

Written by Kathy  
Friday, 29 September 2017 01:14

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CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM-CLEVELAND, Ohio -The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, on Thursday, denied an official request by Una HR Keenon, who served as municipal judge and school board president and was the runner-up in the Democratic mayoral election primary in East Cleveland this month to Mayor Brandon King, for her name to be placed on the November ballot, in spite of a city charter provision that requires that "the two candidates each receiving the most votes cast in the primary election shall proceed to a runoff election" remains

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in the charter."

Keenon and her attorney say the aforementioned language mandates that the top two vote-getters in the primary, regardless of partisanship, such as Democrat or Republican, are to advance to the November general election.

East Cleveland is a 95 percent Black impoverished suburb of Cleveland with roughly 18,000 residents.

The elections board, led by Chairwoman Inajo Davis Chappell, an attorney, rejected Keenon's arguments saying another provision in the charter, per an amendment in 2002, changed previous non-partisan elections in city to partisan.

How the board of elections decided which position to choose among the conflicting city charter provisions is not clear.

Also a licensed attorney, Keenon, and her attorney, Angela Bennett, said Thursday that the charter language makes it clear that Keenon should be on the November ballot after coming in second in the primary election, and that Keenon will sue.

East Cleveland law director Willa Hemmons, who reports to Mayor King and is an at will employee chosen by the mayor, lobbied against Keenon to the board of elections. It voted

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Thursday to certify the results of the Sept 12 primary election

Keenon, who is endorsed by 11th Congressional District Congresswoman Marcia Fudge and the county Democratic party, among others, lost to King in the primary election , 33 percent to his 44 percent out of four Democratic candidates on the ballot, also including former councilman Mansell Baker, and Dana Hawkins Jr.

King will face Green Party candidate and community activist Devin Branch in November.

The outcome in East Cleveland may dictate a pending proposed merger with Cleveland promoted by the establishment and the Plain Dealer Newspaper, among others, a merger that proponents say is necessary to rescue the nearly bankrupt East Cleveland from despair.

Opponents of the merger, including East Cleveland councilpersons Nathaniel Martin and Barbara Thomas, who supported Keenon, and Keenon herself, argue that East Cleveland should maintain its autonomy from Cleveland, a city with a population of about 385,000 people.

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Both Cleveland and East Cleveland are Democratic strongholds in the heavily Democratic Cuyahoga County that is roughly 29 percent Black and the second largest of 88 counties statewide, behind Franklin County, which includes the capital city of Columbus, Ohio's largest city, followed by Cleveland.

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