

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS**

Aurelia King

Challenger,

v.

Lorine Watson

Candidate.

Administrative Hearing
No. 00-034

Re: Challenge to Nominating Petition

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

I. Background.

Lorine Watson submitted a nominating petition to appear on the ballot as a candidate in the May 2, 2000 Presidential Preference Primary for the Office of Ward One Democratic State Committee. The petition was posted for inspection for ten (10) days, as required by law, and challenged on March 5, 2000 by Aurelia King—a registered voter in the District of Columbia—pursuant to D.C. CODE §1-1312(o)(1).

A preliminary review of the petition challenge indicates that Ms. Watson submitted a total of one hundred twenty-two (122) signatures. The minimum requirement for this office is one hundred (100) signatures of duly registered voters of Ward One who are members of the Democratic Party.

Challenger Aurelia King filed challenges to a total of 65 signatures, enumerated by line and page number on individual “challenge sheets” filed for each petition page on a specific ground or grounds, as required by the Board’s regulations.

On March 20, 2000, the Board convened to hear the above challenge. Ms. Watson appeared pro se, and Ms. King was not present at the hearing. The Board proceeded with the hearing ex parte pursuant to 3 DCMR 403.4.

II. Contentions

Pursuant to D.C. Code §1-1312(o)(1) after the nominating petition supporting a candidate has been filed with the Board, any registered qualified elector of the District of Columbia is permitted to file a specific challenge to the validity of those signatures. Therefore, the Board’s disposition of the challenge determines whether the candidate’s name will appear on the scheduled ballot.

Ms. King challenged inter alia that Ms. Watson had failed to file the minimum one hundred (100) valid signatures of registered voters who are members of the Democratic Party for the following reason(s):

- Signer not registered to vote at the address listed on the petition (3 DCMR 1607.5(b));
- The signer is not a duly registered voter (3 DCMR 1607.5(c));
- The signature not dated (3 DCMR 1607.5(d));
- Signer not registered to vote in same party (3 DCMR 1607.5(e));
- Signer not from same ward (3 DCMR 1607.5(f));
- Signer did not include address (3 DCMR 1607.5(g));
- Illegible (3 DCMR 1607.5(h));

A review of the petition challenges by the Registrar of Voters indicated that a total of fifty-two (52) of the sixty-five (65) challenges were valid. The final determination of this challenge indicates Ms. Watson filed seventy (70) valid signatures, thirty (30) signatures less than the minimum 100 for ballot access.

III. Conclusion

The Board, having adopted the Registrar's Report upholding the challenge of Aurelia King to the candidacy of Lorine Watson for Ward One Member of the Democratic State Committee, it is hereby,

ORDERED, that Ms. Watson be denied access to the May 2 2000 Presidential Preference Primary Election for the Office of Ward One Member of the Democratic State Committee.

3-27-2000

Date



Dr. Lenora C. Alexander, acting Chair