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

Objections of: GEORGE BROWN	)	
	)	
	)	
To the Nomination	)	No.: 20-EB-WC-006
Papers of: CLEOPATRA WATSON	)	
	)	
Candidate for the office of DEMOCRATIC	)	
Ward Committeeperson, 9th Ward	)	
	)	
	)	

FINDINGS AND DECISION

The duly constituted Electoral Board, consisting of the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago, Commissioners Marisel A. Hernandez, William J. Kresse and Jonathan T. Swain, organized by law in response to a Call issued by Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair of said Electoral Board, for the purpose of hearing and passing upon objections ("Objections") of GEORGE BROWN ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of CLEOPATRA WATSON, ("Candidate") for elected at the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, having convened on December 16, 2019 at 9:00 a.m., in Room 800, 69 West Washington Street, 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 were duly and timely filed.

2. The Electoral Board was legally constituted under the laws of the State of Illinois.

3. A Call to the hearing on said Objections was duly issued by the Chair 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 December 16, 2019 and was continued from time to time.

5. The Electoral Board assigned this matter to Hearing Officer Monica L. Llorente for further hearings and proceedings.

6. The Objector and the Candidate were directed by the Electoral Board to appear before the Hearing Officer on the date and at the time designated in the Hearing Schedule. The following persons, among others, were present at such hearing: the Objector, GEORGE BROWN, and/or his Attorney, ROSS D SECLER; and the Candidate, CLEOPATRA WATSON, Pro Se.

7. The Hearing Officer ordered that an examination of the voter 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 Officer directed all parties to appear and be present, either personally and/or by their authorized representatives, during this records examination.

9. The Candidate and/or her duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records.

10. The Objector and/or his duly authorized representative 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 result of the registration records examination is contained in the Electoral Board's file in this case and a copy has been provided or made available to the parties.

12. The results of the records examination indicate that:

A. The minimum number of valid signatures required by law for placement on the ballot for the office in question is 891;

B. The number of purportedly valid signatures appearing on the nominating petition filed by the Candidate total 1,081;

C. The number of signatures deemed invalid because of objections sustained as a result of the records examination total 490;

D. The remaining number of signatures deemed valid as a result of the records examination total 591.

13. The Electoral Board finds that the number of valid signatures appearing on the Candidate's nominating petition following completion of the records examination was less than the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the official ballot as a candidate for the office of Democratic Ward Committeeperson, 9th Ward.

14. The Hearing Officer has tendered to the Electoral Board a report and recommended decision. Based upon the evidence presented, the Hearing Officer found that the Candidate's Nomination Papers contained only 591 valid signatures, which is less than the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the official ballot as a candidate for the office of Democratic Ward Committeeperson, 9th Ward, and that the Candidate's Nomination Papers should be found invalid.

15. The Electoral Board, having considered the evidence and arguments tendered by the parties and the Hearing Officer's report of recommended findings and conclusions of law, hereby adopts the Hearing Officer's recommended findings and conclusions of law.

16. For the reasons stated above, the Electoral Board finds that the Candidate has an insufficient number of valid signatures on her nominating petitions and that the Nomination Papers of CLEOPATRA WATSON are, therefore, invalid.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of GEORGE BROWN to the Nomination Papers of CLEOPATRA WATSON, candidate for election to the office of Democratic Ward Committeeperson, 9th Ward, are hereby SUSTAINED and said Nomination Papers are hereby declared INVALID and the name of CLEOPATRA WATSON, candidate for the office of Democratic Ward Committeeperson, 9th Ward, SHALL NOT be printed on the official ballot for the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

Dated: Tuesday, December 31, 2019.

Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair

William J. Kresse, Commissioner

Jonathan T. Swain, 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 5 days after service of the decision of the Electoral Board.