

Voter Registrations Voided Because a Deputy Registrar Was Dismissed

Johnson v. Helander
(*Charles R. Norgle, Sr., N.D. Ill. 1:00-cv-6926*)

A high-school student filed a federal complaint to validate high-school voter registrations that had been voided because of sloppy work by a deputy registrar. The district judge denied class certification, and he denied immediate injunctive relief. The county attorney presented evidence that the plaintiff had received notice of his voided registration in time to cure it.

Subject: Nullifying registrations. *Topics:* Registration procedures; student registration; class action.

The high-school son of North Chicago's mayor filed a federal complaint against Lake County's clerk on the Sunday before the 2000 general election, seeking validation of his and some of his classmates' voter registrations.¹ The deputy registrar who had registered them was dismissed for submitting "inaccurate, incomplete and unverifiable" registration applications, so the clerk voided, at the close of the registration period, applications submitted by the dismissed deputy registrar, including the plaintiff's.² The complaint sought a temporary restraining order allowing the plaintiff and his classmates to vote.³

On the day that the complaint was filed, Judge Charles R. Norgle, Sr., denied class certification and denied immediate injunctive relief.⁴

According to the *Chicago Sun-Times*,

Assistant Lake County State's Attorney Daniel Jasica argued that a clerk's office employee tried to contact [the plaintiff] by phone well before the [October 10 registration] deadline and that [the plaintiff] had received and signed for a letter on Oct. 8 telling him about the need to register again. Moreover, four of the 14 other students in the same group as [the plaintiff] did formally register to vote.⁵

On January 25, 2001, Judge Norgle granted the parties' stipulated dismissal.⁶

1. Complaint, *Johnson v. Helander*, No. 1:00-cv-6926 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 6, 2000), D.E. 1; see Dave McKinney, *Teen Sues Lake Clerk to Regain Voting Right*, Chi. Sun-Times, Nov. 6, 2000, at 21.

2. See Complaint, *supra* note 1; see also McKinney, *supra* note 1; Evan Osnos & Rummana Hussain, *N. Chicago Teens Lose in Bid to Cast Ballots*, Chi. Trib., Nov. 7, 2000, at 1.

3. Complaint, *supra* note 1.

4. Minutes, *Johnson*, No. 1:00-cv-6926 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 6, 2000), D.E. 9; see Osnos & Hussain, *supra* note 2.

5. Steve Warmbir, *N. Chicago Teen Loses Suit Over Registration*, Chi. Sun-Times, Nov. 7, 2000, at 8.

6. Minutes, *Johnson*, No. 1:00-cv-6926 (N.D. Ill. Jan. 24, 2001), D.E. 11; Docket Sheet, *id.* (Nov. 6, 2000) (noting a January 8, 2001, dismissal stipulation).