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

Objections of: EMMA JEAN ROBINSON and KATHY DAVIS,	)	
To the Nomination Papers of: NIKHIL BHATIA	)	No.: 24-EB-CON-001
Candidate for the nomination of the DEMOCRATIC Party for the office of Representative in Congress, 7th Congressional 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, William J. Kresse and June A. Brown, 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 EMMA JEAN ROBINSON and KATHY DAVIS, ("Objectors") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of NIKHIL BHATIA, candidate for the nomination of the DEMOCRATIC Party for the office of Representative in Congress, 7th Congressional District in the State of Illinois ("Candidate") at the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, having convened on December 18, 2023, 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.

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 Objectors 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 December 18, 2023 and was continued from time to time. The Electoral Board assigned this matter to Hearing Officer Frank Tedesso for further hearings and proceedings.

5. The Objectors 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 Objectors, EMMA JEAN ROBINSON and KATHY DAVIS,, by Attorney JENNIFER GROSSMAN and ED MULLEN; and the Candidate, NIKHIL BHATIA, by Attorney MICHAEL C DORF.

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.

9. The Objectors and/or their duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records or waived their right to do so.

10. 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 Board's file in this case and a copy has been provided or made available to the parties.

11. 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 821.

B. The number of purportedly valid signatures appearing on the nominating petition filed by the Candidate total 1556.

C. The number of signatures deemed invalid because of objections sustained as a result of the records examination total 474.

D. The remaining number of signatures deemed valid as a result of the records examination total 1082.

12. The Electoral Board finds that the number of valid signatures appearing on the Candidate's nominating petition following completion of the records examination exceeds by 261 the minimum of 821 valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the ballot as a candidate for the nomination of the DEMOCRATIC Party to the office of Representative in Congress of the 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois.

13. Neither party filed motions pursuant to Rule 8 of the Board's Rules of Procedure.

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 1082 valid signatures, which exceeds the minimum

number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the ballot as a candidate of the DEMOCRATIC Party for the office of Representative in Congress of the 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois.

15. The Electoral Board agrees with the Hearing Officer and finds that Candidate's failure to include his surname in the heading on sheet 84 was sufficient to invalidate said sheet.

16. The Electoral Board further finds that the objections to other sheets on the basis of purported defects in the heading of said sheets provide insufficient bases to invalidate the sheets. For the reasons stated in the Hearing Officer's recommended findings, the Electoral Board finds that the headings on the petition sheets in question are in substantial compliance with the requirements of Section 7-10 of the Election Code. 10 ILCS 5/7-10.

17. 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.

18. For the reasons stated above, the Electoral Board finds that the Candidate has a sufficient number of valid signatures on his nominating petitions and that the Nomination Papers of NIKHIL BHATIA are, therefore, valid.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of EMMA JEAN ROBINSON and KATHY DAVIS, to the Nomination Papers of NIKHIL BHATIA, candidate for nomination of the DEMOCRATIC Party for the office of Representative in Congress of the 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois, are hereby OVERRULED and said Nomination Papers are hereby declared VALID and the name of NIKHIL BHATIA, candidate for nomination of the DEMOCRATIC Party for the office of Representative in Congress of the 7th Congressional

District, State of Illinois, SHALL be printed on the official ballot for the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

Dated: January 23, 2024.

Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair

William J. Kresse, Commissioner

June A. Brown, 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.