COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SUFFOLK, SS STATE BALLOT LAW COMMISSION Docket \#24-1, 24-2

BRUCE CHAFEE, KIM JANEY,
MARK BRODIN, ELIZABETH BARTHOLET,
And AUGUSTA MCKUSICK,
Objectors
V.

DONALD JOHN TRUMP,
Respondent
MICHAEL S. ROBERTSON, JR.,
KEVIN BATT, THERESA MASON,
And STEPHANIE SANCHEZ,
Objectors
V.

DONALD JOHN TRUMP,
Respondent
*****************************

PRE-HEARING CONFERENCE of the state Ballot

Law Commission before the Honorable Commissioner Francis
T. Crimmins, Jr., Commissioner Joseph Eisenstadt and

Commissioner Joseph Boncore at One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts on January 18 , 2024 commencing at 10:10 AM.
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MR. CRIMMINS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It being 10:10 AM on today's date of Thursday, January 18, 2024 we'll start the hearing.

My name is Francis T. Crimmins, Jr, Chair of the State Law Ballot Commission. Seated to my immediate right is Commissioner Joseph Boncore, and seated to my immediate left is Commissioner Joseph Eisenstadt. At this time I'd like to introduce the clerk to the commission who works for the Office of Secretary of State, Attorney Michelle Tassinari.

MS. TASSINARI: I'm going to read the cases. The two cases before today are SBLC 24-01 Bruce Chafee, Kim Janey, Mark Brodin, Elizabeth Bartholet and Augusta McKusick, Objectors $V$ Donald John Trump, Respondent. And SBLC 24-02 Michael S. Robertson, Jr, Kevin Batt, Theresa Mason and Stephanie Sanchez, Objectors V. Donald John Trump, Respondent.

MR. CRIMMINS: Thank you, Attorney Tassinari. At this time I'd ask our stenographer to please stand to be sworn. Would you identify yourself for the record please?

STENOGRAPHER: Barbara A. Hoey.
(Whereupon, Barbara A. Hoey, the court stenographer was sworn.)

MR. CRIMMINS: Would counsels who are present here representing parties having filled appearances please introduce yourself for the record starting with the Objectors.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: Good morning, Commissioner. Thank you very much for having us today. My name is Shannon Liss-Riordan, very proud to represent the Objectors in this matter. With me today are Jack Bartholet and Sam Davis. We are all from the Law Firm of Lichten \& Liss-Riordan. And also Ron Fein, Legal Director of Free Speech for People is here as well.

MR. CRIMMINS: Thank you. And for the Respondent?

MR. SALINAS: Good morning, Mark Salinas on behalf of Donald John Trump, and $I$ also filed an appearance on behalf of the Massachusetts Republican Party as an interested party. Good morning.

MR. CRIMMINS: Thank you. We are here today because the commission has received two objections in State Ballot Law Docket number 2401 and 2402 which appear to be identical except for the names of the voters listed as Objectors. Both objections ask this

Commission to remove Donald Trump's name from the presidential primary ballots in Massachusetts.

In light of the fact that the two appear to be identical, we are consolidating the cases. Since the filing of the objections there have been some additional substantive filings. We received a Motion For Summary Decision filed by the Objectors. We received a Motion to Dismiss filed by the Respondent. And we received a Motion to Dismiss filed by the Mass GOP.

Based upon the matters contained in those filings the Commission must first determine the threshold legal issue as to whether or not the objection relates to matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission. As such we'll take this matter for further review by the Commission under -- at the conclusion of the hearing we'll take that issue under advisement.

Before that we'll ask to see if either counsel, first for the Objectors and then for the Respondent, wish to be heard on just the issue of jurisdiction. And we'll give each counsel five minutes to address the Commission on the issue of jurisdiction and jurisdiction only under Mass General Laws 55B. At this time, counsel, if you wish to be heard.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: Yes, thank you. Objectors do
wish to be heard. We did receive copies of the Motion to Dismiss last night. We would ask for leave to submit a written response to it which we can do very promptly. I can summarize our argument right now if you would like to hear that.

MR. CRIMMINS: I'd like to hear right now just on jurisdiction.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: Yes, on jurisdiction it is very clear under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 55 as well as the regulations regarding the jurisdiction of the Commission that this Commission has the jurisdiction and authority to hear these objections. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 55B Section 4 specifically states that the commission may investigate upon objection made in accordance with the provisions of this chapter the legalities, validity, completeness and accuracies of all nomination papers and actions required by law to give candidates access to the state ballot.

The provision goes on to say the Commission shall have jurisdiction over and render a decision on any matter referred to it pertaining to statutory and constitutional qualifications of any nominee for state, national or county office. The certificates of nomination or nomination papers filed in any
presidential or state primary and it goes on from there. So in this case there have been actions required by law to give candidates access to a ballot.

Secretary of the Commonwealth Galvin has taken action to place Mr. Trump on the presidential primary ballot. And we are challenging the legality under the United States Constitution, the 14 th Amendment, Section 3. We believe that Mr. Trump's candidacy for this office and placement on the Massachusetts ballot violates the Constitution.

We are challenging the Constitutionality. And we are also challenging certificates of nomination or nomination papers filed in any presidential or state primarily which is also specifically under this jurisdiction under the statute that $I$ just read the regulations. Also Chapter 59 which puts forth the regulations of how this Commission operates also makes clear such an objection can be filed to Constitutional legal challenges to a candidate's candidacy.

So even though Secretary Galvin has said his job is just to put candidates on the ballot, it is the job of this Commission to hear objections to the legality of such placement of candidates on the ballot. We have reviewed a number of prior decisions by this Commission
which have heard Constitutional challenges to such ballot appropriateness matters. For example, there was
a -- we can cite these for you in our opposition papers, but this Commission heard a challenge to the Constitutionality of Mitt Romney being on the ballot for the governorship. And the Commission decided he was properly on the ballot because he satisfied the residency requirements.

There have been a number of other Ballot Commission decisions that considered residency requirements such as the case of Kaitlyn Bean verses Erika Uyterhoeven, Cathy Dwyer verses Paul Sarnowski and others we can cite. I don't think there is any question this is the proper forum for this type of objection to be heard.

I'm happy to answer any other questions that you may have. I do know that Mr. Trump and his Motion to Dismiss and the Republican Party's Motion to Dismiss --

MR. CRIMMINS: We're just on jurisdiction.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: I'm not sure whether you considered the $14 t h$ Amendment argument to be a jurisdictional issue where they argue that this is a question only Congress should consider. I can address that briefly, but we would like you to lay that out for
you more thoroughly in opposition to the Motion to Dismiss.

I will say that other states that have determined that Mr. Trump should not appear on the ballot in the State of Colorado --

MR. CRIMMINS: We are just talking about jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: Okay. All right. I will summarize our argument. And we'd like to submit it -- we can submit it as soon as tomorrow or before 9 AM on Monday, whatever is the Commission's pleasure.

MR. CRIMMINS: Thank you.
MR. SALINAS: Thank you. So the Objector's argument with regard to jurisdiction is completely predicated on the fact there has been a nomination or some nomination papers that have been filed in this case. What I want to distinguish for the Commission is this, that Donald John Trump was placed on the ballot at the request of the Massachusetts Republican Party. That is different than a nomination and is distinguished from nomination papers.

There is nothing in the case law or the statutes that the Commission is required to follow that says qualifications to be on a ballot is a pre-condition to
appear on the ballot. What I'm saying is this, if the Massachusetts Republican Party so chose to put somebody on the ballot who is clearly not qualified -- $I$ want to give you a very non-controversial type of example, someone who is 12 years old they are not old enough to hold the office. The position is as absurd as it might seem is that once the Republican Party asks that under the statute to be placed on the ballot the candidate must appear on the ballot.

If and when that candidate is or is not
nominated, the next question is would that person ever be able to take the oath of office. Well perhaps not. We are not there yet. If this was an issue where Donald John Trump was placed on the ballot through a nomination or this was a question addressing being on the general election ballot after being duly nominated, then this Commission would have jurisdiction. At this stage it doesn't. That's why we asked for the objection to be dismissed.

I did cite one case of the Commission that I believe outlines this issue in a very black and white type of way. In the matter of Collins verses Gorman there was a candidate for commissioner in Norfolk County, and the issue came up apparently in that
petition whether or not because of residency issues the person was qualified to appear on the ballot. And the Commission in looking at that essentially came to the same conclusion, at least my read of it, that $I^{\prime} m$ arguing here today. Is that it's premature at this point.

There is no legal basis to deny somebody access to the ballot purely on the issue of disqualification. It's not until they are nominated that the jurisdiction is conferred on this Commission. For those reasons on on the jurisdiction issue $I$ would suggest there is no jurisdiction. The objection must be dismissed at this point because it's not right for adjudication.

I will not get into the issues regarding section
3 of Article 14 because of the limits you want of my argument right now. Suffice to say we contest all of those allegations that Section 3 of Article 14 does not apply in this case, that the jurisdiction is conferred upon Congress and not this Commission.

And any suggestion what happens in colorado is binding on this Commission is not accurate. The people of Massachusetts deserve better. They deserve a Commission within their own jurisdiction to decide these issues. As far as the due process requirements in

Colorado $I$ would suggest they were wholly inadequate. It was a very improvised

MR. CRIMMINS: We are not discussing Colorado, your side or the other side.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: Just a very brief rebuttal. Thank you. The statutes and regulations that $I$ just cited to be clear that challenges to primary candidates are appropriate to be brought before this Commission. I also want to cite for you the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court case of Thatcher verses Cooke which we have --

MR. CRIMMINS: Tell you what, we've received the papers with extensive filings.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: If I may read this one quote, the Massachusetts SJC decision, the party nominations must be affected to the end of an election so that any party may nominate any such candidate only that may be elected under the law. More narrowly stated the word candidate in the first sentence of General Law Chapter 53 Section 1 signifies candidates capable under the law as being elected. The SJC has said you can only put a candidate on the ballot who is capable of serving that office.

MR. CRIMMINS: Anything else in response?

MR. SALINAS: No. Thank you.
MR. CRIMMINS: This is a pretrial hearing. This
Commission as $I$ said has the threshold issue of whether or not we have jurisdiction. Each counsel have will have leave to file any other responses to yesterday's filings by tomorrow. How much time do you need to do it on your end, Ms. Riordan?

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: If we can have the end of the day tomorrow?

MR. CRIMMINS: Fair enough for you?

MR. SALINAS: That's fine.

MR. CRIMMINS: Those will be before the

Commission if we get beyond the issue of jurisdiction. This is a pretrial. We're not taking testimony today. This Commission will adjourn. Thank you all very much.

MS. LISS-RIORDAN: Commissioner, if we may given that any hearing in this case must be concluded and a decision rendered by a week from Monday, if there is going to be a hearing we need to be able to prepare for it right now. I was hoping that we could discuss or find out --

MR. CRIMMINS: There will be no other discussion on anything other than what $I$ just said. We're adjourned. Everybody will be notified if they need to


> | $C$ | $E$ | $R$ | $T$ | $I$ | $F$ | $C$ | $A$ | $T$ | $E$ |
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts Suffolk, ss.

I, Barbara A. Hoey, a Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby certify that:

The foregoing transcript is a true accurate record of the proceedings.

I further certify that $I$ am not related to any of the parties in this matter by blood or marriage and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set forth my hand and seal this $\qquad$ day of $\qquad$ , 2024 .

Barbara A. Hoey
My commission expires:
November 16,2029

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