

Arizona Supreme Court
Civil Election Appeal

CV-26-0114-AP/EL

HOPPE v BUCHLI et al

Appellate Case Information

Case Filed: 10-Apr-2026 Archive on: 4-May-2036 (planned)
Case Closed: 4-May-2026

Dept/Composition

Side 1. MAUREEN HOPPE, Plaintiff/Appellant

(Litigant Group) MAUREEN HOPPE

- Maureen Hoppe

Attorneys for: Plaintiff/Appellant

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Side 2. BOBBI BUCHLI, et al., Defendant/Appellee

(Litigant Group) BOBBI BUCHLI

- Bobbi J Buchli

Attorneys for: Defendant/Appellee

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(Litigant Group) CHAVELI HERRERA

- Chaveli Herrera

Attorneys for: Defendant/Appellee

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(Litigant Group) MARICOPA COUNTY, et al.

- Maricopa County
- Maricopa County Board of Supervisors
- Justin Heap
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[Current Member]

Attorneys for: Defendant/Appellee

Rosa Aguilar Dhakal, Esq. (AZ Bar No. 37774)
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CASE STATUS

May 4, 2026.....Case Closed

May 4, 2026.....Decision Rendered

PREDECESSOR CASE (S)

PREDECESSOR CASE (S)	Cause/Charge/Class	Judgment/Sentence	Judge, Role <Comments>	Trial	Dispo
MAR CV2026-013760			John L Blanchard, Trial		

CASE DECISION

04-May-2026 DECISION ORDER

* A panel consisting of Chief Justice Timmer, Justice Montgomery, Justice King, and Justice Cruz has considered this matter.

Plaintiff Maureen Hoppe seeks to enjoin Defendant Bobbi Buchli's candidacy for Gilbert Town Council. She claims that two flaws

Ann Timmer

Filed: **04-May-2026**

Mandate: **04-May-2026**

Decision Disposition

Affirmed

11 PROCEEDING ENTRIES

- 10-Apr-2026 FILED: Statement Identifying Appeal as Expedited Election and Request for Initial Telephonic Scheduling Conference; Certificate of Service; Exhibit 1 - Copy of Notice of Appeal with Order Filed in Trial Court (Appellant Hoppe)
- 14-Apr-2026 FILED: Record from MCSC

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11 PROCEEDING ENTRIES

3. 15-Apr-2026 Plaintiff/Appellant/Challenger Hoppe filed a Notice of Appeal in this expedited election matter on April 10, 2026, pursuant to Rule 10(g), Arizona Rules of Civil Appellate Procedure.
- In lieu of a telephonic scheduling conference, Court staff has consulted with counsel for Appellant and Defendant/Appellee/Candidate Buchli and the Town of Gilbert and Maricopa County. Counsel for Maricopa County has advised that the deadline to resolve this matter is May 7, 2026.
- IT IS ORDERED directing Maricopa County to file a pleading with the deadline for a decision in this case forthwith.
- IT IS FURTHER ORDERED if either party wishes to use transcripts, such party shall file authorized transcripts as soon as possible. If no authorized transcript can be prepared and filed timely, the parties are encouraged to stipulate to the pertinent facts or testimony or provide pertinent segments of unauthorized transcripts in a joint appendix as soon as possible.
- IT IS FURTHER ORDERED Appellant shall file the opening brief no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2026. The opening brief shall be no more than 2500 words.
- IT IS FURTHER ORDERED Appellee may file an answering brief no later than 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21, 2026. The answering brief shall be no more than 2500 words. There will be no reply.
- IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that briefs will be in a legible 14-point font, double-spaced, and will include all arguments the parties wish to present to the Court. They may be filed in memorandum format (no tables of contents or authorities).
- IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that copies of all filings must be delivered as required under Rule 10(h).
- IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that in addition to filing briefs with the Clerk of the Supreme Court (with filing and service through AZTurboCourt) all filings are also to be sent by email to all the parties and court staff and to SACrtDocs@courts.az.gov when filed. This matter will be decided without oral argument. (Hon. William G. Montgomery)
4. 16-Apr-2026 FILED: Maricopa County's Notice of Decision Deadline; Certificate of Service (Appellees Maricopa County, et al.)
5. 16-Apr-2026 RECEIPT No.: 2026-00120 ; \$330.00, Authorization: 8568654081654254, Applied to: MAUREEN HOPPE - Class A Filing Fee (\$330.00) Paid for: MAUREEN HOPPE - By nCourt LLC
6. 17-Apr-2026 FILED: Opening Brief; Certificate of Service; Certificate of Compliance; Joint Stipulation of Facts (Appellant Hoppe)
7. 20-Apr-2026 FILED: Answering Brief; Certificate of Service; Certificate of Compliance (Appellee Buchli)
8. 29-Apr-2026 RECEIPT No.: 2026-00135 ; \$165.00, Authorization: 8744645735773075, Applied to: BOBBI BUCHLI - Class B Filing Fee (\$165.00) Paid for: BOBBI BUCHLI - By nCourt LLC

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11 PROCEEDING ENTRIES

9. 4-May-2026 A panel consisting of Chief Justice Timmer, Justice Montgomery, Justice King, and Justice Cruz has considered this matter.

Plaintiff Maureen Hoppe seeks to enjoin Defendant Bobbi Buchli's candidacy for Gilbert Town Council. She claims that two flaws in the caption of her nomination petitions independently prevent her from appearing on the 2026 primary election ballot. The trial court found that Plaintiff failed to show the petitions were not in substantial compliance with Arizona law. For the following reasons, we affirm the trial court's decision.

We review a challenge to the content of a nomination petition to determine whether it substantially complies with the statutory requirements. *Lohr v. Bolick*, 249 Ariz. 428, 431 ¶ 7 (2020). This entails discerning whether the petitions "could confuse or mislead" electors. *Moreno v. Jones*, 213 Ariz. 94, 102 ¶ 42 (2006). "Because the statute allows a measure of inconsistency by only requiring substantial compliance, no mere irregularity can be considered, unless it be shown that the result has been affected by such irregularity." *Id.* (citation modified). The Court will "not remove candidates from the ballot for mere technical departures from the form." *Bee v. Day*, 218 Ariz. 505, 506 ¶ 10 (2008). The Court uses this standard unless presented with a "clear statement that the legislature intended a particular form requirement" to be critical. *Id.*

A.R.S. § 16-314(C) provides the nomination petition caption for nonpartisan elections:

I, the undersigned, a qualified elector of the county of _____, state of Arizona, and of (here name political division or district from which the nomination is sought) hereby nominate _____ who resides at _____ in the county of _____ for the office of _____ to be voted at the _____ election to be held _____, and hereby declare that I am qualified to vote for this office

Here, the parties agree that for two sets of petitions, Defendant filled in the caption as follows:

I, the undersigned, a qualified elector of the county of Maricopa, state of Arizona, and of LD 14 Town of Gilbert hereby nominate BOBBI BUCHLI who resides at 3573 E MEADOWVIEW Dr Gilbert, Az 85298 in the county of Maricopa for the office of Gilbert Town Council to be voted at the primary election to be held July 21, 2026, and hereby declare that I am qualified to vote for this office

(Emphasis added).

I, the undersigned, a qualified elector of the county of Maricopa, state of Arizona, and of Town of Gilbert hereby nominate BOBBI BUCHLI who resides at 3573 E MEADOWVIEW Dr Gilbert, Az 85298 in the county of Maricopa for the office of Gilbert Town Council to be voted at the 2026 election to be held Aug 4, 2026, and hereby declare that I am qualified to vote for this office

(Emphasis added). The parties also agree that if either set of petitions is disqualified, Defendant will lack sufficient signatures to qualify for the primary ballot.

Plaintiff makes two arguments. First, she claims that stating "LD 14 Town of Gilbert" could cause electors who live in Legislative District 14, but not the Town of Gilbert, to wrongly believe they are qualified. The parties agree that Legislative District 14 and the Town of Gilbert, while overlapping, do not share the same borders. Second, she asserts that by writing "2026" Defendant failed to specify that the signatures are for the primary election, thereby confusing electors. That particular blank, she claims, must be filled with either "primary" or "general." For support, she points to § 16-314(C)'s caption for partisan nominations, which has no blank and simply says "primary."

As to the first argument, Plaintiff has not identified any defective signatures from outside the relevant jurisdiction, and she claims she does not have to because the caption is facially defective. However, even if there is an irregularity in a petition, it is Plaintiff's burden to show that the irregularity has affected the results. See *Moreno*, 213 Ariz. at 102 ¶ 42. In addition, as the trial court noted, any geographic ambiguity is clarified by the petitions' identification of the office at stake, "Gilbert Town Council." She therefore fails to show that the first set of petitions are not in substantial compliance.

As to the second argument, although Plaintiff has offered the inference that "2026" should actually say "primary" or "general," she has not identified any clear statement from the Legislature mandating those terms. See *Bee*, 218 Ariz. at 506 ¶ 10. The Court notes that after "2026" the petitions accurately identify the primary election date. Plaintiff fails to show that electors who read the whole caption would be confused as to whether Defendant is seeking signatures for the primary election.

Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED affirming the trial court's ruling.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED directing the Clerk to issue the mandate forthwith. (Hon. Ann A. Scott Timmer)

10. 4-May-2026 ----CASE STATISTICALLY TERMINATED----

11. 4-May-2026 MANDATE TO THE SUPERIOR COURT

Issued Mandate and Copy of Decision Order to Trial Court.
