

Green Party can stay on Pennsylvania's ballot, judge says

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HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A judge on Wednesday night ordered election officials to put the Green Party's candidate for president on Pennsylvania's ballot, turning back a court challenge by Democrats just eight weeks before an election in the battleground state that could be tilted by votes flowing to a third party.

Democrats had contended that the Green Party's presidential and vice presidential nominees did not properly submit candidate affidavits in August to go with paperwork containing voter signatures to get on the ballot.

As a result, Democrats argued, both must be barred from the ballot. Commonwealth Court Judge Drew Crompton, a Republican, disagreed, and dismissed arguments that the presidential nominee, Howie Hawkins, should be barred from the ballot. But Green Party's vice presidential nominee should be barred, he said.

An appeal to the state Supreme Court is possible. A Democratic Party lawyer didn't respond to messages Wednesday night, but Pennsylvania's Democratic Party chairwoman, Nancy Patton Mills, said Democratic Party presidential nominee Joe Biden has legal options in the matter.

Still, Mills said that she did not know enough about Hawkins to say whether him being on the ballot could hurt Biden's chances of winning Pennsylvania in the Nov. 3 contest against President Donald Trump, a Republican.

In 2016, Trump beat Democrat Hillary Clinton by 44,292 votes in Pennsylvania. The Green Party's nominee that year, Jill Stein, drew slightly more votes than that, 49,941.