BCCON-WC

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO AS THE DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTORAL BOARD

Objections of: LOUISE TATUM	)	
	)	
To the Nomination	)	
Papers of: ELIZABETH M. WRIGHT	)	
	)	No. 04-EB-WC-32
Candidate for the office of Ward Committeeman for	)	
the 21st Ward of the City of Chicago, Democratic	)	
Party	)	

FINDINGS AND DECISION

The duly constituted Electoral Board, consisting of Chicago Board of Election Commissioners Langdon D. Neal, Theresa M. Petrone, and Richard A. Cowen, organized by law in response to a Call issued by Langdon D. Neal, Chairman of said Electoral Board, for the purpose of hearing and passing upon objections ("Objections") of LOUISE TATUM ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of ELIZABETH M. WRIGHT, candidate for election to the office of Ward Committeeman for the 21st Ward of the City of Chicago, Democratic Party ("Candidate"), having convened on January 5, 2004, at 2:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, 121 North LaSalle Street, 2nd Floor, Chicago, Illinois; and having heard and determined the Objections to the Nomination Papers in the above-entitled matter finds that:

1. Objections to the Nomination Papers of the Candidate herein were duly and timely filed.

2. The said Electoral Board has been legally constituted according to the laws of the State of Illinois.

3. A Call to the hearing on said Objections was duly issued by the Chairman of the Electoral Board and served upon the members of the Electoral Board, the Objector and the Candidate, by registered or certified mail and by Sheriff's service, as provided by statute.

4. A public hearing held on these Objections commenced on January 5, 2004 and was continued from time to time.

5. The Electoral Board assigned this matter to Hearing Examiner PETER S. FARACI for further hearings and proceedings.

6. The Objector and the Candidate were directed by the Electoral Board to appear before the Hearing Examiner for a hearing on the date and at the time designated on the Electoral Board's docket. The following persons, among others, were present at such hearing: the Objector, LOUISE TATUM, by her attorney; and the Candidate, ELIZABETH M. WRIGHT, by her attorney.

7. The Hearing Examiner ordered that an examination of the registration records be conducted by clerks and agents under the Board's direction and supervision, in accordance with the laws of Illinois and the rules of the Board.

8. The Hearing Examiner directed all parties to appear and be present, either personally and/or by their authorized representatives during the records examination.

9. The Candidate or her duly authorized representative(s) was present during the examination of the registration records.

10. The Objector or her duly authorized representative(s) was present during the examination of the registration records.

11. The examination of the registration records was completed and the Electoral Board hereby adopts and incorporates by reference the results of the records examination conducted by its clerks and agents. The written report of the results of the registration records examination is contained in the Electoral Board's file in this case and is available for inspection upon request of a party.

12. The Electoral Board has considered all evidence and arguments tendered by the parties.

13. The Electoral Board finds that:

    a. The minimum number of valid signatures required by law for placement on the ballot for the office in question is 1,061;

    b. The number of purportedly valid signatures appearing on the nominating petition filed by the Candidate total 2,878;

    c. The number of signatures deemed invalid because of objections sustained total 1,005;

    d. The remaining number of signatures deemed valid total 1,873;

14. The Electoral Board finds that the number of valid signatures appearing on the Candidate's nominating petition following completion of the records examination exceeds the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed

upon the official ballot as a candidate for election to the office of Ward Committeeman for the 21st Ward of the City of Chicago, Democratic Party.

15. The Hearing Examiner granted the Candidate's motion to strike paragraph 14 of the Objector's petition. The Objections allege a "pattern of fraud" but failed to specify the conduct that gave rise to the alleged fraud or pattern of fraud or what sheets and lines evidence the pattern of fraud. Such Objection lacked specificity to put the Candidate on notice of the purported deficiency and deprived the Candidate of an opportunity to prepare a defense.

16. The Hearing Examiner also granted the Candidate's motion to strike paragraph 15 of the Objector's petition. The Objector's general allegations of a pattern of fraud as to some nineteen of the Candidate's circulators lack the specificity required by law.

17. The Objection to six petition sheets circulated by the same individual and containing 90 signatures is moot inasmuch as even if these 90 signatures were stricken, the Candidate would have more than enough valid signatures on her petition.

18. The Electoral Board finds, therefore, that the Objector's Petition is sustained in part and overruled in part as more fully indicated in the results of the records examination.

19. For the reasons stated above, the Electoral Board finds that the Nomination Papers of ELIZABETH M. WRIGHT are valid.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of LOUISE TATUM to the Nomination Papers of ELIZABETH M. WRIGHT, candidate for election to the office of Ward Committeeman for the 21st Ward of the City of Chicago, Democratic Party, are hereby OVERRULED and said Nomination Papers are hereby declared VALID and the name of ELIZABETH M. WRIGHT, candidate for election to the office of Ward Committeeman for the 21st Ward of the City of Chicago, Democratic Party, SHALL be printed on the official ballot for the General Primary Election to be held on March 16, 2004.

Dated: Chicago, Illinois, this 10th day of February, 2004.

Langdon D. Neal, Chairman

Theresa M. Petrone, Commissioner

Richard A. Cowen, Commissioner

NOTICE: Pursuant to Section 10-10.1 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/10-10.1) a party aggrieved of this decision and seeking judicial review of this decision must file a petition for judicial review with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County within 10 days after the decision of the Electoral Board.