrary to the qualifications for voting specified in the instructions provided with the ballot, he signed a name on the ballot return envelope signature line that was not the “[s]ignature of voter to whom this ballot was sent[.]” He has also admitted that he voted that ballot and, in the same election, another ballot issued to him.

That said, Mr. Watkins has stipulated that he did not intentionally vote another’s ballot or vote more than once. His claim is supported by the fact that he did not sign the name of the intended recipient of the ballot or otherwise attempt to forge the name of the voter and he signed both ballot return envelopes in the same handwriting and inserted the same date. These facts reasonably suggest that Mr. Watkins lacked any nefarious intent and was simply confused by the existence of two ballots sent to his address where, at the time, he lived alone. The evidence here is that Mr. Watkins did not exercise care and caution in voting a ballot.

Based on the record before us, we decline to find that Mr. Watkins had the level of intent required for a criminal conviction. That said, the General Counsel has recommended that a civil

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

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

penalty be imposed. We concur that Mr. Watkins' conduct should have consequences. Under the circumstances, we believe that a fine of \$150.00 is appropriate.⁶

Conclusion

For the reasons indicated above, it is hereby:

ORDERED that the recommendation of the General Counsel is **ACCEPTED**, and that Mr. Watkins is directed to pay a civil fine of \$150.00 by no later than no later than December 31, 2025.⁷ The Board issues this written order today, which is consistent with its oral ruling rendered on November 5, 2025.

Date: November 6, 2025



Gary Thompson
Chairman
Board of Elections

⁶ While have in other cases we have imposed a fine of \$100.00 on voters who inadvertently or unwittingly voted twice or who inadvertently or unwittingly voted another's ballot, in this case, Mr. Watkins both voted twice and voted another's ballot. Accordingly, we believe a slightly higher fine is appropriate.

⁷ **Payment must be made by check or money order made out to the "D.C. Treasurer."** It may be mailed to the attention of the General Counsel at the Board's offices (1015 Half Street, Suite 750, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003) or hand delivered at that address.