

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Committee to Hold Jack Evans Accountable to Submit Over 5,700 Signatures to DC Board of Elections

Most signatures collected ever in a Ward 2 political campaign shows wide support for removing Jack Evans from the DC Council

Wildly Inaccurate Ward 2 Voter Rolls Harm Local Democracy

WASHINGTON, DC – At 3:00pm, November 18, 2019, the Committee to Hold Jack Evans Accountable (the “Recall Campaign”) will submit over 5,700 signatures to the DC Board of Elections (1015 Half Street, SE, Suite 750). The petitioning phase of the recall campaign began on May 18, 2019 and with the help of 89 petitioners, the Recall Campaign collected more signatures from Ward 2 voters than any other political campaign since the Home Rule Act went into effect in the 1970’s.

“While Councilmember Jack Evans has been asked to resign by most of his colleagues on the DC Council, it will be his constituents who have the final say,” says Recall Campaign Chairman Adam Eiding. “I offered to suspend this campaign on multiple occasions, but Mr. Evans has refused to either resign or indicate that he would not seek reelection, so for the last 6 months we have spoken to thousands of voters who overwhelmingly support restoring integrity and these signatures are proof.”

Voters of the District of Columbia have four petitioning options at their disposal: a nominating petition, a ballot initiative petition, a referendum petition, and a recall petition. Each petitioning option has its own submission requirements in order to be accepted by the Board of Elections. In the case of a nominating petition for a Ward 2 councilmember, a candidate must submit 250 valid signatures of Ward 2 voters 90 days before the primary election. For a ballot initiative and referendum petition, campaigns must submit signatures from 5% of the registered voters in 5 of the 8 Wards. For a recall petition of a Ward-level councilmember, campaigns must submit signatures of 10% of the registered voters residing in the Ward within 180 days. Based on the October 15, 2019, voter registration total, the Recall Campaign needed to submit 4,949 signatures to trigger a special election.

DC VOTERS ROLLS HORRIBLY INFLATED PUTTING CAMPAIGN AT SEVERE DISADVANTAGE

“We may have more than 20% of the signatures of Ward 2 voters who actually live in the District of Columbia, but the shoddy voter rolls tell another story,” says the Recall Campaign’s volunteer Field Director, Nikolas Schiller. “During the course of this campaign, we have discovered thousands of voters who do not live in Ward 2, yet are still listed as active on the voter rolls, and this makes the threshold of triggering a recall election much more difficult and unfair.”

For example, nearly 3% of the registered voters in Ward 2 are students at either George Washington University or Georgetown University and are registered at annual residences. This means it is impossible for the Recall Campaign to reach these students at their registered addresses because each year they change addresses while completing their degrees. At 1900 F Street NW (GWU’s Thurston Hall), there are currently 240 registered voters and as a strictly freshman dorm, not one of those voters still lives there. Some voters at that address go back to the late 1990’s and the Recall Campaign discovered they are registered to vote in other states.

“We also have to deal with what the Recall Campaign is calling ‘ghost voters,’ who are registered to vote, but haven’t voted since at least 2012.” continues Schiller. In total, the Recall Campaign identified at least 7,000 voters who have not voted since Barack Obama was on the ballot in November 2012. This amounts to 14% of the total voters in Ward 2 who have either moved or should be considered inactive voters.

The Board of Elections is charged with maintaining an up to date voter file. In order to do this, the DC Board of Elections removes inactive voters on odd numbered years. Between October 2018 and October 2019, the total number of registered voters in Ward 2 was reduced by 513 voters. However, between October 2019 and October 2015, the total number of registered voters increased by 7,773 voters. New construction within Ward 2 could account for this dramatic increase in the total number of voters, but the Recall Campaign believes this is due to the Board of Elections failing to maintain an accurate number of registered voters in the Ward.

WARD 2 VOTERS ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO REACH

“I would knock on doors with 5 registered voters and all of them would have moved and the person who answered the door would not even be registered to vote at the address. It was quite frustrating, I think the most common voter name in Ward 2 should be AirBnB,” says Kris Furnish, the Recall Campaign’s volunteer coordinator. “To make matters worse, Ward 2 is full of large apartment buildings that are inaccessible to petition circulators.”

Ward 2 is home to numerous large apartment buildings where petitioners were frequently harassed by building management for participating in the most basic democratic process: petitioning our government. “We contend that ‘solicitation’ should refer to only asking for money or selling a product, not engaging free speech activities, like petitioning our government,” continues Furnish. The 25 largest voting addresses in Ward 2 amount to over 7,000 voters, or 14% of the registered voters, who cannot be reached in person by campaign volunteers. “The DC Council needs to pass a law that says that petitioning in all residential buildings is a sacred right and cannot be denied.” concludes Furnish.

NEXT STEPS FOR WARD 2 VOTERS

The Board of Elections has 30 calendar days to certify the petition. Once the petitions have been certified to have a sufficient number of signatures, the Board of Elections shall conduct a special election for the voters of Ward 2. The special ballot will ask voters if they are FOR or AGAINST the recall of Councilmember Jack Evans. If a majority of voters choose FOR, Councilmember Jack Evans will become the first member of the Council of the District of Columbia to be recalled from office since the Home Rule Act went into effect.

Voters of Ward 2 will then have a special election in the Spring of 2020 to provide representation for the remainder of Evans’ term, which concludes at the end of 2020. Ward 2 voters will also have a primary election on June 2, 2020 to choose candidates for the general election, which will take place on November 2, 2020.

The Recall Campaign is aware of the costs associated to District of Columbia taxpayers that will be incurred by having two additional elections in 2020 and is why we asked Councilmember Jack Evans to step down before beginning the petitioning.

To learn more about the Committee to Hold Jack Evans Accountable please visit www.Ward2CitizensRecall.org

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