

IN THE STUDENT JUDICIARY
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

No. 24-002

ELEANOR ISRAEL;

SENATOR, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION:

Appellant,

versus

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS BOARD;

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION:

Appellee,

Appeal for Judicial Review

OPINION

CHIEF JUSTICE ELECT SMITH delivered the Opinion of the Court, which was joined in full by the Panel of Justices present on the case.

I

This case comes before us on appeal from the practices of the Elections Board, the Appellee, chaired by Scott Sonnier. The Appellant, Eleanor Israel, a senator for the College of Arts and Sciences, challenges the Board's constitutionality in implementing the rules and regulations that govern the Student Government Association elections process. The essence of the appeal concerns the Appellee's failure to properly apply the meaning of the word "day" when concerning the timeframe for students to vote in Student Government Association Elections.

In the complaint, the argument was presented that the term "day" should be interpreted within the context of the Elections Manual to mean a 24-hour timeframe, rather than the currently practiced 12-hour timeframe. The complainant contends that adopting this definition would align with common understandings and uses of the word, thereby eliminating ambiguity.

In the facts and pleadings submitted by the Appellant, it was made evident that the Elections Board failed to define a clear window for election voting, using ambiguous language that compromised the clarity and integrity of the electoral process.

However, the defendant argued that other regulations within the Elections Manual implicitly challenge the feasibility of implementing a 24-hour definition of a day. According to the defendant, such an interpretation would lead to conflicts with existing rules and regulations within the Manual, making it impractical, if not impossible, to adopt.

II

The Court voted unanimously in favor of the Appellant, finding the Elections Board to have acted unconstitutionally in failing to provide all rules and regulations over Student Elections within the Student Elections Manual. It is important to clarify, however, that the Court did not conclude that the voting window should be precisely 24 hours. Instead, the unanimous decision emphasizes the necessity for the Elections Manual to specify a clear, unambiguous voting window, whatever the duration may be.

III

In their deliberations, the Court recognized the Elections Board's view that expanding the voting window to 24 hours was not feasible and would cause conflicting precedents under the

current Elections Manual. However, the Manual, as it stands, was found to be ambiguous and misleading to the general student body. The Court noted a lack of adequate explanation on a critical matter within the Manual. Furthermore, the Student Government Association Constitution, which serves as the primary governing document for all SGA members, explicitly states:

“All rules and regulations of the Student Elections Board shall reside in the Elections Manual, which shall be pursuant to only this Constitution.”

To the Panel of Justices hearing Appeal No. 24-002, this means the Elections Board acted unconstitutionally by omitting a regulation that would clearly designate a voting window in the Elections Manual.

ORDERS

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: That for future elections, the Elections Board more clearly outline within the Elections Board Manual the timeframe during which election voting will take place.

It is so ordered,

Nicholas Smith

Chief Justice Elect, Student Government Association