

Ballot Access Requirements in Puerto Rico

López-Rutol v. Gracia
(*Hector M. Laffitte, D.P.R. 3:03-cv-1880*)

A would-be independent candidate for Puerto Rico's senate and several of his supporters filed a federal complaint in the District of Puerto Rico on August 18, 2003, challenging ballot petition requirements for candidates.¹ The complaint sought a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction.²

Judge Hector M. Laffitte issued an order to show cause why injunctive relief should not be granted and set the matter for hearing on August 22.³ At the hearing, Judge Laffitte denied the plaintiffs immediate injunctive relief, and he issued an opinion on the matter on September 2.⁴ On the one hand, the plaintiffs "waited for the eleventh hour to file the present petition for injunctive relief"; on the other hand, they "erroneously believe[d] that a law imposing any burden upon the right to vote must be subject to strict scrutiny."⁵ Judge Laffitte found Puerto Rico's ballot access petition requirements to be reasonable.⁶

On September 29, Judge Laffitte accepted the plaintiffs' voluntary dismissal.⁷

1. Docket Sheet, *López-Rutol v. Gracia*, No. 3:03-cv-1880 (D.P.R. Aug. 18, 2003); Opinion at 1–2 & nn.1–2, *id.* (Sept. 2, 2003), D.E. 12.

2. Order to Show Cause, *id.* (Aug. 19, 2003), D.E. 4.

3. Order, *id.* (Aug. 20, 2003), D.E. 5; Order to Show Cause, *supra* note 2.

4. Opinion, *supra* note 1.

5. *Id.* at 4–5.

6. *Id.*

7. Judgment, *López-Rutol*, No. 3:03-cv-1880 (D.P.R. Sept. 29, 2003), D.E. 19.