DEFAULT-OBJ

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

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| Objections of: MARLO PAYNE | ) | |
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| To the Nomination | ) | No.: 26-EB-CON-003 |
| Papers of: PATRICIA "P RAE" EASLEY | ) | |
| | ) | |
| Candidate for the nomination of the | ) | |
| Republican Party for the office of | ) | |
| Representative in Congress 7th Congressional | ) | |
| District, State of Illinois | ) | |

## FINDINGS AND DECISION

The duly constituted Electoral Board, consisting of the Board of the Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago, Commissioners Marisel A. Hernandez, June A. Brown and Laura Kotelman[1], 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 MARLO PAYNE ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of PATRICIA "P RAE" EASLEY, candidate for the nomination of the Republican Party for the office of Representative in Congress, 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois ("Candidate") at the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, having convened on November 19, 2025, at 9:30 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.

[1] Commissioner Kotelman was sworn into office and joined the Board on November 26, 2025.

2. The Electoral Board was constituted according to 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(s) and the Candidate, by registered or certified mail and by Sheriff's service, as provided by statute, or statutory service was waived and service by email was authorized.

4. A public hearing held on these Objections commenced on November 19, 2025 and was continued from time to time. The Electoral Board assigned this matter to Hearing Officer Laura Jacksack for further hearings and proceedings.

5. 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. On such date and time, the Hearing Officer called the case by calling aloud the case number, the name of the Objector and the name of the Candidate. The following persons, among others, answered and were present at such hearing: the Candidate, PATRICIA "P RAE" EASLEY, by Attorney CHRISTOPHER ABBASI. The Objector did not answer the call nor did the Objector appear at the hearing. The case was called again at least one more time at least 15 minutes apart on November 19, 2025, and at no time did the Objector or any person purporting to represent the Objector appear.

6. The Electoral Board finds that on November 14, 2025 the Cook County Sheriff attempted to serve the Objector with a copy of the Call to the November 19, 2025 hearing in this cause. Per the Certified Mail tracker, the USPS delivered the call to a person at the Objector's address on November 15, 2025.

7. The Electoral Board further finds that the Objector knew, or should have known, that an Objector's Petition was filed in the Objector's name, and the Objector therefore should have made a reasonable effort to inquire into the date and time of the hearings on the Objector's Petition. As stated in the Electoral Board's Call, the hearing information was posted and publicly available at all times on the Electoral Board's website and with paper postings outside its main offices at 69 W. Washington Street.

8. Subsequent to the initial hearing, the Objector filed a Motion to Reconsider alleging that she was present at the initial hearing but did not hear her case called, and the Candidate filed a response thereto. The Hearing Officer entered a Case Management Order setting a briefing schedule and a further hearing on Objector's Motion. Despite having notice of the hearing, Objector did not appear at this motion hearing.

9. The Electoral Board finds that the Objectór did not appear at any of the duly called meetings and hearings conducted in this matter despite having notice of said hearing.

10. Therefore, the Electoral Board finds that the Objector is in default, that the Objections are therefore overruled, and that the Candidate's Nomination Papers are, thereby, presumed to be valid. The Electoral Board further finds that this presumption of validity may still be overturned by the duty of, and the authority vested in, the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago, pursuant to 10 ILCS 5/10-8, to only certify to the ballot the names of those candidates whose nomination papers are in apparent conformity with the mandatory requirements of the Election Code.

11. Furthermore, although the issue was not reached in this particular action due to the Objector's lack of appearance, the Electoral Board is aware from the resolution of other actions filed by this same Objector (*Payne v. Driver Jr.*, 26-EB-CON-001, and *Payne v. Tello*,

26-EB-CON-002) that the Objector's residence address stated on her Objector's Petitions is outside of the 7th Congressional District, and the Objector therefore lacks standing to lodge these objections, pursuant to 10 ILCS 5/10-8.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of MARLO PAYNE to the Nomination Papers of PATRICIA "P RAE" EASLEY, candidate for the nomination of the Republican Party for the office of Representative in Congress, 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois, are hereby DISMISSED, said Nomination Papers are hereby declared presumptively VALID, and the name of PATRICIA "P RAE" EASLEY shall be printed on the official ballot for the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

Dated: Chicago, Illinois, on Wednesday, December 17, 2025.

Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair

June A. Brown, Commissioner

Laura Kotelman, Commissioner

**NOTICE: Pursuant to Section 10-10.1 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/10-10.1) a party aggrieved by 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.**