BCCOFF

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

Objections of: YOLANDA RODRIGUEZ	)	
	)	
	)	
To the Nomination	)	No.: 26-EB-RGA-004
Papers of: FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ	)	
	)	
Candidate for the nomination of the	)	
Democratic Party for the office of	)	
Representative in the General Assembly in	)	
the 24th Representative District of the 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 YOLANDA RODRIGUEZ ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ, candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for the office of Representative in the General Assembly, 24th Representative District in the 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, 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 Joe Ponsetto for further hearings and proceedings.

5. The Objector and the Candidate were directed by the Electoral Board's Call served upon them to appear before the Hearing Officer on the date and at the time designated in the Hearing Schedule. Appearances were filed by or on behalf of the following persons: the Objector, YOLANDA RODRIGUEZ, by Attorney MICHAEL J KASPER; and the Candidate, FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ, by Attorney JOHN FOGARTY JR.

6. 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.

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

8. The Candidate and/or his duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records or waived their right to do so. The Objector and/or her duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records or waived their right to do so.

9. 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.

10. 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 500;

B. The number of purportedly valid signatures appearing on the nominating petition filed by the Candidate total 975;

C. The number of signatures deemed invalid because of objections sustained as a result of the records examination total 503;

D. The remaining number of signatures deemed valid as a result of the records examination total 472.

11. 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 nomination of the Democratic Party for the office of Representative in the General Assembly of the 24th Representative District, State of Illinois.

12. Both the Candidate and the Objector filed motions pursuant to Rule 8 of the Board's Rules of Procedure ("Rule 8 Motion"). Pursuant to Rule 8, the Hearing Officer conducted a hearing to allow the parties an opportunity to present evidence in support of their Rule 8 motion objecting to the Board's clerk's findings during the records examination. Per the

Hearing Officer's Recommended Decision, "It was agreed that the Candidate would proceed first and show his evidence to reverse the final rulings of the Records Exam". Only two signatures were rehabilitated.

13. The Hearing Officer has tendered to the Electoral Board a report and recommended decision. Based upon the results of the records examination and the subsequent Rule 8 hearing, the Hearing Officer found that the Candidate's Nomination Papers contained only **474** 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 nomination of the Democratic Party for the office of Representative in the General Assembly, 24th Representative District of the State of Illinois, and that the Candidate's Nomination Papers should be found invalid.

14. 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 and incorporates them herein.

15. For the reasons stated above, the Electoral Board finds that the Candidate has an insufficient number of valid signatures on his nominating petitions and that the Nomination Papers of FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ are, therefore, invalid.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of YOLANDA RODRIGUEZ to the Nomination Papers of FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ, candidate for the nomination of the Democratic Party to the office of Representative in the General Assembly of the 24th Representative District, State of Illinois, are hereby SUSTAINED and said Nomination Papers are hereby declared INVALID and the name of FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ, candidate for nomination of the Democratic Party for the office of Representative in the General Assembly of

the 24th Representative District, State of Illinois, SHALL NOT be printed on the official ballot for the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

Dated: 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.

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

AS A DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTORAL BOARD

YOLANDA RODRIGUEZ — NO: 2026 EB RGA 004

OBJECTOR

V

FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ — HEARING OFFICER: JOSEPH PONSETTO

CANDIDATE

RECOMMENDED DECISION OF THE HEARING OFFICER

BACKGROUND

The above-named case came to be heard before the Duly Constituted Electoral Board at 69 West Washington, Chicago, Illinois on December 19, 2025 pursuant to the verified objection of Yolanda Rodriguez (objector) to the nomination papers of Francisco Rodriguez (Candidate) for the Office of Representative in the Illinois General Assembly, 24th Representative District in the March 17,2026 Primary Election. Joseph Ponsetto, was appointed Hearing Officer. Michael Kaspar appeared on behalf of the Objector and John Fogarty appeared on behalf of the Candidate.

EXHIBITS

The Boards official file contains documents which are incorporated into the record as evidence and include but are not limited to the following: Nomination Papers, Statement of Candidacy, Petition sheets and all other attachments – objectors petition and related motions – proof of service and appearances.

ISSUE and FINDING

On November 26, 2025, per the directive of the Electoral Board, a Final Petition Detail Report Including the Results of the Handwriting Expert was completed and a summary report completed. The exam found that the Candidate had a total of 472 valid signatures, 28 signatures fewer than the required minimum of 500. Upon review of the report Candidate filed a timely Rule 8 Motion and on December 4, 2025 an evidentiary hearing was held allowing the Candidate to present evidence of staff rulings made in error. The Objector also file a Rule 8 Motion and asked for an evidentiary hearing. It was agreed that the Candidate would proceed first and show his evidence to reverse the final rulings of the Records Exam.

Candidate requested, pursuant to Rule 19{a) (1), that he be provided with the signature clips for all Petion signers whose records were reviewed at the records exam. Prior to the commencement of the hearing this was provided to all parties and agreed to that the Hearing Officer also review them in making his decisions whether to so sustain or reverse the record exam finding.

On December 4, 2025 the Hearing was conducted with the Candidate submitting rehabilitation affidavits of a specific reviewed invalid signature. The Hearing Officer examined the respective affidavits along with the petition signatures and the registration clips and heard argument to make his decision.

The following are the findings as to whether the record exam finding was sustained or reversed:

1) Sheet 53 line 3 Sustained
2) Sheet 50 line 10 Sustained
3) Sheet 49 line 4 Sustained
4) Sheet 50 line 11 Sustained
5) Sheet 52 line 3 Sustained
6) Sheet 53 line 12 Sustained
7) Sheet 65 line 5 Sustained
8) Sheet 55 line 10 Sustained
9) Sheet 56 line 3 Sustained
10) Sheet 53 line 13 Sustained
11) Sheet 56 line 15 Reversed
12) Sheet 65 line 10 Sustained
13) Sheet 59 line 1 Sustained
14) Sheet 60 line 7 Sustained
15) Sheet 59 line 14 Sustained
16) Sheet 5 line 5 Sustained
17) Sheet 5 line 7 Sustained
18) Sheet 5 line 12 Sustained
19) Sheet 5 line 13 Sustained
20) Sheet 28 line 15 Sustained
21) Sheet 35 line 13 Sustained
22) Sheet 35 line 10 Sustained
23) Sheet 38 line 4 Sustained
24) Sheet 37 line 3 Sustained
25) Sheet 8 line 12 Sustained
26) Sheet 28 line 4 Reversed
27) Sheet 28 line 4 Sustained
28) Sheet 52 line 8 Sustained

The finding is that a total of 2 (two) Signatures were rehabilitated still leaving the Candidate 26 signatures fewer than the required minimum

RECOMMENDATION

THEREFORE, it is the recommendation that the name Francisco Rodriguez should "NOT" be printed on the Ballot for Election to the Office of Representative in the Illinois General Assembly, 24th Representative District voted for at the Primary Election to be held March 17 , 2026.

Respectfully Submitted, Joseph L Ponsetto, Hearing Officer /s/ December 7, 2025