



Hall County Election Office

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Charge Filed in Suspected Petition Fraud Case

Grand Island, Nebr. – Hall County Attorney Marty Klein filed a charge Thursday in Hall County Court regarding suspected fraudulent signatures found on petitions sent to Hall County for signature verification. The charge is a Class IV felony and is expected to be bound over to Hall County District Court.

“Signature irregularities were found by the Hall County Election Office and an investigation ensued,” Klein said. The irregularities were on the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Regulation and Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection petitions.

The Hall County Sheriff’s Office conducted the investigation with assistance from the Hall County Election Commissioner’s Office, the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office, and the Hall County Attorney’s Office, Klein said.

The petitions were circulated locally, turned into the Nebraska Secretary of State’s Office and then distributed by the Secretary of State to county election offices across Nebraska to conduct signature verification using each county’s voter registration records.

Hall County Election Commissioner Tracy Overstreet said Hall County received 349 pages for the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Regulation petition, 17 of which were flagged as having fraudulent signatures. Overstreet said Hall County received 346 pages from the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection petition, 21 of which were flagged as having fraudulent signatures.

“Petition circulators and voters alike should know and understand that this office – and all election offices across Nebraska – take elections and signature verification very seriously,” Overstreet said. “We go through each petition line by line by line, signature by signature – just like we do for signatures on early voting ballot envelopes.”

All of the pages with suspected fraudulent signatures were traced back to one petition circulator, Michael Egbert of Grand Island.

A felony charge was filed against Egbert. The penalty for a Class IV felony ranges from probation to a maximum two years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. Klein said he felt it was important to file the charge to maintain the integrity of the election process.

None of the fraudulent signatures counted successfully in the effort to place the medical cannabis initiatives on the Nov. 5 general election ballot.

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