

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Lauren Milord)	
Challenger)	Administrative
)	Order #26-036
)	
v.)	Re: Challenge to Nominating
)	Petition Submitted for
)	At-Large Member of the DC
Dyana N.M. Forester,)	Council
Candidate.)	

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Introduction

This matter came before the District of Columbia Board of Elections (“the Board”) on April 17, 2026. It is a challenge (“the Challenge”) to the nominating petition submitted by Dyana N.M. Forester (“the Candidate”) to run for the office of At-large Member of the DC Council in the June 16, 2026 Primary Election (“the Primary Election”). The challenge was filed by Lauren Milord (“the Challenger”), a registered voter in the District of Columbia, pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08 (o)(1). Chairman Gary Thompson and Board member Karyn Greenfield presided over the hearing. All parties appeared *pro se*.

Background

On March 18, 2026, the Candidate submitted a nominating petition to appear on the ballot as a candidate in the Primary Election contest for the nomination for the office of Mayor of the District of Columbia (“the Petition”). The minimum number of signatures required to obtain ballot access for this office is 2,000 signatures of District of Columbia voters who are duly registered in the same party as the candidate. The Petition contained 2,362 signatures. Pursuant to Title 3, D.C.M.R. § 1603.1, Marissa Corrente, the Board's Registrar of Voters (“the

Registrar”), accepted 2,362 signatures for review. As part of the Registrar’s preliminary determination count, certain petition sheets were discounted due to incomplete circulator affidavit defects (including, as noted in the Registrar’s report, Sheet 112 (no circulator date), Sheet 113 (no circulator date), Sheet 119 (no circulator date), and Sheet 150 (no circulator date)).

On March 21, 2026, the Petition was posted for public inspection for 10 days, as required by law. On March 30, 2026, the Challenger filed the Challenge.

The Challenger filed challenges to a total of 591 signatures. The signatures were challenged pursuant to Title 3, Chapter 16 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations ("D.C.M.R.") on the following grounds: the signer is not a registered voter in DC; the signer’s voter registration was designated as inactive on the voter roll at the time the petition was signed; the signer, according to the Board’s records, is not registered to vote at the address listed on the petition at the time the petition was signed; the signature is a duplicate of a valid signature; the signature is not dated; the petition does not include the address of the signer; the petition does not include the name of the signer and the signature is not sufficiently legible for identification; and the signer is not registered to vote in the same party as the Candidate at the time the petition is signed. *See* 3 D.C.M.R. §§ 1603, 1607.1.

Registrar’s Preliminary Determination

The Registrar’s review of the challenge indicated that a total of 395 of the 591 signature challenges were valid. Specifically, the Registrar found that: 118 challenges were valid because the signer is not registered to vote; 91 challenges were valid because the signer is not registered to vote at the address listed on the petition at the time the petition was signed; 21 challenges were valid because the signer’s voter registration was designated as inactive on the voter roll at the time the petition was signed; three challenges were valid because the signature is a duplicate of a valid

signature; 23 challenges were valid because the signature is not dated; five challenges were valid because the petition does not include the address of the signer; 74 challenges were valid because neither the name of the signer nor the signature is sufficiently legible for identification; and 60 challenges were valid because the signer is not registered to vote in the same party as the Candidate at the time the petition is signed.

Accordingly, the Registrar preliminarily determined that the Petition contained 1,967 presumptively valid signatures, which is 33 signatures below the number required for ballot access.

The Registrar also noted that, in prior matters and with Board approval, circulators have been permitted to appear before the Board to address certain missing circulator dates or pre-date discrepancies. The Registrar indicated that if the signatures on the sheets with circulator date discrepancies (Sheets 112, 113, and 119, none of which were challenged) were credited back, the Petition would regain 29 signatures but would still be four signatures below the number required for ballot access.

April 15, 2026 Pre-Hearing Conference

Pursuant to title 3 D.C.M.R. § 415.1, the Office of the General Counsel (“the OGC”) convened a pre-hearing conference with both parties on April 15, 2026. In her findings report issued prior to the pre-hearing conference, the Registrar outlined her determinations with respect to the validity of each signature challenged and provided a key code explaining the notations she used to indicate the basis for upholding or denying each challenge.

The Candidate referenced affidavits submitted prior to the conference in support of crediting additional signatures, including four affidavits from petition signers whose signatures were invalidated due to not being dated, and a circulator affidavit that addressed missing circulator date issues.

The Challenger acknowledged that if the Board credited the Candidate's sworn statements, the Petition would exceed the 2,000-signature requirement, but stated that she needed time to review the submitted affidavits. She also stated that she nonetheless intended to proceed and would seek to sustain sufficient challenges to keep the Petition below the statutory minimum required for ballot access.

As the parties were not able to resolve the matter, it was set for a Board Hearing on April 17, 2026. Both parties were duly notified of the hearing.

April 17, 2026 Board Hearing

The Registrar's Office appeared and summarized the Registrar's Report dated April 13, 2026, reflecting a preliminary determination that the Petition contained 1,967 presumptively valid signatures, which is 33 signatures below the 2,000 required for ballot access.

The OGC representative advised the Board that, just prior to the pre-hearing conference, the Candidate had submitted the aforementioned affidavits. The Board admitted the same into the record.

The Candidate requested that the Board credit the affidavits and permit ballot access, describing the omissions as good-faith errors by a first-time campaign.

The Challenger stated that she continued to have concerns about certain challenged signatures, including issues relating to party affiliation and handwriting similarities on certain sheets, but acknowledged the work performed by the Registrar and the Candidate.

Based on the admitted affidavits and the Registrar's report, the Board credited back 29 signatures associated with petition sheets discounted solely for circulator date discrepancies (Sheets 112, 113, and 119, which were not challenged). The Board further credited four signatures previously invalidated as not dated based on the affidavits from the four petition signers.

With the additional signatures credited, the Board found that the Petition contained 2,001 valid signatures and therefore met the statutory minimum for ballot access.

Discussion

The minimum number of signatures required to obtain ballot access for the office of At-Large Member of the Council of the District of Columbia in the June 16, 2026 Primary Election is 2,000 signatures of District of Columbia voters who are duly registered and registered in the same party as the Candidate at the time the petition is signed. *See* D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08; 3 D.C.M.R. §§ 1603, 1607.1.

Here, the Candidate submitted a nominating petition containing 2,362 signatures. The Challenger filed challenges to 591 signatures. Following review of the challenged signatures pursuant to the Board's regulations, the Registrar sustained 395 of the 591 challenges and preliminarily determined that the Petition contained 1,967 presumptively valid signatures, which is 33 signatures below the statutory minimum for ballot access.

The Registrar's report further explained that, as part of the preliminary determination count, certain petition sheets had been discounted due to circulator affidavit defects involving missing circulator dates, including Sheets 112, 113, 119, and 150. The Registrar also noted that, in prior matters and with Board approval, the Board has excused certain minor defects in the date component of a circulator affidavit where the integrity of the signature-gathering process is otherwise supported by extrinsic evidence, including testimony or sworn statements from the circulator. *See Gant v. Douglas*, Admin. Order No. 22-005 (D.C. Bd. of Elections Apr. 22, 2022) (excusing circulator-affidavit date defects where the record included evidence supporting the circulator's compliance with the oath); *Moore v. Butler*, Admin. Order No. 20-024 (D.C. Bd. of Elections Sept. 4, 2020) (waiving certain circulator-affidavit irregularities as formal error); *In re*

Jovan Perry, Candidate, Admin. Order No. 24-027, at 4 (D.C. Bd. of Elections Sept. 7, 2024) (crediting an otherwise undated petition signature based on extrinsic evidence, including a signer affidavit and waiving the missing date as a formal error).

Upon review of the record as a whole, the Board concludes that the sworn affidavit from the circulator provides a sufficient basis to credit signatures on Sheets 112, 113, and 119, which were discounted solely due to missing circulator date information, and which were not challenged as to any underlying signer defect. In these circumstances, and consistent with the Board's prior orders addressing date-related defects in circulator affidavits, the Board credits back 29 signatures associated with those sheets.

The Board further concludes that the sworn statements from the four petition signers provide an adequate basis to credit four signatures previously invalidated as not dated.

With these signatures credited, the Board finds that the Petition contains 2,001 valid signatures and therefore meets the statutory minimum for ballot access.

Conclusion

As a result of this challenge, the Board finds that the Petition contains 2,001 valid signatures – one signature above the number required for ballot access. It is hereby:

ORDERED that challenge to the nominating petition of Dyana N.M. Forester for the office of At-Large Member of the D.C. Council in the Primary Election is hereby **REJECTED**.

The Board issues this written order today, which memorializes its oral ruling rendered on April 17, 2026.

Date: April 18, 2026



Gary Thompson
Chairman
Board of Elections

