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JUDGE DENIES DEMOCRATS CHALLENGE OF GOP PETITIONS

State Democrats Fear GOP Congressional Candidates in 12th and 10th Districts

TRENTON, NJ, April 12, 2018 – State Democrats attempted unsuccessfully to thwart two Republican congressional candidate petitions in court this week, while still claiming they are the party of “voter rights.”

Attorneys for the party mounted legal challenges to the petitions of 12th District GOP candidate Daryl Kipnis and 10th District GOP candidate Dr. Agha Khan on Monday.

An administrative law judge dismissed the 12th District challenge and the Secretary of State adopted that decision in its entirety on Wednesday, ordering that Kipnis be placed on the GOP June 5 primary ballot.

Attorneys for the state Democrats challenged the petition signatures, including those of Chinese-born U.S. citizens who used their American nicknames on the form.

They also tried to invalidate one of the petition circulators, Republican Organization President Matthew Cherian, an Indian-born U.S. citizen based on their allegations that others assisted in physically passing the petition around at a meeting.

“New Jersey Democrats constantly tell you about the need for ‘expanding the right to vote,’ and of their concerns about ‘voter suppression,’ particularly when it concerns voters hailing from the diverse racial, ethnic, and religious minorities which we all celebrate to have here in New Jersey,” Kipnis, who is running against two-term, Democratic incumbent U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, said Thursday. “What they don’t tell you is that they filed meritless court challenges to the nominating petitions of two candidates for Congress, one of whom is Jewish (myself), and the other, Dr. Agha Khan, who is a Pakistani-American Muslim who emigrated here legally and became a U.S. Citizen.”

Kipnis said the candidates were the only two Republicans on the June 5 primary ballot in those respective districts, which Democrats view as “safe” following redistricting after the 2010 census, which is indicative of their fear of the incumbents being defeated.

“For all their rhetoric about how they want people to be able to identify however they please, the New Jersey Democratic State Committee actually paid an attorney from a politically connected law firm to argue in front of an Administrative Law Judge that Chinese-born U.S. citizen voters using their American nicknames should be disenfranchised,” he said. “They failed, and justice prevailed. However, this exercise in futility by the left proves that when they speak of ‘diversity,’ they don’t mean diversity of opinion, beliefs, or philosophy.”

Kipnis thanked New Jersey State GOP Chairman Doug Steinhardt for his leadership in thwarting the Democrats attempt to preemptively disenfranchise Republican voters in those districts.

In a release from the state GOP, Steinhardt congratulated the candidates on the legal victory.

“The NJGOP is committed to giving New Jersey voters the democracy they deserve,” Steinhardt said in that release. “Just this week, we went to bat for candidates Daryl Kipnis in the 12th Congressional District and Agha Khan in the 10th Congressional District when the Democrat State Committee hired high-power lawyers to try and throw them off the ballot. I would like to congratulate Mr. Kipnis and Mr. Khan on successfully fending off those challenges. We look forward to working with them to run strong campaigns. We believe that the best way to increase voter participation is through competitive elections and fair ballot access for good candidates.”

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