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

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| Objections of: OMARI J. DAVIS | ) | |
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| To the Nomination | ) | No.: 26-EB-CON-008 |
| Papers of: CHAD KOPPIE | ) | |
| | ) | |
| Candidate for the nomination of the | ) | |
| Republican 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, 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 OMARI J. DAVIS ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of CHAD KOPPIE, candidate for the Republican Party nomination 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 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 Terence Flynn 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, OMARI J. DAVIS, by Attorney PERICLES ABBASI; and the Candidate, CHAD KOPPIE, by Attorney JEFFREY A MEYER.

6. The Electoral Board finds that the sole issue presented in this case was whether the nominating papers evidenced a pattern of fraud and false swearing which required striking all of the sheets of the nominating papers. The Hearing Officer found that the evidence presented by the Objector both as to the quality and quantity was insufficient and that Objector failed to establish a basis to strike the nominating papers in their entirety.

7. 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 the number of valid signatures appearing on the Candidate's nominating petition exceeds the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the ballot as a candidate

of the Republican Party for the office of Representative in Congress of the 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois, and that the Candidate's Nomination Papers should be found valid.

8. 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.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of OMARI J. DAVIS to the Nomination Papers of CHAD KOPPIE, candidate for nomination of the Republican Party for the office of Representative in Congress of the 7th Congressional District, State of Illinois, are hereby OVERRULED, said Nomination Papers are hereby declared VALID, and the name of CHAD KOPPIE, candidate for nomination, SHALL be printed on the official ballot for the General Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

Dated: Chicago, Illinois, on 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.**

**BEFORE THE DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTORAL BOARD FOR THE HEARING AND PASSING UPON NOMINATION OBJECTIONS TO THE NOMINATION PAPERS OF CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FOR THE 7TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS TO BE VOTED UPON AT THE MARCH 17, 2026 GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION**

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| OMARI J. DAVIS<br><br>Petitioner-Objector<br><br>v.<br><br>CHAD KOPPIE<br><br>Respondent-Candidate | ) | Case No. 26-EB-CON-008 |

**Report and Recommendation**

**Summary of Recommendation**

The evidence presented at the evidentiary hearing was insufficient to prove a pattern of fraud that would allow this tribunal to strike the Nomination papers and prevent Candidate's name from appearing on the ballot.

**Procedural Background**

This matter was assigned by the Electoral Board to the undersigned Hearing Officer, Terence Flynn. At the initial hearing on 11/19/25, Pericles Abassi appeared for the Objector and Jeffrey Meyer appeared for the Candidate.

The sole objection alleged in Objector's Petition was that the Candidate, as sole circulator for his nominating petitions, did not in fact circulate all those petitions and therefore falsely signed the circulator's affidavits, allegedly leading to a "pattern of fraud" as enunciated in cases such as *Fortas v. Dixon,* 122 Ill.App.3d 694 (1st Dist. 1984), *Canter v. Cook County Officers Electoral Board,* 170 Ill.App.3d 364 (1st Dist. 1988) and their progeny.

No motions were anticipated and none were filed. Obviously, there was no need for a Rule 6 examination. As a result, the matter was set over for a Rule 8 evidentiary hearing

on December 3rd, with the parties to exchange exhibits and witness lists on December 1st. Both parties complied with the December 1st evidence exchange date.

**The December 3rd Hearing**

For context, it should be noted that Candidate filed 53 nomination sheets, each one with 10 signatures for a total of 530 signatures. The minimum signature requirement for the nomination is 272. The 7 affidavits Objector sought to admit into evidence (6 were admitted) would have only caused a 70- signature decrease if each attacked sheet was disallowed, leaving 460 signatures not directly attacked. That number was well above the minimum signature requirement. Thus, the only issue at the evidentiary hearing was whether a pattern of fraud was proven that would require striking of all the sheets. As discussed below, it was not.

At the December 3rd hearing, both Objector and Petitioner presented testimony and exhibits. Each proffer will be discussed in turn.

Objector sought to admit 7 affidavits into evidence. Six were admitted.[1] They were in the usual form submitted under Board Rule 10 (c).[2] They were mostly preprinted with an open block area available for "free writing" regarding the description of the person tendering the petition.

In Objector's Exhibit 1, the affiant open block stated, "signed petition at Oak Park Farmers' Market but person was not Chad Koppie". Objector's 2: "Black man at Jewel in Oak Park". Objector's 3: "I don't remember but it was not Chad Koppie". Objector's 4: "thought that I was signing for Democratic Candidate Lashawn Ford". Objector's 6: "middle-aged white male getting signatures at Jewel in Oak Park, IL". Objector's 7: "An older (70-ish) African American man in the Jewel parking lot on Madison in Oak Park".

As will be discussed further below, there was no testimony regarding the collection of these affidavits. We do not know who wrote in the "free writing" block of each affidavit plus there is no evidence that any photograph of Chad Koppie was shown to the affiants. It is without question, however, that Chad Koppie is an 87- year-old white male.

The Objector called the Candidate on his case-in-chief. As discussed below, there were no admissions of substance on his examination. With that, Objector rested. Of

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[1] Objector's 5 was not admitted because of the variance between the name on the affidavit (Naomi Grace) and the attestation (Naomi George) and the failure to include the line number on the involved petition sheet. Given the ultimate recommendation, the non-admission is in no way determinative.

[2] Candidate interposed an objection under Supreme Court Rule 191 that the affidavits were incomplete as the petition sheet involved was not attached to the affidavit. That was overruled (except as to Objector's 5), as the affidavits incorporated-by-reference the petition sheets sufficient for notice purposes.

interest is that though Objector's evidence exchange of December 1st included a photograph of the Candidate, Objector did not seek to admit it on his case. Again, that may well go to the weight afforded the affidavits, to be discussed below.

Candidate's attorney, having reserved examination on Objector's case, called the Candidate. He described his background – an international jumbo jet pilot for Delta and a farmer. His avocation seems to be to run for public office, as far back as for Senate in 1992 and for a number of other offices since, including this office in the last election cycle. His nomination papers have been challenged once, according to his unrebutted testimony, and he was, as he put it "exonerated" in that 1992 Senate run for the nomination. At one point he mis-spoke and said he circulated his petitions into November but was corrected when he was refreshed by noting that the sheets were all notarized in October.

He affirmatively stated that he collected each and every signature on his nomination petitions and did not attempt to provide any explanation for the affidavits that differed. He stated that he did not employ anyone (except one person who turned in no sheets).

Candidate offered 3 exhibits: bank statements (Candidate's 1&2) that showed gas purchases and White Castle purchases in the Oak Park-Forest Park area, where, he testified, he centered his signature-collection efforts. He also offered Candidate's Exhibit 3, a notarized handwritten (by the notary) statement from the manager of the Oak Park Jewel, attesting to requesting he leave the premises when collecting signatures (i.e., kicked out). All three exhibits went to the relevant issue that he was actually in Oak Park, though they hardly get to the number of times he was there and whether that was sufficient to collect 530 signatures. The 3 Exhibits were not objected to and were admitted.

The Candidate's case concluded, as said, with his own testimony, and he was cross-examined by Objector's attorney. There was no rebuttal case.

This hearing Officer requested simultaneous post-hearing briefs and both parties filed same on Saturday, December 6th.

**Discussion**

Of course, the burden of proof is on the Objector. Here, under pattern-of-fraud analysis that burden is one of "clear and convincing" evidence, as is well known, a heightened standard above that of the preponderance standard. *Muldrow v. Barron,* 2021 IL App (1st) 210248 ¶ 28; 191 N.E. 3d 171. See also, *Bass v. Township Officers Electoral Board of Rich Township,* 2025 Il App (1st) 250092; 265 N.E.3d 860. ( *Bass* was cited and relied upon by Candidate.)

Out of 530 signatures and encompassed in 53 sheets, Objector attacked only 7 signatures (6 affidavits allowed) on 7 different sheets (only 6 at issue). Thus the *quantity* of the evidence was minimal to say the least.

We must also analyze the *quality* of the Objector's evidence. As said above, there was no contextual evidence on the gathering of the affidavits, what was presented to the proposed affiant, if anything. It is often the case in these types of challenges that a photo of the circulator in question will be shown to the proposed affiant, and the photo both referred to and attached to the affidavit. No such evidence was presented in the Objector's case.[3]

Generally, Objector relies on the description of the circulator's race and age as at variance with the Candidate's (sole circulator) own race and age. That pertains to only Objector's Exhibits 2 and 7, where race was mentioned and Objector's 6, where "middle-aged" was mentioned. As reprised above, the other affidavits simply say "don't remember" or in a conclusory fashion state that "it wasn't Chad Koppie". Thus the *quantity* of the Objector's evidence has been narrowed to 3 affidavits, and the *quality* is simply suspect for the complete lack of context. After all, this is "petition-signing season", and we simply do not know – and may not speculate – that the affiant signed only one petition or would remember the particulars in any event. On an examination of the *weight* to be afforded the affidavits, the Objector falls dramatically short of "clear and convincing evidence".

The Objector argues in his post-hearing brief that Candidate was impeached when he stated that he circulated into November when all the sheets were notarized in October. However, when shown the notarization date, the Candidate immediately corrected that mis-statement. I find that this mis-statement does not rise to the level of an impeaching testimonial admission. Even if it did, that would not supply the quantum of ammunition necessary to meet the clear and convincing standard.

The sole case cited by Objector in his post-hearing brief is *Harmon v. Township of Cicero Municipal Officers Electoral Board,* 864 N.E.2d 996 (1st Dist. 2007). The thoroughness of Objector's evidence in that case and the quantity thereof stand in stark contrast to the minimal presentation here.

The Candidate testified on both the Objector's and his own case-in-chief. This Hearing Officer found him to be credible in his testimony that he, and he alone, circulated each of the 53 sheets.

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[3] It is noteworthy that in the evidence exchange of December 1st, Objector's package included a photo of the Candidate. (Those exchanged documents were also filed with the Board.) However, that photo was not offered into evidence. It is a reasonable inference therefore that no photo was shown to the affiants.

In his Post-hearing Brief, the Objector suggested (politely) that the Candidate's age may have affected his memory regarding all the circumstances of petition circulation and called into question the reliability of his testimony. Again, this Hearing Officer saw the Candidate testify twice. There seemed to be no impairment of memory at all. Also, his manner of testimony was forthright, without evasion or overreaching. The further problem, for Objector, is that this finding contrasts with the affidavits, which reflect short, chance meetings in a grocery store or parking lot that lack context and corroboration for the affiants' own memory.

The Candidate's exhibits, as mentioned above, merely provided some level of corroboration that he was in Oak Park in and around the petition gathering period. There could be other reasons for a farmer from Kane County to drive to Oak Park for gas and White Castle sliders (but this Hearing Officer cannot think of any).

**Findings of Fact**

1) The Candidate's testimony was credible.
2) The weight to be given the Objector's affidavits is minimal at best.
3) The disparity in the number of affidavits (6) versus the number of signatures (530) is fatal to Objector's case. The Candidate is well over the 272 minimum signature requirement.

**Conclusion of Law**

Neither the quantity of Objector's evidence nor the quality of that evidence comes close to the type of clear and convincing evidence that this Board's precedents – including Objector's own citation to *Harmon, supra* -- requires to find a "pattern of fraud".

**Recommendation**

It is the recommendation of this Hearing Officer that the name Chad Koppie should appear on the Republican primary ballot in the March 17, 2026, primary election for the Republican nomination for Representative for the 7th Congressional District of the State of Illinois.

s/Terence Flynn

Terence Flynn
Hearing Officer

Dated: 12/9/25