

NM Senate candidate Adams investigated for ‘questionable’ campaign signatures

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 April 2016 04:34



Request by Muñoz surpasses deadline

Incumbent New Mexico Senator George Muñoz said April 6 that he'll wait and see what the district attorneys from McKinley, Cibola and San Juan counties plan to do regarding some “questionable” signatures” on the nominating petitions of District 4 challenger Felisha Adams of Iyanbito —on the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation.

Muñoz said a few weeks ago that he hired Judith Housley of Edgewood, a certified documents examiner, to go through the signatures gathered by Adams for the Senate run.

“That’s when something was found that didn’t appear to be above water,” Muñoz said.

Candidates running for the state Senate are required to submit at least 135 qualifying signatures to the Secretary of State’s Office. Adams, 29, a political newcomer, said she submitted “way over 500 signatures,” saying the final petition amount speaks for itself.

NM Senate candidate Adams investigated for 'questionable' campaign signatures

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 April 2016 04:34

"I think he's taking a swing for no apparent reason," Adams said. "I did everything the exact way that it was supposed to be done. The more he goes against me, the more he takes away from fulfilling his duties to the constituents," noting that Muñoz initiated the investigatory request after a 10-day filing deadline.

Muñoz called at least 26 of the signatures turned in by Adams "suspicious and questionable." He said it was discovered that one signature was signed by a person who is mentally unstable and with a caretaker.

"I think the whole matter deserves to be looked into," Muñoz said. "Let's see what some further investigation turns up."

Amy Bailey, general counsel for the Secretary of State's Office, said in a March 30 letter to Muñoz that her office couldn't do much about the matter because of statutory limitations. Bailey's letter was in response to previous correspondence sent by Muñoz to the Secretary of State's Office.

Bailey said in the one-page response to Muñoz: "Unfortunately, the allegations in your letter are beyond our statutory authority with regard to candidate qualification, as well as beyond our investigatory capabilities."

Muñoz said he will wait for official responses from the relevant district attorneys. "This is a matter of honesty and integrity," Muñoz, the son of former Gallup mayor Ed Muñoz, said. "When you vote for a person that represents you, those two things are important."

The signature caper wasn't the only legislative campaign matter in the air recently. Last week, 11th District Court Judge Lyndy Bennett of McKinley County threw out similar cases pertaining to races involving former Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and with a separate race involving Sen. John Pinto, D-Tohatchi.

Shelly is running for the District 69 House of Representatives seat vacated by Ken Martinez who is retiring from state service. Pinto's challenger is Willis Nez of Navajo Estates. Pinto, 91, is

NM Senate candidate Adams investigated for ‘questionable’ campaign signatures

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 April 2016 04:34

the longest serving state senator in the history of New Mexico.

In the Shelly case, Bennett ruled that a lawsuit against Shelly by challenger Lloyd Felipe was null and void. Felipe, represented in court by his wife Barbara Felipe, indicated that Shelly’s petition contained some invalid signatures. In the Pinto situation, Bennett removed Nez from the ballot due to several dozen invalid signatures.

Muñoz, Adams, Shelly and Pinto are Democrats. District 4 includes McKinley, Cibola and San Juan counties.

***By Bernie Dotson
Sun Correspondent***