



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### Charges Filed in Petition Fraud Case

Hall County Attorney Martin Klein and Attorney General Mike Hilgers hosted a joint press conference today announcing a Class IV felony charge related to fraudulent signatures found on petitions for the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Regulation and Medical Cannabis Patient Protection.

The investigation began after Hall County Election Commissioner Tracy Overstreet flagged 17 of the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Regulation petition as having potentially fraudulent signatures. In addition, Overstreet identified 21 pages of the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection petition received by Hall County as having potentially fraudulent signatures. All of the pages with suspected fraudulent signatures were traced back to one petition circulator, Michael Egbert of Grand Island.

“Signature irregularities were found by the Hall County Election Office, and an investigation ensued,” Hall County Attorney Martin 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.

“Nebraskans expect secure elections. As we head into election season, Nebraskans should be confident that the election and law enforcement officials will work together to identify and investigate fraudulent activity,” stated Attorney General Mike Hilgers.

Michael Egbert was charged with false swearing to a circulator’s affidavit on a petition under Neb. Rev. Stat. 32-1546(2). The penalty for a Class IV felony ranges from probation to a maximum of two years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine.

Klein said he felt it was important to file the charges to maintain the integrity of the election process.

“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,” Tracy 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.”

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