IN THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA

ALEXANDRA "SONDRA" WILSON,	)	
	)	
Petitioner-Appellant,	)	Supreme Court No. 26-1268
	)	Polk County No. EQCE092993
v.	)	
	)	
PAUL D. PATE, in his official capacity as Secretary of State of Iowa	)	
	)	
Respondent-Appellee	)	

PETITIONER-APPELLANT'S PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSE TO RESPONDENT'S JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

MATTER REQUIRING PROMPT CONSIDERATION: NOVEMBER 3, 2026 GENERAL ELECTION

INTRODUCTION

1. Respondent's August 7 statement sharpens the jurisdictional dispute into two questions:

2. First, may a ruling formally denying a first Rule 1.904(2) motion nevertheless **modify** the prior ruling within the meaning of Iowa Rule of Appellate Procedure 6.101(1)(c)?

3. Second, if so, was Appellant's June 17 motion **"directed only at the modification"**?

4. Directly on-point Iowa appellate authority answers the first question yes. The text of Appellant's June 17 motion answers the second question yes.

5. Respondent's contrary argument depends principally upon the decretal word **"DENIED."** Respondent asserts that if the June 5 ruling had modified the May 28 ruling, the district court necessarily "would have granted Wilson's Rule 1.904(2) motion to reconsider, enlarge, or amend then denied the petition anew."

6. *Waller* cannot be reconciled with that proposition.

7. There, the district court likewise expressly denied the first Rule 1.904 motion. Yet the Court of Appeals held that the ruling modified the earlier order because modification is determined from **the content of the ruling**, not merely its decretal label.

8. The fit here is unusually direct.

9. On May 28, the district court expressly refused to reach the remaining equitable considerations.

10. On June 5, it reached them.

11. That is not merely a longer explanation of a determination already made. It is a determination the prior ruling expressly stated had **not been made**.

I. RESPONDENT'S DISPOSITION-LABEL THEORY CANNOT BE RECONCILED WITH *WALLER*

12. Rule 6.101(1)(c) recognizes the precise circumstance in which a successive posttrial motion may extend the time for appeal: where "the court has modified its order, ruling, judgment, or decree and the subsequent motion is directed only at the modification."

13. Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 1.904(4) contains materially parallel language.

14. Respondent argues that the June 5 ruling could not constitute such a modification because the district court formally denied reconsideration.

15. But *Waller* examined an order containing precisely that feature.

16. After the first Rule 1.904(2) motion in *Waller*, the district court expressly stated that the motion was denied. The Court of Appeals recognized the baseline rule stated in *In re Marriage of Okland*, 699 N.W.2d 260, 265–66 (Iowa 2005), but continued:

> "But in determining whether there was a modification, we look at the content of the ruling." *Waller*, slip op. at 8.

17. The court then examined what the first reconsideration ruling actually added and held that a modification occurred notwithstanding the formal denial.

18. Respondent's proposed rule would have ended the inquiry in *Waller* at the word "denied."

19. The Court of Appeals did not end it there.

20. Neither should the inquiry end there in this case.

II. THE JUNE 5 RULING MODIFIED THE MAY 28 RULING BY DECIDING A MATTER THE MAY 28 RULING EXPRESSLY REFUSED TO REACH

21. The May 28 order denied relief because Appellant had not supplied a sufficient legal basis for equitable modification of the statutory deadline. The court concluded:

> "Because Plaintiff has not identified a legal basis for an equitable extension, she cannot show a likelihood of success on the merits, and the Petition fails at the threshold."

It then expressly stated:

> "The Court does not reach the remaining considerations." (May 28, 2026 Order at 1.)

22. May 28 therefore made no adverse determination concerning whether Appellant's asserted circumstances were extraordinary, external, diligent, or otherwise equitably sufficient; it expressly declined to reach those considerations. June 5 reached and decided those matters adversely to Appellant for the first time.

23. After Appellant supplied additional authority in her June 1 Rule 1.904(2) motion, the court acknowledged that the premise that Iowa courts possess equitable authority to address extraordinary roadblocks was "well-founded" and stated that it did not dispute the existence of equitable power of that kind.

24. The court then adjudicated the considerations that May 28 had expressly left unresolved.

25. It found, among other things, that Appellant's burdens:

- did not arise from an external condition;
- arose from litigation she initiated;
- constituted ordinary and foreseeable demands of litigation; and
- resulted from competing obligations voluntarily undertaken. (June 5, 2026 Order at 1–3.)

26. Those determinations did not appear in the May 28 ruling because the May 28 court expressly said it was **not reaching them**.

27. The June 5 ruling therefore supplied a new and independently dispositive adjudicative basis for denying relief.

28. *Waller* involved new substantive content added to a ruling despite an unchanged decretal result.

29. This case presents an even clearer form of substantive change: the June 5 court resolved an entire category of questions the May 28 court expressly declined to decide.

III. *TURNER* CONFIRMS THAT THE ULTIMATE RESULT MAY REMAIN UNCHANGED WHILE THE RULING IS MODIFIED

30. *Waller* relied upon *Turner v. CCRC of Cedar Rapids, LLC*, No. 20-0973, 2021 WL 3076742 (Iowa Ct. App. July 21, 2021).

31. In *Turner*, the ruling on the first reconsideration motion modified the original decision by adding procedural grounds supporting the result, even though the ultimate disposition remained adverse to the movant.

32. The problem arose at the second step.

33. *Turner*'s successive motion was not "directed only at the modification." It requested numerous additional factual findings and expressly reincorporated all previous reconsideration requests.

34. Thus *Turner* separates two questions that Respondent's argument tends to collapse:

First: Did the first reconsideration ruling modify the original ruling?

Second: Was the second motion directed only at that modification?

The fact that the requested ultimate relief remained unchanged does not answer the first question.

IV. APPELLANT'S JUNE 17 MOTION WAS DIRECTED AT THE JUNE 5 MODIFICATION

35. The actual text of Appellant's June 17 motion provides strong evidence of its object. Its first numbered paragraph begins by identifying the intervening June 5 determination:

> "The Court's June 5, 2026 Order concluded that the burdens identified by Plaintiff arose from litigation Plaintiff herself initiated and therefore did not constitute the type of extraordinary external burden warranting equitable modification…"

36. The motion then presents the factual record bearing upon that characterization.

37. Most importantly, the June 17 motion repeatedly tied its factual presentation to the precise June 5 modification. Its opening paragraph identified the June 5 conclusion that Appellant's burdens arose from litigation she initiated and therefore did not constitute extraordinary external burdens. Paragraph 9 stated that the campaign burden "did not arise merely from the existence of litigation," but from the underlying allegations, their incorporation

into governmental records, and the resulting need for judicial review. Paragraph 14 expressly argued that the burdens "cannot fairly be characterized as self-created in the sense contemplated by the Court's prior ruling." Paragraph 17 then requested that the court "reconsider its conclusion that the burdens identified were self-created." The motion thus identified, developed, and ultimately requested reconsideration of the same newly announced determination. (June 17, 2026 Motion to Reconsider and Clarify Factual Record ¶¶ 1, 9, 14, 17.)

38. The relationship between the underlying alleged misconduct, the resulting litigation, and Appellant's campaign was not a theory developed after the statutory deadline or in response to the June 5 ruling. It was expressly pleaded before the June 2 ballot-access deadline expired.

39. The original Emergency Petition alleged that materially false and misleading allegations and documents had "damaged my reputation and *adversely affected my campaign activities*," and further alleged that the litigation arising from those allegations "*substantially interfered with my campaign activities*" during the ballot-access period. Emergency Petition for Equitable Extension of Ballot-Access Deadline ¶¶ 2, 8 (filed May 27, 2026) (emphasis added). The June 17 motion therefore supplied a completed record concerning a campaign-related burden that had already been pleaded; it did not manufacture a new rationale after the deadline.

40. That asserted necessity was concrete rather than abstract. In the operative Reliable Street pleading, Appellant expressly alleged that she had not stalked or harassed the individual whose accusations were used against her; that a Discord communication had been "screenshotted, rearranged, and made to look" as though Appellant continued contact after being told to stop; and that a "falsified document," out-of-context statements, and allegedly libelous accusations—including accusations of stalking and harassment—had been used to attack her reputation and integrity in the ICRC proceeding. Appellant further alleged that a deceptive

document containing out-of-context statements was used to make the disputed accusations appear true. Appellant cites these allegations here not to establish liability in the Reliable Street action, but to demonstrate what the underlying litigation was actually about and why characterizing it simply as litigation she voluntarily “chose to bring” materially understated the factual basis she had presented. Amended Petition at Law ¶¶ 119–22, *Wilson v. Reliable Street Inc.*, No. LACV053674 (Iowa Dist. Ct. Story Cnty. filed June 17, 2024).

41. The seriousness of the asserted reputational harm was not merely Appellant’s characterization in the ballot-access case. In ruling on the Reliable Street defendants’ motion to dismiss, the district court concluded that the written statements alleged in the petition could “impute crimes to Sondra (most notably, harassment and stalking),” could impair her ability to work, and could expose her to “general hatred, contempt or ridicule.” The court therefore concluded that it could not say as a matter of law that no set of facts would permit recovery on the written-defamation claim and allowed that claim to proceed. Order Granting in Part and Denying in Part Defendants’ Motion to Dismiss at 16, *Wilson v. Reliable Street Inc.*, No. LACV053674 (Iowa Dist. Ct. Story Cnty. Oct. 4, 2024).

42. Appellant does not cite that ruling as establishing that the underlying accusations were false or that any defendant ultimately is liable. Its relevance here is narrower: another district court had already recognized that the allegations being litigated were capable of imputing serious misconduct and inflicting substantial reputational injury.

43. The public-interest materials previously submitted with Appellant’s July 31 statement organize and explain the same record; the primary support for the present jurisdictional argument remains the underlying pleadings, motions, and orders.

44. If the litigation burden resulted, in whole or substantial part, from conduct alleged in good faith to have materially interfered with a candidate's campaign activity, a court evaluating whether that burden was merely "voluntary" or "self-created" should not treat the alleged interference as irrelevant to that determination without examining the record. Otherwise, the very conduct alleged to have diverted the candidate from ballot qualification could become self-executing by helping exclude the candidate from the ballot before the underlying conduct can be adjudicated.

45. Appellant does not ask this Court, at the jurisdictional stage, to determine that the underlying allegations are true or to adjudicate the merits of *Wilson v. Reliable Street Inc., et al.* The narrower point is that the June 5 characterization did not merely repeat the May 28 ruling; it newly characterized as voluntary and self-created a burden that Appellant's original Petition had expressly attributed to allegedly false and misleading accusations adversely affecting her campaign. The June 17 filing directly responded to that new characterization by supplying the completed factual record concerning the origin, nature, scope, and asserted necessity of the underlying litigation.

46. The distinction matters. The June 5 order treated the relevant causal event as Appellant's decision to file a lawsuit. Appellant's pleadings treated the relevant causal sequence differently: allegedly false and materially misleading accusations entered governmental records; those accusations posed asserted reputational and electoral consequences; Appellant sought judicial redress; court-imposed obligations followed; and those obligations consumed the ballot-access period. The June 17 motion was directed at whether the latter sequence could fairly be collapsed into the single proposition that Appellant voluntarily "chose to bring" litigation.

47. The June 17 motion therefore did not introduce an unrelated subject. It addressed why the newly announced characterization of the burden as "self-created" was disputed.

48. It contains no *Turner*-style clause reincorporating all previous reconsideration requests. Nor does it ask the district court again to resolve whether equitable authority exists—the question that June 5 had already answered in Appellant's favor.

49. Appellant acknowledges that paragraphs 15 and 16 additionally cite ballot-access principles concerning the interests of voters. Those paragraphs, however, do not assert a new cause of action, request separate findings, reincorporate the June 1 arguments, or seek independent relief. They provide legal context for the same request expressly stated in paragraph 17: reconsideration of the newly announced conclusion that Appellant's burdens were self-created.

50. The voter-interest discussion was also germane to the consequence of that determination. The consequence is not purely personal: ballot exclusion burdens the associational and voting interests of persons wishing to support or consider the candidate as well. See *Anderson v. Celebrezze*, 460 U.S. 780, 786–88 (1983).

51. That is materially different from *Turner*, where the second motion affirmatively sought numerous additional findings and wholesale reincorporation of prior requests.

52. This substantive reading also accords with Iowa authority concerning the interpretation of filings. The Iowa Supreme Court has held that "[t]he label attached to a motion is not determinative of its legal significance; we will look to its content to determine its real nature." *Iowa Elec. Light & Power Co. v. Lagle*, 430 N.W.2d 393, 395 (Iowa 1988). And in the

pro se pleading context, the Court has recognized that "some leeway must be accorded from precision in draftsmanship." *Knight v. Knight*, 525 N.W.2d 841, 843 (Iowa 1994).

53. Appellant does not contend that self-represented status excuses compliance with Rule 6.101(1)(c). It does not. The point is narrower: Iowa law looks to the substance of filings rather than their labels and recognizes reasonable leeway in construing the draftsmanship of self-represented pleadings. The June 17 motion should therefore be evaluated according to what it substantively sought—not parsed as though every supporting paragraph constituted a separate request for relief. Its opening paragraph identifies the June 5 determination; its body addresses that determination; and its requested disposition specifically asks the court to reconsider the resulting "self-created" characterization.

54. The June 17 motion was directed at the modification.

V. THE JUNE 22 DISPOSITION MADE THE JULY 20 NOTICE OF APPEAL TIMELY

55. The district court disposed of the June 17 motion on June 22.

56. Appellant filed her notice of appeal on July 20—twenty-eight days later.

57. If, as *Waller* and *Turner* indicate, the June 5 ruling modified the May 28 ruling and the June 17 motion was directed only at that modification, the June 17 motion fell within Rule 6.101(1)(c)'s express successive-motion exception.

58. The notice of appeal was therefore timely.

VI. *OKLAND* STATES THE BASELINE RULE; IT DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE MODIFICATION EXCEPTION

59. Respondent's general successive-motion proposition derives from *In re Marriage of Okland*, 699 N.W.2d 260, 265–66 (Iowa 2005).

60. *Waller* expressly considered that proposition.

61. It recognized *Okland*'s baseline rule that a second Rule 1.904 motion following denial of the first ordinarily is improper.

62. But it then examined the **content** of the first reconsideration ruling and held that a modification had occurred.

63. Thus *Okland* states the ordinary rule.

64. Rule 1.904(4), Rule 6.101(1)(c), *Turner*, and *Waller* address the circumstance presented here: the first reconsideration ruling itself substantively changes what the court has decided and the succeeding motion is confined to that change.

VII. RESPONDENT HAS NOT ESTABLISHED THAT EFFECTIVE RELIEF IS IMPOSSIBLE

65. Iowa's practical test asks whether the Court's decision would have **"any practical legal effect upon an existing controversy."** *Iowa Mut. Ins. Co. v. McCarthy*, 572 N.W.2d 537, 540 (Iowa 1997).

66. It would.

67. The November 3 election has not occurred. Appellant remains a candidate, presently retains approximately 1,000 petition signatures, and seeks an opportunity to satisfy—not waive—the statutory nomination requirements.

68. Respondent nevertheless contends the controversy is moot because the July 15 and July 23 dates previously proposed by Appellant have passed.

69. Those proposed dates were remedial dates, not the underlying controversy.

70. The continuing controversy is Appellant's effort to qualify for Iowa's November 3, 2026 general-election ballot while satisfying the full statutory nomination requirements.

71. Both pleadings additionally requested "such other and further relief as the Court deems just and equitable."

72. Respondent's reliance upon *Bailiff v. Adams County Conference Board*, 650 N.W.2d 621, 626 (Iowa 2002), and *Forex Israel, VP Ltd. v. Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust Co.*, No. 19-0080, slip op. at 7–10 (Iowa Ct. App. Jan. 23, 2020), does not establish otherwise. *Forex Israel* affirmed denial of a proposed amendment because the newly asserted conversion claim was legally futile. Id. Appellant proposes no new cause of action here; she seeks a temporally adjusted form of the same equitable ballot-access relief pleaded from the outset.

73. Nor has Respondent established that no administratively workable remedy remains.

74. Federal law ordinarily requires transmission of ballots to qualifying military and overseas voters not later than forty-five days before a federal election. 52 U.S.C. § 20302(a)(8)(A). That requirement unquestionably creates a serious administrative constraint.

75. But the existence of an approaching administrative constraint is not the same thing as a determination that no effective relief remains available now.

76. Indeed, federal law itself contemplates circumstances in which ballot generation is delayed by a legal contest and provides a mechanism through which the chief state election official may seek a hardship waiver. 52 U.S.C. § 20302(g)(2)(B)(ii), (g)(3)(B). Appellant does not contend that a waiver necessarily would or should be granted here. The provision demonstrates only that the forty-five-day timetable should not be treated, without further

analysis, as establishing an absolute jurisdictional impossibility whenever election litigation remains pending.

77. Appellant therefore does not ask this Court to assume any particular replacement filing date.

78. She asks the Court to preserve jurisdiction and, if she prevails, fashion or remand for relief using the **latest legally and administratively workable date**, with Respondent given an opportunity to identify the actual election-administration constraints that must be accommodated.

79. Appellant also recognizes that a judicially adjusted nomination-paper deadline cannot disregard the rights of persons otherwise entitled to object to nomination papers or Respondent's legitimate verification responsibilities. Iowa Code § 44.4(2)(a)(1) (2026)'s ordinary objection deadline is tied to the statutory election calendar and does not, by its text, automatically create a new objection period if a court establishes a different nomination-paper deadline.

80. Accordingly, Appellant requests that any eventual relief include—or permit Respondent to establish under the Court's direction—a corresponding accelerated **objection, verification, and review process** sufficient to preserve those safeguards. Appellant seeks no exemption from objections, signature verification, county-distribution requirements, or other lawful ballot-administration protections.

81. The need to coordinate those procedures affects the structure and timing of relief. It does not, without further showing, establish that relief is legally impossible.

VIII. CURRENT FACTS SUPPLIED BY DECLARATION PROVIDE A CONCRETE BASIS FOR FINDING THAT RELIEF COULD STILL BE EFFECTIVE

82. Respondent argues in part that Appellant has not demonstrated that she remains capable of qualifying for the ballot.

83. The accompanying Declaration supplies current information bearing directly on that question.

84. Appellant presently possesses approximately **1,000 petition signatures** gathered toward the statutory requirement.

85. She retains the original petition materials and remains committed to satisfying the full statutory signature requirement and county-distribution requirement. She seeks no waiver or reduction of either.

86. On at least one day when she was able to devote the day substantially to petition circulation, Appellant gathered approximately **60 signatures**. She does not represent that this single-day result is a sustainable daily average over multiple weeks.

87. Approximately 2,500 additional signatures would be required merely to reach the statutory numerical threshold, before any prudent overcollection against possible challenges or invalid signatures.

88. At sixty signatures per day, the arithmetic equivalent of 2,500 signatures would be approximately forty-two days of individual circulation. Appellant offers that calculation only to illustrate the scale of the remaining task, not as a representation that she can sustain sixty signatures every day.

89. Appellant therefore does not intend to rely solely upon one-person circulation.

90. She expects principal current filing obligations in *Wilson v. Reliable Street Inc., et al.* to continue through approximately August 14, including preparation of the notice of appeal in that matter. If relief is granted before then, Appellant is prepared to resume circulation promptly to the extent those obligations permit; beginning approximately August 15, she expects to be able to redirect substantially greater available time toward intensive petition circulation.

91. She also intends to publicly disseminate the disposition of this case and the underlying litigation record through the public materials she has been preparing, and to use that public dissemination to recruit additional volunteer circulators and supporters.

92. Appellant does not represent that any particular number of volunteers is guaranteed.

93. She does represent that she intends actively to recruit and coordinate such assistance, that she has demonstrated meaningful individual collection capacity, and that she remains ready to satisfy all statutory qualifications rather than seek their waiver.

94. Those facts distinguish impossibility from uncertainty.

95. Whether the available period ultimately proves sufficient is a factual and administrative question. Respondent has not established that qualification is necessarily impossible.

IX. THE APPROPRIATE PROCEDURAL RESPONSE TO THE SHRINKING ELECTION CALENDAR IS EXPEDITION

96. The fact that election time is disappearing should not itself become the mechanism through which judicial review becomes impossible.

97. In *Gluba v. State Objection Panel*, 11 N.W.3d 459, 463 (Iowa 2024), this Court retained and expedited an election appeal when the State identified a concrete ballot-administration deadline.

98. Appellant does not rely upon *Gluba*'s particular 2024 dates as applicable to 2026. She relies upon its procedural lesson: when a ballot controversy remains judicially resolvable but ordinary appellate time threatens effective relief, expedited adjudication is available.

99. Rule 6.901(9) expressly authorizes this Court to shorten briefing periods.

100. If jurisdiction is retained, Appellant respectfully requests that authority be exercised here.

X. ALTERNATIVELY, THE CONTROVERSY WARRANTS REVIEW UNDER IOWA'S PUBLIC-IMPORTANCE EXCEPTION

101. Even if the Court concludes that specific ballot relief can no longer be afforded, the underlying question satisfies the considerations supporting Iowa's public-importance exception. See *Riley Drive Entertainment I, Inc. v. Reynolds*, 970 N.W.2d 289, 298 (Iowa 2022) (identifying the private-or-public nature of the issue, desirability of authoritative guidance, likelihood of recurrence, and likelihood of recurrence yet evasion of appellate review as relevant considerations).

102. *Riley Drive Entertainment I, Inc. v. Reynolds*, 970 N.W.2d 289, 298–99 (Iowa 2022), and *Martin-Trigona v. Baxter*, 435 N.W.2d 744, 745 (Iowa 1989), declined that exception because the challenged circumstances depended upon discretionary institutional choices that might not recur in the same form.

103. This case is structurally different.

104. The existence of a legislatively fixed filing deadline recurs by operation of statute. See Iowa Code §§ 44.4(1), 45.4 (2026). Unlike a discretionary administrative policy, that statutory deadline cannot be altered unilaterally by an election administrator.

105. The record also reflects the absence of an administrative extension mechanism.

106. The recurring institutional question is therefore:

> Whether, and according to what standard, an Iowa court may provide narrowly tailored equitable relief where extraordinary circumstances materially interfere with a candidate's ability to comply with a statutory ballot-access deadline, the election administrator possesses no extension authority, and the election calendar threatens to expire before ordinary judicial review can be completed.

107. This case presents a related question that is particularly important where the asserted burden arises from litigation:

108. Whether litigation undertaken in good faith to obtain redress for conduct alleged to have materially interfered with a candidate's rights, reputation, or campaign activity may be deemed categorically "self-created" or "voluntary" merely because the candidate was the party who initiated the proceeding seeking redress.

109. Appellant does not ask the Court, under the public-importance exception, to adjudicate whether particular third parties actually committed defamation, campaign interference, abuse of process, or other wrongdoing in the underlying litigation. Those merits belong in the proceedings in which they were pleaded.

110. But authoritative guidance is warranted concerning the standard by which such circumstances are evaluated. Political candidates are predictably subject to heightened public scrutiny, opposition research, media investigation, examination of public records, and allegations concerning past conduct. Where existing public or governmental records contain accusations of

serious wrongdoing—including accusations arguably imputing criminal conduct—a candidate may reasonably conclude that obtaining adjudication, correction, or other lawful redress is important before those allegations surface independently during an active campaign. A rule that automatically characterizes resulting litigation as "self-created" merely because the candidate initiated proceedings could force candidates to choose between protecting their legal and reputational interests and preserving the time necessary for ballot qualification.

111. The legal issue is therefore not whether candidates should receive an exemption whenever they choose to litigate. They should not.

112. The recurring issue is whether the origin, necessity, timing, nature, asserted electoral consequences, and reasonable foreseeability of the underlying litigation may be considered when deciding whether the resulting burden was truly voluntary or self-created—and what evidentiary showing is required before such a burden may qualify as extraordinary or external.

113. If the Court concludes that specific relief is no longer administratively possible, Appellant respectfully requests that the Court nevertheless provide authoritative guidance, to the extent necessary to resolve the controversy, concerning:

i. whether alleged governmental, judicial, or third-party interference may be considered in determining whether a candidate's resulting litigation burden is "external" rather than self-created;
ii. whether the mere fact that the candidate initiated litigation seeking redress is sufficient, by itself, to characterize the resulting burden as voluntary;
iii. what evidentiary showing a candidate must make to establish extraordinary interference;
iv. how diligence and reasonable efforts to protect the candidate's legal and reputational interests should enter the equitable analysis;

v. how the associational and voting interests of supporters should be weighed when the consequence of the burden is ballot exclusion; and

vi. what narrowly tailored relief, if any, remains available while preserving statutory signature, objection, verification, and election-administration safeguards.

114. Those questions provide guardrails without requiring this Court to decide the merits of the underlying Reliable Street claims.

115. The question is public rather than private. Authoritative guidance would benefit candidates, election administrators, district courts, and voters. And some version of the issue is inherently capable of recurring because election disputes necessarily arise against short statutory calendars.

116. The consequence of ballot exclusion also extends beyond the candidate herself. The United States Supreme Court has recognized that restrictions on candidate access implicate voters' rights to associate, to express political preferences through candidates, and to cast meaningful votes. *Anderson v. Celebrezze*, 460 U.S. 780, 786–88 (1983).

117. Iowa election precedent likewise demonstrates that strict preelection compliance does not render extraordinary circumstances categorically irrelevant. In *Wingert v. Urban*, 250 N.W.2d 731, 735 (Iowa 1977), the Court recognized exceptional circumstances arising from a candidate's reliance upon erroneous official advice. *Gluba* later discussed that exception while reaffirming strict compliance as the ordinary rule. *Gluba*, 11 N.W.3d at 467–68.

118. Appellant does not contend that *Wingert* controls her factual circumstances.

119. She cites it for the narrower proposition that Iowa election law itself does not treat "strict compliance" and "exceptional circumstances" as mutually exclusive concepts.

REQUESTED DISPOSITION

Appellant respectfully requests that this Court:

i. **hold that the June 5 ruling modified the May 28 ruling** within the meaning of Iowa Rule of Appellate Procedure 6.101(1)(c) and Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 1.904(4);

ii. **hold that the June 17 motion was directed only at that modification**;

iii. **hold that the June 17 motion therefore tolled the appeal period and that the July 20 notice of appeal was timely**;

iv. **decline to dismiss the appeal as moot** because the Court's decision can still have practical legal effect and Respondent has not established that all effective and administratively workable relief is impossible;

v. **alternatively, retain and decide the controversy under Iowa's public-importance exception**, including the legal standard governing whether litigation burdens arising from asserted extraordinary interference may be deemed categorically self-created merely because the candidate initiated proceedings seeking redress;

vi. pursuant to Iowa Rule of Appellate Procedure 6.901(9), **establish an expedited schedule** for further briefing and disposition;

vii. if Appellant ultimately prevails on the merits, direct that any revised nomination-paper deadline be accompanied by, or coordinated with, a corresponding accelerated **objection, verification, and review period**, at the latest date the Court determines remains legally and administratively workable; and

viii. grant such other and further relief as the Court deems just and equitable.

CONCLUSION

120. Respondent's timeliness argument depends upon the proposition that a ruling formally denying reconsideration cannot modify the ruling being reconsidered.

121. *Waller* demonstrates otherwise.

122. May 28 denied Appellant's petition "at the threshold" and expressly refused to reach the remaining considerations.

123. June 5 acknowledged the existence of equitable authority and then resolved those previously unreached considerations adversely to Appellant.

124. June 17 directly challenged that newly announced determination, repeatedly disputed the characterization of the burden as “self-created,” and supplied the completed record bearing upon why litigation that the original Petition already alleged arose from campaign-affecting false and misleading accusations could not fairly be treated as merely a voluntary competing commitment.

125. June 22 disposed of that challenge.

126. July 20—twenty-eight days later—Appellant appealed.

127. Under Rule 6.101(1)(c), Rule 1.904(4), *Turner*, and *Waller*, the appeal was timely.

128. And the current facts supplied by declaration demonstrate that the election controversy is not an abstract dispute over an expired date. Appellant remains a candidate, retains approximately 1,000 petition signatures, has demonstrated meaningful individual collection capacity, intends to resume intensive circulation and recruit additional circulators, and seeks to satisfy—not waive—the statutory qualification requirements.

129. Nor is the consequence purely personal. Ballot exclusion implicates the interests of voters who may wish to hear, support, consider, or reject the candidate. The Court can preserve those interests without dispensing with Iowa’s statutory safeguards by requiring any adjusted filing period to be accompanied by appropriate objection, verification, and administrative procedures.

130. The Court should retain jurisdiction and expedite further proceedings while effective relief remains potentially available. If specific ballot relief ultimately becomes impossible, the Court should alternatively retain the controversy under Iowa’s public-importance doctrine and

provide guidance concerning the recurring legal standard before the same compressed election calendar causes the question to evade review again.

Respectfully submitted,

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