

Examining Utah's 2024 Signature Verification Crisis

This presentation examines critical procedural irregularities in Utah's 2024 candidate petition signature verification process, specifically focused on concerning events surrounding Governor Cox's petition. My research reveals a troubling pattern of conflicts of interest, selective enforcement, and collusion among state officials.

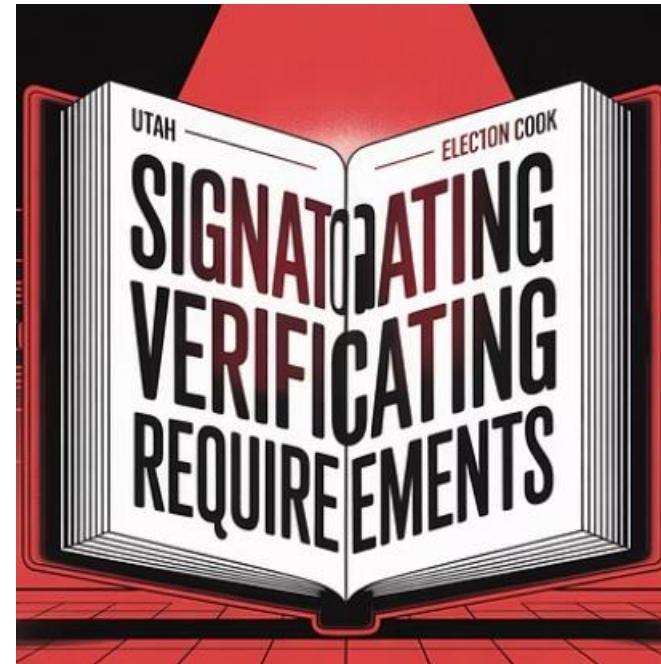
The following analysis documents how established verification protocols were compromised, resulting in preferential treatment that undermines electoral integrity and public trust. I will present evidence of systematic failures and official obstruction that should alarm every Utah voter concerned with fair and transparent elections.



J. Michael Clara - 05/22/25 presentation to the
Rules Review and General Oversight Committee of the Utah Senate

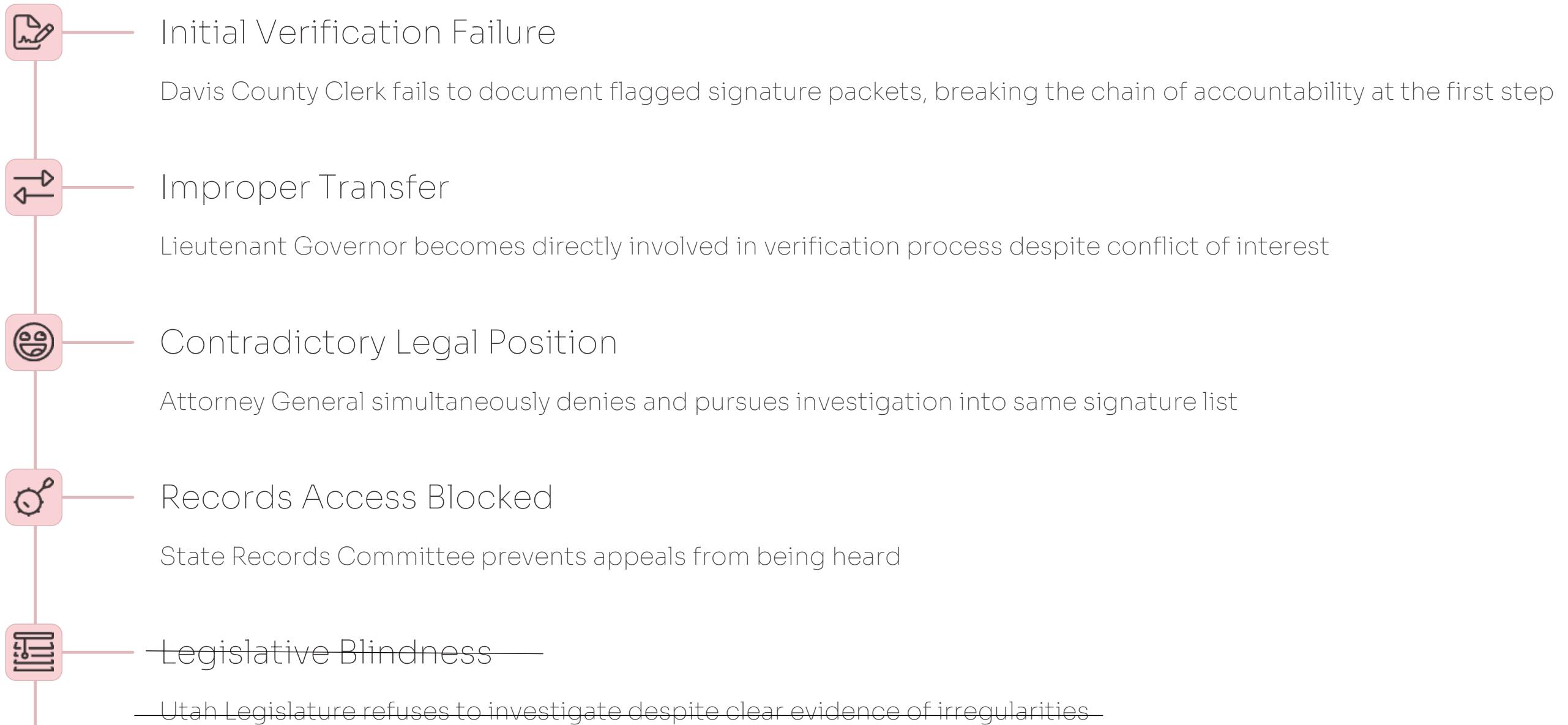


Legal Framework Violations



The handling of Governor Cox's signature packets appears to violate multiple legal frameworks that govern Utah's elections. State laws explicitly require consistent application of verification standards, maintenance of proper documentation, and public access to election records. When officials circumvent these requirements, they not only undermine the current election but also weaken the legal foundation of all future elections.

Systemic Accountability Breakdown



Legislative Oversight

1 Investigate

Despite clear evidence of procedural irregularities, the Utah Legislature should open a formal investigation into the handling of Governor Cox's signature packets.

2 Oversight Responsibility

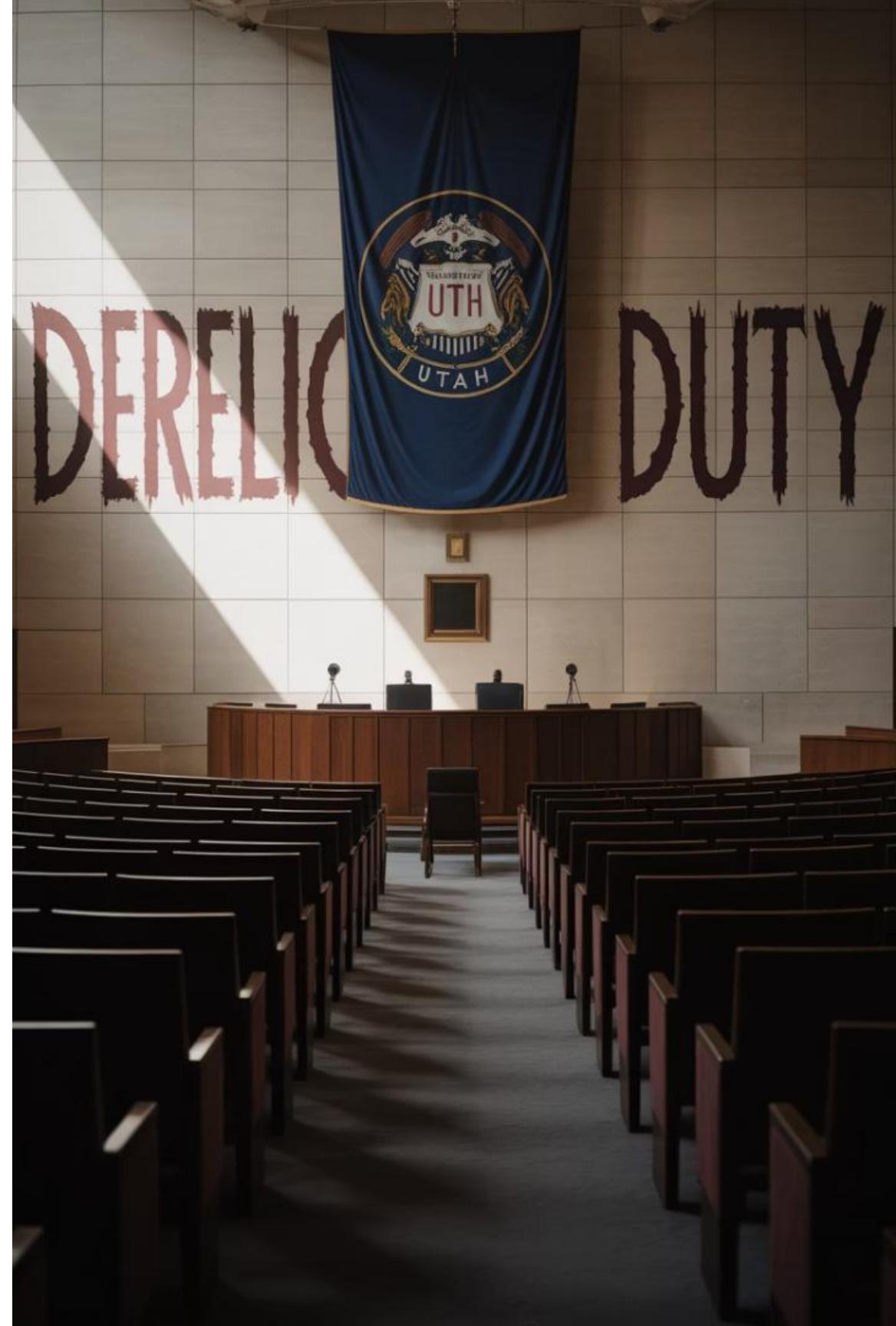
The Legislature has a constitutional duty to provide checks and balances on executive offices. .

3 Expose the Cover-up Collusion

An investigation by the Legislature will restore public trust in the election process.

4 Accountability

Inaction of the legislature establishes a dangerous precedent that election officials can deviate from proper procedures without facing legislative inquiry or consequences.





AGENDA LEGISLATIVE AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

LEGISLATURE

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 | 4:00 PM | Room 445 Capitol Building

President J. Stuart Adams, Co-Chair • Speaker Mike Schultz, Co-Chair

Senator Evan J. Vickers • Representative Jefferson Moss • Senator Luz Escamilla • Representative Angela Romero

1. Committee Business

- Call to order.
- Approval of the minutes of the August 20, 2024, meeting.

2. Audit Report Presentations

The committee will hear presentations on the following performance audits:

- A Performance Audit of the Signature Verification Process (Report 2024-16)
 - Presented by Jesse Martinson, Audit Manager

The LG's Office has contracted with the Davis County Clerk's Office (DCC's Office) to verify the signatures on all candidate petitions for statewide offices. Earlier



We looked through every packet to identify concerns such as photocopying, family members signing for each other, or signatures being submitted for the wrong candidate.

The LG's Office has contracted with the Davis County Clerk's Office (DCC's Office) to verify the signatures on all candidate petitions for statewide offices. Earlier this year when reviewing petition packets, the DCC's Office flagged some packets for having many non-matching signatures. They submitted those packets to the LG's Office for further review and then potential submission to the Office of the Attorney General for review. Because of these earlier concerns, we looked

Report No. 2023-001

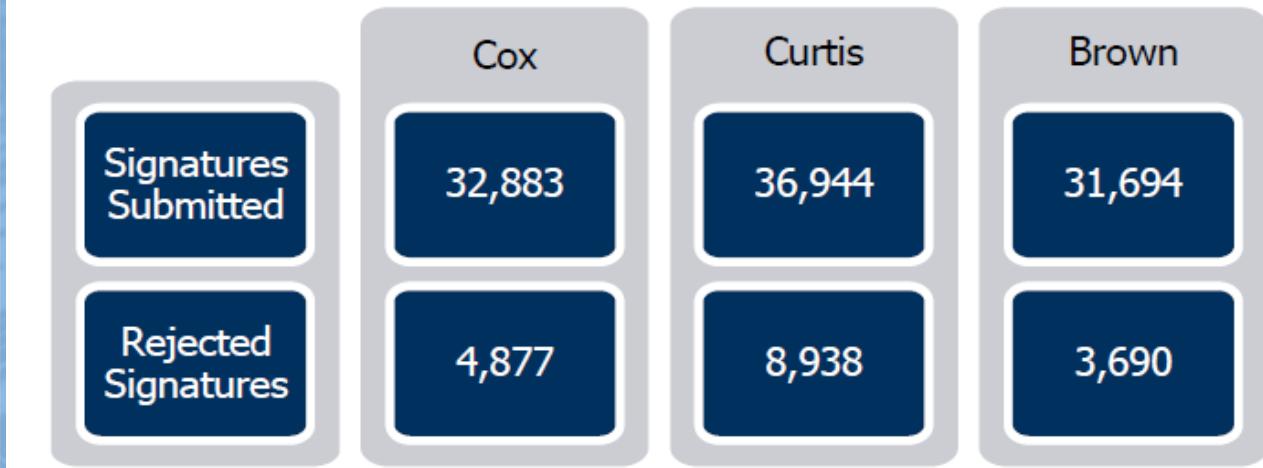
A Performance Audit of the **Signature Verification Process**

Improving Controls and Transparency

Office of the Legislative Auditor General
Report to the UTAH LEGISLATURE



Figure 1.2 The Disqualification of Many Signers by the DCC's Office, Which We Verified by Reviewing Every Packet, Suggests the DCC's Office Reasonably Followed Standards For Verifying Personal Information. The numbers in this figure do not include the signatures in packets that were submitted to the Office of the Attorney General for further review. The DCC's Office completely removed those packets and signatures from the count of submitted and reviewed signatures for each candidate.



Source: Auditor generated from signature lists for Spencer Cox, John Curtis, and Derek Brown.

After verifying the personal information outlined on the previous page, election workers then verify signatures. Some packets had no signatures rejected, other packets had a few, but a small number of packets had a disproportionate number of signatures rejected and were suspected of potential concerns with the signature gatherer. In these instances, the DCC's Office removed the packet from the verification process and sent it to the LG's Office. The LG's Office then reviewed the packet and determined whether to send it to the Office of the Attorney General for further review. We reviewed concerning packets in the custody of the Office of the Attorney General as part of our audit process.



Additional Chain of Custody Controls Would Provide Greater Assurance of the Security and Integrity of Candidate Petition Packets

All candidate petition packets involved in our audit were ultimately accounted for. Verification of petition packets is currently done within an access-controlled

Activity Logs Should Be Used to Track the Movement and Control of Petition Packets During Processing. During the review of signatures and candidate petition packets, we were unable to locate certain packets because they had been separated and set aside for further review by election officials at the LG's Office. Election officials located these packets when we notified them that the packets were missing, but no record or activity log was kept to document the transfer of packets or the purpose for their separation. Such a record would provide auditable evidence that the packets are accounted for and remain uncompromised.





- 06/19/24

Ms. Clawson,

I write in response to your GRAMA request dated Monday, June 10, 2024, and your amended requests dated June 18 and June 19, 2024.

Signature and Personally Identifying Information Request:

Your original request asks for "a copy of all and every signature and accompanying personal identifying information gathered and submitted by the following candidates: Brad Wilson, Spencer Cox and Derek Brown." A voter's signature and personally identifiable information are classified as "protected" under Utah Code § 63G-2-305(74), 63G-2-305.5(1)(b), and 20A-2-104(2). For this reason, the Lieutenant Governor's Office is statutorily required to deny your request for copies of voter signatures and personal identifying information. There are two options available to you:

You can request a report containing a list of signers. The fee for the report is \$50 per candidate requested. The report contains a list of each person who signed the nomination petition and had their signature reviewed by Davis County. In the place of information for a private or withheld voter, the report is redacted and indicates the signer was "private" or "withheld" as is allowed under statute. The report contains the following fields: Packet ID, Packet Number, Candidate, Circulator, Privacy, Voter ID, First, Middle, Last, Record Status, and County. As per our conversation on June 19, 2024, a new report could be created to include the address of each signer not classified as private or withheld. The list of signers could be available as soon as one business day after it is requested.





• The Deception

Utah code outlines three avenues by which a candidate may seek a party's nomination: the party convention process, collecting signatures, or both. The process for verifying signatures is outlined in the code (See Utah Code § 20A-1-1002). Signature packets for each candidate are reviewed independently of each other by trained elections workers. Each signature is individually reviewed to ensure it matches the signature in the voter's registration record. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor contracts with Davis County to verify the signatures for statewide candidates, thus removing any conflict with the Lieutenant Governor overseeing the review of her campaign's signatures.

The Lieutenant Governor's Office has not been involved in the ongoing investigation in Washington County. While this office cannot speak to which specific signatures are being investigated, each signature was reviewed by County elections officials as required by Utah code.

Statistics for the Cox/Henderson Campaign	
Required Threshold	28,000
Valid Verified Signatures	28,006
Rejected Signatures	4,877
Validity Rate	85.2%
Unreviewed Signatures*	592

*Signature review stops once the required signature threshold is met.

The Cox/Henderson Campaign submitted 592 additional signatures that were not verified once the required 28,000 signature threshold was met on March 18. Had more signatures been needed, the campaign had an extra month (until April 15) to supplement its signature submission to secure a place in the primary election.





STATEMENT REGARDING

STATEWIDE AND MULTI-COUNTY CANDIDATE PETITION PROCESSES

June 21, 2024

I Brian McKenzie, Davis County Clerk, provide this statement regarding State and Multi County Candidate Petition Processes conducted by my office.

There have been questions raised about the validity of candidate petition signatures verified by Davis County. I affirm that each signature was reviewed by trained election workers and either validated or rejected in accordance with the requirements set forth by Utah law. I further affirm that each candidate who qualified for the ballot through this process submitted a sufficient number of valid signatures. These candidates were then certified by the Lt. Governor on May 1, 2024.

During the 2024 petition cycle, Davis County staff processed petitions for 32 candidates, these included candidates for Governor, Attorney General, Congress, US Senate, State Legislators and State School Board with signatures totalling over 310,000.

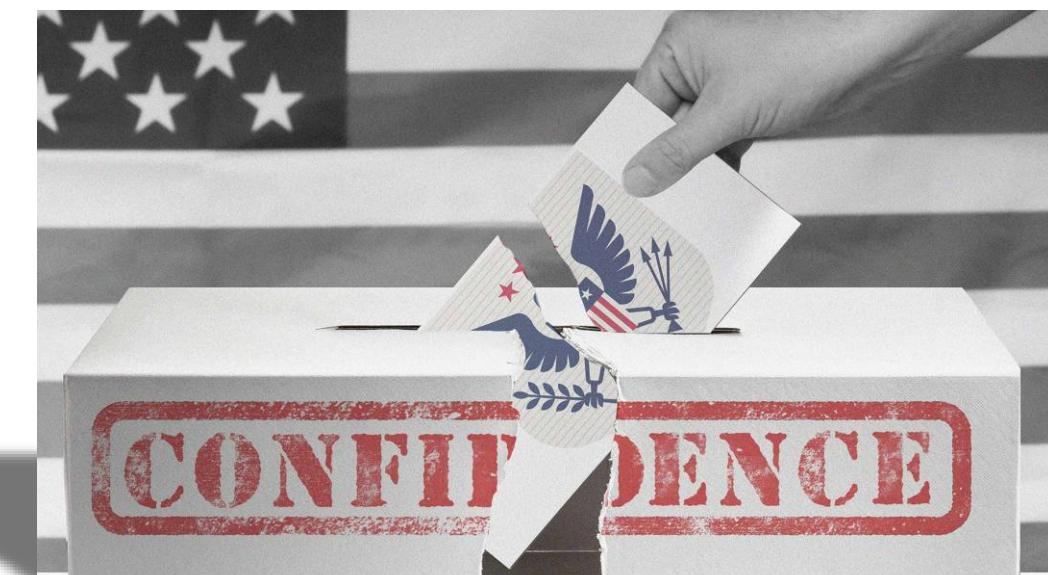
All petition packets were delivered directly to the Davis County Clerk's Office. Petitions were date stamped and recorded on a petition submission form, a copy of which was provided to the person who submitted the petitions. All petitions remained in the custody of Davis County Clerk personnel throughout the verification process. As is the case with any personnel working in elections, all persons working on petitions were required to pass a criminal background check and attend State and County signature verification training. Petitions were always processed in the presence of two or more workers.

Each petition was processed through the following steps:

1. Verification of the petition collector or circulator - This is to verify that the person that collected the signatures properly completed the circulator certification and that they met the statutory requirements.
2. Verification of each individual signature - Signers of candidate petitions must be registered voters, affiliated with a qualifying political party and, if applicable, live within the boundaries of the candidate's district. State law outlines the requirements that must be met for a signature to be considered valid.
 - a. the signer's name matches or is substantially similar to the voter registration record; and
 - b. the signer's signature appears substantially similar to the signature associated with the voter registration record; and
 - c. the signers address matches the voter registration record; or
 - d. the signer's age or date of birth matches the voter registration record.
3. Determination that the signature threshold was met - If a signature was valid it was counted towards the candidate, if a signature was invalid it was rejected and a reason for the rejection was recorded. Once Davis County personnel determined that a candidate had met the needed number of valid signatures to qualify for the ballot, the Lt. Governor's Office was notified.

Once completed, petitions were stored in the secure Davis County Election Center until they were delivered to the Lt. Governor's office for retention.

June 21, 2024





contact your county clerk — go in

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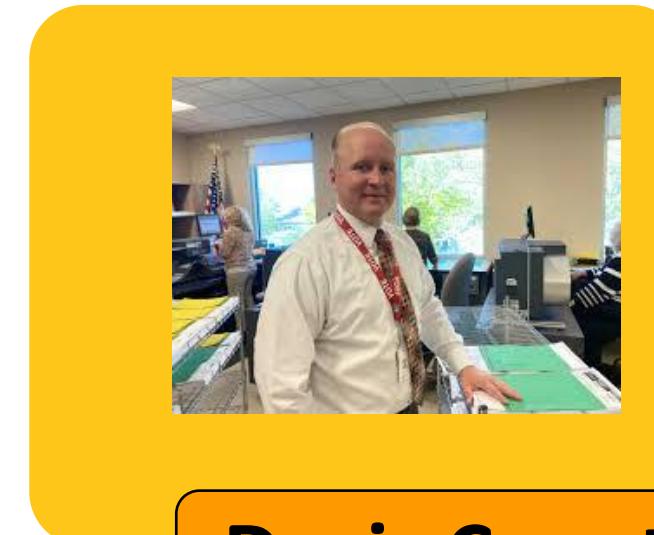
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Gathering Inc.



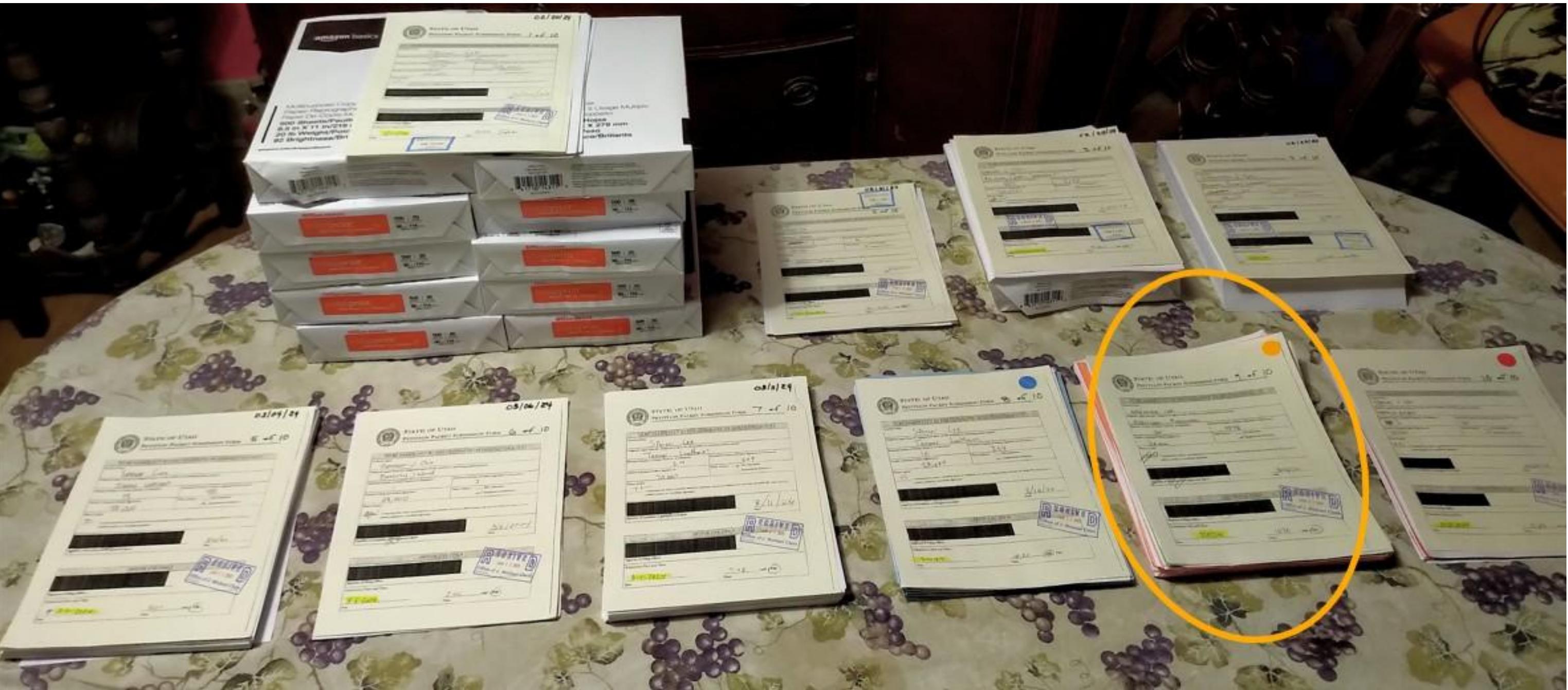
Cox & Henderson



Davis County Clerk

Packet ID	Packet Numbr	District	AREA	Race	Cand First	Cand Middle	Cand Last	Cand Suffix	Cand Party	CIRCULATO	Action	Voter ID	First	Middle	Last	Suffix	Address	City	Zip	Precinct	County	Voter Party	Privacy
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid									XAN:1	Iron	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Invalid Party									XAN:1	Iron	No Labels	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid	5204822	KayLynn	Williams	Carter		361 E 200 N	Xanarraville	84742	XAN:1	Iron	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid	5221701	Jason	Spencer	Illoyt		60 N 100 W	Xanarraville	84742	XAN:1	Iron	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid	5202855	Michael	D	Williams		105 S 100 W	Xanarraville	84742	XAN:1	Iron	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid	5202859	Rosalie	Hawkins	Williams		105 S 100 W	Xanarraville	84742	XAN:1	Iron	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid									ST C46	Washington	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid	4423387	Michele	Trene	Dumm		39 N Valley V	Saint George	84770	ST C46	Washington	Republican	Private
54013	77	State School E	State School E	State School E	KRISTAN	L.	NORTON		Republican	Nathan I Koei	Valid	2239202	Dennis	C	Dana		39 N Valley V	Saint George	84770	ST C46	Washington	Republican	Private

Cox / Henderson Submission Forms



The Irregular Routing of Signature Packets



Davis County Clerk's Flagged Packets

During the 2024 candidate petition process, the Davis County Clerk identified specific signature packets submitted for Governor Cox that contained irregularities requiring additional scrutiny.



Unusual Routing Protocol

Instead of documenting these flagged packets through standard procedures, the Clerk forwarded them directly to the Lieutenant Governor's office without proper documentation or transparency.



Broken Chain of Custody

This deviation from normal verification protocols created serious gaps in the documentation trail, making it impossible to verify the integrity of the signature collection process.





Initial Signature Shortfall Discovery



Verification Completion

Davis County Clerk finalized the initial signature verification process

Request for “Flagged” Packets

Davis County Clerk requested that the Lieutenant Governor return “flagged” packets so signatures can be extracted.



Upon completing the initial verification process, the Davis County Clerk determined that the Cox campaign had not obtained the required 28,000 valid signatures to meet the legal threshold for the primary ballot qualification. This discovery represented a critical moment in the verification process and would typically result in the campaign failing to qualify for ballot placement.

The identification of this shortfall triggered subsequent actions that deviated from standard electoral procedures and today raise questions about integrity of the signature verification process.



The Return of Flagged Packets



Return Decision

After the shortfall was identified, the Lieutenant Governor decided to return select "flagged" to the Davis County Clerk.

Recalculation

Signatures from these returned "flagged" packets were marked as valid and added to the previous total to meet the legal threshold.



Packet Transfer

Some of the previously excluded "flagged" packets were physically transferred back to the Davis County Clerk for supplemental processing.

Delayed Processing

The Davis County Clerk then proceeded to process these "flagged" packets, entering signatures into the Statewide Vista System.

This unusual return process effectively created a two-phase verification system where certain signatures received delayed processing the initial shortfall was identified. The selective nature of which flagged packets were returned versus those retained (and documented) raises questions about the integrity of the entire verification process.

Procedural Integrity Compromised

Established Rules Ignored

Standard verification protocols bypassed for specific candidates

Transparency Abandoned

Public unable to verify process integrity

Security Measures Circumvented

Chain of custody broken during critical verification stages

Official Discretion Abused

Authority used to influence qualification outcomes



The involvement of candidates in their own qualification process fundamentally undermines the integrity of the entire system. When officials responsible for verifying signatures have personal stakes in the outcome, the process becomes inherently compromised.

Attorney
General



Governor
Lt. Governor



Davis County Clerk





The Davis County Clerk and the Lieutenant Governor Exchanged Cox “Flagged” Signature Packets During the Verification Process



Dual Role Conflict

The Lieutenant Governor maintained statutory oversight of the election process while simultaneously running as a candidate in the same election, creating an inherent conflict of interest in reviewing signature packets for her own campaign.

Procedural Deviation

By directly handling signature verification matters related to her own campaign, the Lieutenant Governor deviated from standard electoral procedures designed to maintain impartiality and prevent candidate interference in the verification processes.

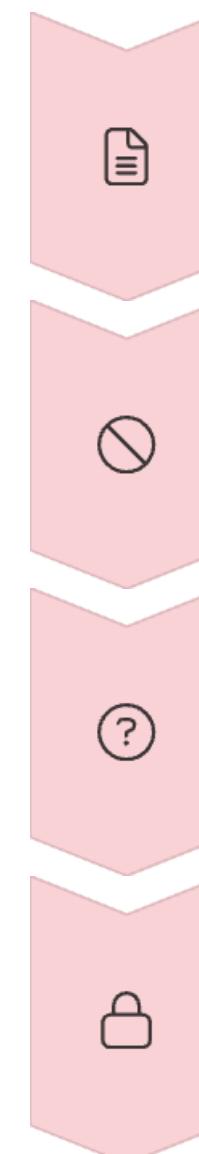
Ethical Considerations

Even if legally permissible (which it is not), the direct involvement of a candidate in reviewing signatures for her own campaign raises significant ethical concerns about the fairness and impartiality of the verification process and its outcome.

These conflict-of-interest concerns bring much clarity to the **cover-up actions of the Lieutenant Governor**. More specifically, the desperate attempts to conceal or delay the release of all election records of the signature verification process. When we allow a candidate to participate in the verification processes to benefit their campaign it erodes public trust in the integrity of the Utah electoral system.



The Lieutenant Governor's Document Suppression



Records Requests Submitted

Multiple formal requests filed for Governor Cox's 2024 signature verification documents under GRAMA

Requests Denied

The Lieutenant Governor refuses to release Governor Cox's verification records in violation of GRAMA

Contradictory Justification

Claims documents are part of an investigation the Attorney General denies exists

Public Access Blocked with unreasonable fees

Critical election documents are kept hidden from citizens, and independent verification by assessed exurbanite fees

**RESTRICTED ACCESS
- CONFIDENTIAL
FILES**



Lt. Governor Response to GRAMA Request

Responsive Records to Clara Records Request – 02/27/25

380

Legislative Auditor General

492

Performance Audit of the Signature Verification Process – 10/15/24

391
(Validated)

State Auditor

John Dougall Letter to Lt. Governor – 09/03/24

2,000 +

Owner – Gathering Inc.

Tanner Leatham – Deseret News – 06/21/24

ABC4 News - 03/10/25

592

Lt. Governor Director of Elections

Ryan Cowley Email to Natalie Clawson – 06/19/24

GRAMA RESPONSE

Davis County Public Records

**Record request #25-20 has been closed.
The closure reason supplied was:**

Thank you for your records request. This request is the same as Request 24-1048 received on Oct 23, 2024. Davis County's response is the same as it was then. For your convenience, the original response is included below:

"We do not have the records you requested as Davis County is a separate entity from the Lieutenant Governor's Office. We suggest you submit a records request to the Utah Lieutenant Governor's Office at <https://sf.gov.utah.gov/Contact-LtGov/s/grama-request>."



GRAMA RESPONSE

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Collin Tanner <collintanner@utah.gov>

Date: Fri, Oct 18, 2024 at 4:22 PM

Subject: LGO GRAMA Request #000258 Response

To: Michael Clara [\[REDACTED\]](#)

Dear Mr. Clara,

This email is in response to your GRAMA request, which was submitted through our online portal on Monday, October 7th. As a reminder, your request sought the following records:

The list of names (and associated information) that were initially classified as unreviewed on the Spencer Cox 2024 Signature list (592 names in total).*

The reports for nomination petition signers that we have issued in the past are generated based on the information that signature validators have entered into the statewide registration system. Although it is true the [State Auditors](#) "[examined] uncounted signatures submitted for Cox to determine whether they were substantially similar and should be considered valid", these additional signers and their information were never entered into the voter registration system and, therefore, a report does not exist that our office can produce as a responsive record. See Utah Code § 63G-2-201(7)(a)(i).

As a result, the Office of the Lt. Governor is not the custodian of any records pertaining to signers initially classified as unreviewed on the Spencer Cox Nomination Petitions for 2024. I would suggest submitting a GRAMA request to [The Office of the State Auditor](#) to see if they have created a record which displays a report of the "uncounted signers".



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GRAMA RESPONSE

Re: GRAMA NOTICE OF APPEAL TO THE CAO Inbox x

 **Brody Bailey** <babailey@utah.gov> Mon, Nov 4, 2024, 10:32 AM ☆ 😊 ✉ ⋮

to me, Collin ▾

Hello Mr. Clara,

I hope this email finds you well. I write in response to your GRAMA appeal dated 10/23/24.

In Mr. Tanner's original response, he stated that the information for the petition signers that the State Auditor's Office verified was "never entered into the voter registration system(.) (T)herefore, a report does not exist that our office can (use to) produce... a responsive record" (See Utah Code § 63G-2-201(7)(a)(i)). It is possible that the State Auditor's Office may have retained a record of the signature verification(s) they performed, but the Lieutenant Governor's Office does not have such a record, hence Mr. Tanner's recommendation to contact the State Auditor's Office.

Because GRAMA code does not require the Lieutenant Governor's Office to create a record (See Utah Code § 63G-2-201(7)(a)(i)), the denial of your GRAMA request is affirmed.





From: LGOrecords GOV <lgorecords@utah.gov>

Date: Wed, Dec 11, 2024 at 4:50 PM

Subject: GRAMA Request #000284, #000285 & #000286 Response

To: <Michael.Cox@utah.gov>

Dear Michael,

This email is in response to your GRAMA requests, submitted between Wednesday, November 27th and Monday, December 2nd. As a reminder, your requests sought the following records:

Request for the "Circulator Verification" forms submitted by the following circulators:

- Joseph Wilde (packet # 21 & 901) for Candidate Spencer Cox (2024 election cycle)
- Colton Drake (packet # 28 & 818) for Candidate Spencer Cox (2024 election cycle)
- Arvel Ashcraft (packet # 8) for Candidate Spencer Cox (2024 election cycle)
- Rocko Huntsman (packet # 366) for Candidate Spencer Cox (2024 election cycle)
- Axel Burt (packet # 378 & 845) for Candidate Spencer Cox (2024 election cycle)

The requested Circulator Verification sheets are a part of nomination petitions, the disclosure of which is governed by 63G-2-305.5. To fulfill requests for such signature lists, our office must either; (a) provide a list of names of the individuals who signed the petition or request, or (b) permit an individual to view, but not take a copy or other image of, the signatures on a political petition. As it stands, your requests require our office to provide the nomination petitions for Spencer Cox in a particular medium not currently maintained, and would also require our office to sort through hundreds of petition packets to locate the requested verification forms, scan them, and prepare them for disclosure. Utah GRAMA Code explicitly does not require a governmental entity from providing a record in a format outside from how it is currently maintained. See Utah Code § 63G-2-201(7)(a)(iii).

As a result, I will be unable to fulfill your request for the circulator verification sheets in the format you have requested. However, you are welcome to come in-person to view the requested signature packets in their entirety. Before we are able to accommodate such a request, our office must first take time to redact all sensitive information as required by law. This process will take approximately 15 hours of staff time, which the requester must cover the actual cost for. Our office's fee schedule is found on [Appendix B of our GRAMA policy](#).

If you are interested in coming into our office and viewing the nomination petitions for Spencer Cox, a fee in the amount of \$590.00 must be paid. This fee is calculated by multiplying the 15 hours of staff time with the rate \$40.00, with the first quarter hour of staff time waived. Any fees charged in excess of actual time spent preparing the records will be returned to you. The soonest our office could have the nomination packets prepared for your view would be around late February/early March. Once payment has been received, I will follow up on specific dates for you to come and view the packets.



OFFICE OF THE
UTAH STATE AUDITOR

January 17, 2025

Michael Clara

Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Mr. Clara:

I write in response to your GRAMA request dated January 10, 2025, in which you requested the following records:

I am requesting the list of names (and associated information) that were initially classified as unreviewed on the Spencer Cox 2024 Signature List.*
592 names in total (as per Ryan Cowley 06/19/24 email).
On September 3, 2024, State Auditor John Dougall informed Lt. Governor Henderson that the previously unreviewed signatures have now been reviewed by the Davis County Clerks. Dougall stated that the Davis County Clerks verified that 391 of those signatures are valid.
However, in response to a GRAMA request to the LG they assert that State Auditors conducted the verification not the Davis County Clerk as Dougall noted in his letter:
"State Auditor's Office verifications were never entered into the voter registration system. Therefore, a report does not exist that our office can produce...the State Auditor's office may have retained a record of the signature verification that they performed."
Accordingly, I am requesting a record of those signatures in the form of a list as per Utah Code 63G-2-305.5.
* address, city, zip code, precinct, county, voter party, packet ID, packet Number, circulator, action/status etc....

We deny your request. After a reasonable search under Section 63G-2-201(7)(b), the Office has determined that we do not retain any records responsive to your request. We are not aware of the existence of any separate record or list which contains the information you are requesting. Our office did not create a record or list containing this information, and under Section 63G-2-201(7)(a), we decline to create such a list in response to your request. To our knowledge, the only records which contain the information requested are the original signature petitions. These are not our records, nor are they in our custody. In short, our response is unchanged since you first requested these same records in October 2024.

To appeal this access denial, you must file a notice of appeal with OSA's Chief Administrative Officer, Auditor Tina Cannon, no later than 30 days from today's date. Please refer to Utah Code Section 63G-2-401, which details the submission of the notice of appeal and lists the information the notice of appeal must contain. You may submit the notice of appeal to tmcannon@utah.gov.

GRAMA RESPONSE



Office of the
State Auditor

592

EMAIL RESPONSE

Re: Question about the Signature Verification Audit ➤ Inbox x Print Compose

 **Mandy Teerlink** Fri, Jan 17, 12:42 PM (5 days ago) Star Smile Reply More

to me ▾

Please see the below response:

In response to your email to the State Auditor's Office dated January 7, 2025 wherein you made the following inquiry regarding petition signatures, "Are they considered 'valid' because they were 'substantially similar' only: Or are they "valid because they also went through the process described on page 2 of the Dougall letter?"

In answer to this inquiry, the validators represented to us that the 391 signatures met all five of the criteria you cited in your email and would have been counted toward the signature count threshold if they had been reviewed during the original validation process



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GRAMA RESPONSE

GRAMA Request #000296 Response ➤ Inbox x Print Checklist

✉ **LGrecords GOV** (sent by collintanner@utah.gov...Wed, Jan 22, 5:01PM (4 days ago)) Star Smile Reply More

to me ▾

Dear Michael,

This email is in response to your GRAMA request, originally submitted on January 7th, 2025. As a reminder, your request sought the following records:

In a June 19, 2024, email from Ryan Cowley to Natalie Clawson. Cowley reports that Cox / Henderson Campaign had 592 unreviewed signatures. On October 15, 2024, the Legislative Auditor reports that Cox had 492 "additional" signatures. I am requesting records that would substantiate Cowley's claim of 592 additional signatures for Cox.

In response to requests related to the signature packets in question, a rough manual count of the unverified signatures was conducted. That count represented an estimation, which was subsequently sent by Ryan to Natalie Clawson in his June 19th, 2024 email.

Regards,

Collin



592

----- Forwarded message -----

From: LGOrecords GOV <lgorecords@utah.gov>

Date: Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 5:01 PM

Subject: GRAMA Request #000296 Response

To: Michael Clara <donmiguelslc@gmail.com>

Dear Michael,

This email is in response to your GRAMA request, originally submitted on January 7th, 2025. As a reminder, your request sought the following records:

In a June 19, 2024, email from Ryan Cowley to Natalie Clawson. Cowley reports that Cox / Henderson Campaign had 592 unreviewed signatures. On October 15, 2024, the Legislative Auditor reports that Cox had 492 "additional" signatures. I am requesting records that would substantiate Cowley's claim of 592 additional signatures for Cox.

In response to requests related to the signature packets in question, a rough manual count of the unverified signatures was conducted. That count represented an estimation, which was subsequently sent by Ryan to Natalie Clawson in his June 19th, 2024 email.

Regards,

Collin

BRODY BAILEY | ELECTION COORDINATOR
OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
LTGOVERNOR.UTAH.GOV | 801-538-1055



↳ **Brody Bailey** <babailey@utah.gov> Jan 28, 2025, 12:30 PM star smile left more
to me ▾

Hello Michael,

I hope this email finds you well. I write in response to your GRAMA appeal for request 296. You requested the following records:

"In a June 19, 2024, email from Ryan Cowley to Natalie Clawson. Cowley reports that Cox / Henderson Campaign had 592 unreviewed signatures. On October 15, 2024, the Legislative Auditor reports that Cox had 492 "additional" signatures. I am requesting records that would substantiate Cowley's claim of 592 additional signatures for Cox."

In response, Mr. Tanner stated the following: "In response to requests related to the signature packets in question, a rough manual count of the unverified signatures was conducted. That count represented an estimation, which was subsequently sent by Ryan to Natalie Clawson in his June 19th, 2024 email."

Because a manual count was conducted, there was no record created. There was no denial; there isn't a record responsive to your request.

Best,
Brody

Cox / Henderson
Unverified or Spare Signatures

Voter Rights Implications

100%

Voter Right to Fair Process

Percentage of Utah voters entitled to equally applied election laws

0

Documents Released

Number of Cox signature verification documents made available to the public

5

Agencies Obstructing

Different government entities blocking access to information

When election officials provide preferential treatment to certain candidates, they effectively disenfranchise voters by undermining the democratic process. Every Utah voter has the right to elections conducted with transparency and integrity, where the same rules apply to all candidates regardless of their position or connections.

The systematic obstruction of information about the signature verification process directly infringes upon these rights by preventing citizens from verifying that proper procedures were followed.



UV1

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITION

SPENCER J. COX

Republican Party
Governor

Address:

Signature Gatherer Verified _____
 Total Signatures 7
 IP 1 UR 0 NR 4
 OA 0 NM 1 O 0
 CD 0 RD 0
 VALID 1 Report Verified AA

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

1298

7

CIRCULATOR VERIFICATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PETITION CIRCULATOR ONLY)

State of Utah
County of Utah County } ssI, Austin McBride, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3/15/24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 7 verifiable signatures.

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

7

UV2

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITION

SPENCER J. COX

Republican Party
Governor

Address:

Signature Gatherer Verified _____
 Total Signatures 12
 IP 1 UR 0 NR 11
 OA 0 NM 1 O 0
 CD 0 RD 0
 VALID 12 Report Verified AA

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

1295

12

CIRCULATOR VERIFICATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PETITION CIRCULATOR ONLY)

State of Utah
County of Utah } ssI, Eyva Antunes, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3/14/24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 12 verifiable signatures.

UV3

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITION

SPENCER J. COX

Republican Party
Governor

Address:

Signature Gatherer Verified _____
 Total Signatures _____
 IP 1 UR 0 NR 4
 OA 0 NM 1 O 0
 CD 0 RD 0
 VALID 41 Report Verified AA

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

1293

50

CIRCULATOR VERIFICATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PETITION CIRCULATOR ONLY)

State of Utah
County of UTAH } ssI, Kenton Hartle, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3/15/24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 50 verifiable signatures.

Cox / Henderson
Unviewed or Spare Signatures

UV10

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITION

SPENCER J. COX
Republican Party
Governor

Address:

1291
2970
33

RECEIVED
MAR 21 2024
DAVIS
COUNTY CLERK

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

UV11

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITION

SPENCER J. COX
Republican Party
Governor

Address:

2069
43

RECEIVED
MAR 21 2024
DAVIS
COUNTY CLERK

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

UV12

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITION

SPENCER J. COX
Republican Party
Governor

Address:

Signature Gatherer Verified 18
Total Signatures 25
IP _____ UR _____ NR _____
OA _____ NM 2 O _____
CD _____ RD _____
VALID 23
Report Verified KP

JACOB BELLISTON 25
1,995

Packet Number (For Office Use ONLY)

State of Utah
County of UTAH } ss.

I, Kenton Hartle, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3-19-24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 33 verifiable signatures.

Candidate: SPENCER J. COX
Office: Governor**CIRCULATOR VERIFICATION**
(TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PETITION CIRCULATOR ONLY)State of Utah
County of UTAH } ss.

I, Kenton Hartle, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3-19-24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 43 verifiable signatures.

State of Utah
County of SALT LAKE } ss.

I, Jacob Belliston, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

State of Utah
County of SALT LAKE } ss.

I, Jacob Belliston, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3/18/24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 25 verifiable signatures.

Candidate: SPENCER J. COX
Office: Governor**CIRCULATOR VERIFICATION**
(TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PETITION CIRCULATOR ONLY)State of Utah
County of SALT LAKE } ss.

I, Jacob Belliston, residing at [REDACTED] hereby state that:
(Print Petition Circulator's Name) (Petition Circulator's Address)

- I am a Utah resident and am at least 18 years old; and
- All the names that appear on the signature sheets bound to this page were, to the best of my knowledge, signed by the persons who professed to be the persons whose names appear on the signature sheets, and each of them signed the person's name on the signature sheets in my presence; and
- I believe that each has printed and signed the person's name and written the person's street address correctly, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah or will register to vote in Utah before the filing officer certifies the signatures on the signature sheet; and
- I understand that as a circulator, I cannot sign the signature sheet of this packet.

[REDACTED] 3/18/24
Petition Circulator's Signature Date

Petition Circulator's Phone Number

This petition packet contains 25 verifiable signatures.

Cox / Henderson
Unviewed or Spare Signatures

Re: GRAMA Notice of Appeal to the LG Request #00185862

1 message

Brody Bailey <babailey@utah.gov>
To: Michael Clara

Thu, Apr 10, 2025 at 3:00 PM

Mr. Clara,

I write in response to your CAO appeal for GRAMA request #00185862, dated March 17, 2025. As a reminder, you sought the following records:

On October 15, 2024, the Office of the Legislative Auditor General released: A Performance Audit of the Signature Verification Process. In that document, the Auditor General noted: "Cox...submitted an additional 492 signatures that DCC's Office could have reviewed...".

I am requesting the signature packets that include the signature sheets wherein the 492 unviewed signatures were penned. In response to a recent GRAMA request, I received records showing totals of unreviewed signatures that fell short of the amount in the Legislative audit. Moreover, those records also reflect the total number of validated-unreviewed signatures to fall short of the number reported in the State Audit. I was provided an email dated, 02-20-25, wherein Davis County Clerk McKenzie stated the following: "I can confirm there were uncounted signatures that had been submitted by the Cox/Henderson campaign. Because they were uncounted by my office, and because I do not have possession of the petitions...I cannot confirm the exact number of these uncounted signatures...The uncounted signatures including any that were determined valid during the audit are included in the petition packets, which have been returned to the Lt. Governor as the custodian of the record..."

So, it appears that the signatures in the packet themselves were marked valid or invalid by the Davis County Clerks, thus this records request.

I am admittedly a bit confused; the Office of the Lieutenant Governor (LGO) has offered, repeatedly, in response to previous requests to allow you to come and view the packets provided you pay the cost for the information of private and withheld voters to be redacted on the packets in accordance with Utah Code 63G-2-305.5. This office has also complied with Utah Code 63G-2-305.5 by providing you a list of verified signers with the private and withheld voter information redacted.



This same issue was recently litigated. The court held:

"Under GRAMA, voter signatures on political petitions are explicitly "protected." Utah Code § 63G-2-305(74). GRAMA only allows access to "protected" petition signatures under very limited circumstances. See id. at § 63G-2-305.5. And, even then, the Utah Election Code requires records custodians to classify certain voter signatures and information as "private." Id. at § 20A-2-104(4)(h) ("The lieutenant governor or a county clerk shall classify the voter registration record of a voter as a private record if the voter: (i) submits a written application ... requesting that the voter's voter registration record be classified as private; (ii) requests on the voter's voter registration form that the voter's voter registration record be classified as a private record; or (iii) submits a withholding request form..."). Under Utah law, in short, records custodians must safeguard voter information when a voter affirmatively requests their information be kept private.

In her administrative decision, the LGO offered Plaintiff/Petitioner the opportunity to view or access in-person the signature packets and the list of names of petition signers with the protected and private voters' names and signatures redacted. The LGO's decision was correct under Utah law and complied with Section 305.5 of GRAMA." (Order Granting Motion to Dismiss First Amended Complaint, Natalie Clawson v Deidre Henderson, Case 240905195)

Simply put, in response to other requests exactly the same as yours, the LGO has correctly applied the law. This office remains committed to following Utah Code.

Let me speak briefly to the verification process itself and address some of your concerns and questions.

First, the sections you refer to in the elections handbook don't identify the review process for candidate nomination petition signatures for affiliated candidates. Rather, the section you cite specifically deals with initiative and referendum signatures.

In accordance with Administrative Rule R623-4-4(D)(4), an election officer is required to verify nomination petition signatures "until the candidate has sufficient signatures to meet the qualification threshold." For this reason, the Davis County Clerk's Office stopped verifying signatures when the threshold was met in accordance with the administrative rule. The unverified signatures were never entered into VISTA as part of the verification process for the affiliated candidate nomination petition process, and thus there is not an electronic record that our office can produce responsive to your request. Utah Code 63G-2-2017(a) states that, in response to a request, a governmental entity is not required to "create a record, compile, format, manipulate, package, summarize, or tailor information..." Because there is no electronic record the LGO can offer, this office has, as I stated earlier, repeatedly offered for you to view the packets in person, as allowed under GRAMA section 63G-2-305.5.

It also appears there may be misunderstanding as to how the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) conducted its recent signature verification audit. The LGO and the Davis County Clerk's Office provided only administrative assistance in the process; the Auditor's conclusions regarding signature verification were based on the Auditor's independent review and those conclusions were *not* entered into VISTA. Thus, we are unable to produce an electronic record of the determinations made by the OSA.

In conclusion, this office has not denied access to public records in relation to the packets. The Office has simply explained that an electronic record of the unverified packets does not exist, and therefore cannot be provided. As has been mentioned previously, you are welcome to view the packets in person provided you pay for the private and protected voter information to be redacted in accordance with Utah Code 63G-2-305.5 and the court's order. Accordingly, I affirm the earlier response to your records requests, and deny your appeal.

GRAMA Request: DENIED

Lt. Governor denies GRAMA appeal for Governor Cox's
Signature Packets of his unverified signatures



Lt. Governor

The LG provided you a list of Cox's verified signatures. You do not need a list of Cox's unverified signatures.



District Judge

Under Utah law the records custodians must safeguard voter information when a voter affirmatively requests their information be kept private.



Davis County Clerk

The DCC never entered the unverified signatures into VISTA, so no electronic record exists to produce.



State Auditor

The SA conducted an independent review of the unverified signatures, and those conclusions were not entered into VISTA. Thus, we are unable to produce an electronic record of the SA conclusions.



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Government Operations

MARVIN DODGE
Executive Director

Division of Archives and Records Service

KENNETH R. WILLIAMS
Director

Appeal 2025-56

Sent via mail

May 2, 2025

Michael Clara

RE: Appeal to the State Records Committee

Dear Mr. Clara:

The State Records Committee received your request for a hearing related to signature packets. Your appeal for a hearing is declined because nothing has been denied, and your appeal does not include a request for a fee waiver.

If you disagree with this decision you may appeal to the District Court within 30 days of this letter per [Utah Code § 63G-2-404](#).

Respectfully,

Rebekkah Shaw
Executive Secretary

Part 2 Access to Records

63G-2-201 Provisions relating to records -- Public records -- Private, controlled, protected, and other restricted records -- Disclosure and nondisclosure of records -- Certified copy of record -- Limits on obligation to respond to record request.

(1) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (1)(b), a person has the right to inspect a public record free of charge, and the right to take a copy of a public record during normal working hours, subject to Sections 63G-2-203 and 63G-2-204.

(12) A governmental entity may not use the physical form, electronic or otherwise, in which a record is stored to deny, or unreasonably hinder the rights of a person to inspect and receive a copy of a record under this chapter.

63G-2-704 Applicability to the governor and lieutenant governor.

(1) The governor, the office of the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the office of the lieutenant governor shall designate and classify records in accordance with Sections 63G-2-301 through 63G-2-305 as public, private, controlled, or protected.

(2) (a) The governor, the office of the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the office of the lieutenant governor are not subject to:

- (i) Section 63G-2-203;
- (ii) Section 63G-2-209;
- (iii) Section 63G-2-401; or
- (iv) Part 6, Collection of Information and Accuracy of Records.



The State Records Committee Obstruction



Denial by Delay
The State Records Committee has consistently refused to schedule appeals of records requests, effectively blocking access through procedural obstruction rather than legal justification.



Protecting Officials
This strategic scheduling failure specifically protects the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, State Auditor Dougall, and the Davis County Clerk from having to defend their records denials.



Transparency Avoidance
By preventing appeals from being heard, the committee ensures that records remain sealed and officials are never forced to explain their contradictory positions under oath.



Michael Clara <[REDACTED]>

Re: GRAMA Notice of Appeal to the LG Request #00185862

1 message

Michael Clara <[REDACTED]>

To: Brody Bailey <babailey@utah.gov>
Cc: LGRecords GOV <lgorecords@utah.gov>
Bcc: Michael Clara <[REDACTED]>

Tue, May 6, 2025 at 9:08 AM

Mr. Bailey,

Before I decide whether to appeal this GRAMA denial in Third District Court, I have a few questions about the offer that has been extended to inspect the record. In the denial letter, you stated:

"I am admittedly a bit confused; the Office of the Lieutenant Governor (LGO) has offered, repeatedly, in response to previous requests to allow you to come and view the packets provided you pay the cost for the information of private and withheld voters to be redacted on the packets in accordance with Utah Code 63G-2-305.5. This office has also complied with Utah Code 63G-2-305.5 by providing you a list of verified signers with the private and withheld voter information redacted."

In providing me the opportunity to inspect the record, I have the following questions:

What signature packets of unviewed signatures will I be viewing? (see attached graphic).

Will it be the thousands of unviewed signatures reported by Tanner Leatham?

Will it be the 592 unviewed signatures that Cowley reported to Natalie Clawson?

Will it be the 391 unviewed signatures reported by the State Auditor?

Will it be the 492 unviewed signatures reported by the Legislative Auditor General?

What will be redacted from the packets?

What is the fee amount that will be levied?

When will they be available to inspect?

Un abrazo,

Michael Clara





Lt. Governor Response to GRAMA Request

Responsive Records to Clara Records Request – 02/27/25

380

Legislative Auditor General

492

Performance Audit of the Signature Verification Process – 10/15/24

391
(Validated)

State Auditor

John Dougall Letter to Lt. Governor – 09/03/24

2,000 +

Owner – Gathering Inc.

Tanner Leatham – Deseret News – 06/21/24

ABC4 News - 03/10/25

592

Lt. Governor Director of Elections

Ryan Cowley Email to Natalie Clawson – 06/19/24



Re: GRAMA Notice of Appeal to the LG Request #00185862 ✉️ ↗

▶ Inbox ×

 ✉️ **Brody Bailey** ✉️ to me ▼

Fri, May 9, 12:42 PM (3 days ago) ☆ 😊 ✉️ ⋮

Hello Mr. Clara,

I hope this email finds you well.

Here is a breakdown of the estimated cost to prepare the unverified/partially verified signature packets for review.

Time to retrieve packets from archives: \$320
Reviewing and redacting the packets: \$3666.67
Material costs for redaction: \$20
Staff time spent with you while you review the packets (estimated four hours): \$320

Total cost: \$4,326.67

As it will take an estimated 43 hours of staff time to prepare the packets, we anticipate they would be available for review in a month from the date of payment. Redactions will include signatures and all information for private and withheld voters as required by GRAMA and as upheld by the courts (See Utah Code 63G-305.5 and Order Granting Motion to Dismiss First Amended Complaint, Natalie Clawson v Deidre Henderson, Case 240905195).

If the task is completed in less time than estimated, the LGO would refund the difference.

Best,
Brody

Deidre Henderson
Utah Lieutenant Governor



Re: GRAMA Notice of Appeal to the LG Request #00185862

1 message

Michael Clara

Fri, May 9, 2025 at 2:50 PM

To: Brody Bailey <babailey@utah.gov>
Bcc: Michael Clara <donmiguelslc@gmail.com>

Thank you so much for the comprehensive breakdown of the cost to inspect the records in dispute.

What signature packets of unviewed signatures will I be viewing? (see attached graphic).

Will it be the thousands of unviewed signatures reported by Tanner Leatham?

Will it be the 592 unviewed signatures that Cowley reported to Natalie Clawson?

Will it be the 391 unviewed signatures reported by the State Auditor?

Will it be the 492 unviewed signatures reported by the Legislative Auditor General?

Un abrazo,

Michael Clara

Fwd: GRAMA Notice of Appeal to the LG Request
#00185862 Inbox



Michael Clara

to Brody, LGOrerecords, bcc: me

Mr. Bailey,

I am resubmitting the questions I asked you on May 6 and again on May 9.

Today constitutes my third inquiry.

Your continued refusal to respond to my GRAMA questions will be the basis for me to file an appeal in the district court.

Moreover, if you force my hand to seek judicial review, I will argue (in part) that you assessed a fee and informed me what parts of the record will be redacted. However, you failed to inform me what records you are redacting, which constitutes a denial under GRAMA. Accordingly, I will appeal the withholding of all records as defined in §63G-2-103(22) that would be responsive to my initial records request that have yet to be identified.

Utah Code §63G-2-205(2) provides that: The notice of denial shall contain the following information: a description of the record or portions of the record to which access was denied and citations to the provisions of this chapter that exempt the record or portions of the record from disclosure.

In other words, the plain language of Utah Code §63G-2-205(2) states that a description and citation must be provided for any withheld “record” (singular). Thus, a denial notice must separately describe and justify the withholding of each withheld record. Even the State Records Committee has previously ruled in *Mark Haik v. Town of Alta*, Utah SRC No. 07-08, that withheld records must be “definitively identified” with “reasonable specificity”, not only to the Committee itself but also to the requester.



The language of Utah Code §63G-2-205(2) closely parallels the discovery provision in Utah R. Civ. P. 26(b)(6), which explicitly requires that a description of withheld documents be sufficiently detailed to “enable other parties to assess the applicability of the privilege or protection.”

By analogy, a GRAMA denial notice must be similarly informative in its description of each withheld record, in order to give the requester sufficient information to bring an appeal. The absence of such a log also keeps the Court oblivious as to what records are being withheld or should be reviewed in camera on the day of the hearing, should one be scheduled.

The Utah Legislature explicitly intended GRAMA to be “consistent with nationwide standards of information practices”. At the federal level, there is a large body of case law requiring that records withheld under the Freedom of Information Act be described in an itemized and detailed “Vaughn index”.

Accordingly, this aspect of your denial is in direct violation of Utah Code §63G-2-205(2)(a), which requires that whenever access to a record is denied, the denial notice include a “description” of that record.

Un abrazo,

Michael Clara

No Longer in Office Re: Fwd: GRAMA Notice of Appeal to
the LG Request #00185862 ➤ [Inbox](#) x



✉ Brody Bailey

to me ▾

10:22AM (2 hours ago)



Hello,

Thank you for contacting the Office of the Lieutenant Governor (LGO).
I recently started a new position in another department, and am no
longer with the LGO. Please email elections@utah.gov or call
801-538-1041 for assistance.

Best,
Brody

--

BRODY BAILEY | LEGAL AND POLICY ANALYST
OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
[LTGOVERNOR.UTAH.GOV](http://ltgovernor.utah.gov/) <<http://ltgovernor.utah.gov/>> | 801-538-1055



**Deidre Henderson
Utah Lieutenant Governor**



May 17, 2024

Michael Clara
[REDACTED]

We have received your request for copies of all the signature gathering forms that list the names of the individuals who signed the submitted forms on behalf of Don L. Ipson.

Under GRAMA, signatures obtained on a political petition are considered protected information. Utah Code Ann. § 63G-2-305(74). However, the County may disclose protected records, if we determine there are factors favoring access instead of restricting access. Utah Code Ann. § 63G-2-201(5)(b)(ii). It has been determined that you will be provided with an opportunity to view the requested records at a mutually agreed time in our office under supervision. You will not be allowed to make copies of the requested documents, or mark the documents in any way. You will not be allowed to remove staples from the documents. As part of our chain of custody procedures, the documents will be sealed prior to and upon completion of viewing because they are part of an ongoing investigation. To arrange a viewing time during business hours, please contact Melanie Abplanalp at (435) 301-7223.

Under Utah Code Ann. § 63G-2-401, you may appeal any portion of this response to the Washington County Commission Chair. To appeal, you must send a notice of appeal to the Commission within 30 days. Include with the notice your name, mailing address, daytime telephone number, and an explanation of what relief you are seeking. Any supporting information should also be included. These items should be sent to:

Washington County Commission Chair
111 E. Tabernacle St.
St. George, Utah 84770

Sincerely,

Ryan Sullivan
Washington County Clerk-Auditor

cc: Mary Decker
cc: Melanie Abplanalp



The Attorney General's office has repeatedly denied the existence of any investigation into Governor Cox's 2024 signature petition list when pressed for records of the investigation.

Yet, the Lieutenant Governor refuses to release any records related to the irregular handling of Governor Cox's signature verification process because of the Attorney General's investigation into Governor Cox's signature petitions.



The Lieutenant Governor is using signatures submitted by Angilau as valid on Governor Cox's signature list although Angilau is not on the list of signature collector for Cox.

Despite claiming no investigation exists, the Attorney General is prosecuting Benson Angilau for fraudulent signatures on Governor Cox's signature list.



STATE OF UTAH
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



SEAN D. REYES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Spencer E. Austin
Chief Criminal Deputy

Daniel Burton
General Counsel

Ric Cantrell
Chief of Staff

Stanford E. Purser
Solicitor General

Brian L. Tarbet
Chief Civil Deputy

August 7, 2024
Sent via U.S. Mail and email

Michael Clara
974 South 1400 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84104
Email: donmiguelslc@gmail.com

RE: Appeal regarding GRAMA Request #24-140

Dear Mr. Clara,

In accordance with Utah Code § 63G-2-401(9), Attorney General Sean D. Reyes has assigned me to act as the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Utah Attorney General's Office (AGO) to respond to appeals under the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA). Accordingly, I am responding to your above-referenced GRAMA appeal, received July 23, 2024.

On July 8, 2024, you submitted a records request seeking: "RECORDS of the investigation pertaining to the signature gathering nominating petitions for Spencer Cox for the 2024 election cycle."

In a response dated July 22, 2024, you were informed that "[d]espite a reasonable search, the Office found no records responsive to your request."

Your appeal challenges whether the Office conducted a reasonable search, stating:

I am aware that [a] Special Agent in the Investigation Division of the Utah Attorney General's Office has interviewed multiple victim/witness in relation to the records sought. Additionally, one of the victim/witnesses provided me with the following case # AG24-170. Accordingly, the relief I am seeking is that I be provided the records that I am seeking.

UTAH STATE CAPITOL • 350 NORTH STATE STREET, STE. 230 • P.O. BOX 142320, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84114-2320.
TELEPHONE: (801) 538-9600 • FAX: (801) 538-1121



Having researched this matter, I can confirm that the Office has no records of an investigation "pertaining to the signature gathering nominating petitions for Spencer Cox for the 2024 election cycle." While the Office may be investigating other matters related to signature gathering, there is no investigation related to Spencer Cox. Thus, there are no records responsive to your request. Moreover, any records related to any ongoing investigation would be classified as protected under Utah Code § 63G-2-305(10) because disclosure at this time reasonably could be expected to interfere with investigations, audits and/or enforcement proceedings.

Accordingly, your appeal is respectfully denied.

Very truly yours,

Daniel Burton
General Counsel

Daniel Burton- CAO
Attorney General



Department of Administrative Services

MARVIN DODGE
Executive Director

Division of Archives and Records Service

KENNETH R. WILLIAMS
Director

State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DIEDRE HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

Appeal 2024-159

Sent via email

August 14, 2024

Michael Clara
974 S. 1400 W.
SLC, UT 84104
donMiguelSLC@gmail.com

RE: Appeal to the State Records Committee

Dear Mr. Clara:

Your request to appeal the Attorney General Office's response to your request regarding investigation records "pertaining to the signature gathering nominating petitions for Spencer Cox" has been received and reviewed.

It has been determined that your appeal should be denied per [Utah Administrative Rule R35-2-2\(2\)](#). This means that the appeal is denied because the Chair has determined that sufficient evidence was not provided that records are maintained by the entity which have not been provided "or that the governmental entity has concealed or has not sufficiently or has improperly searched for the record."

If you disagree with this decision, you may appeal to the District Court within 30 days of this denial letter per [Utah Code § 63G-2-404](#).

Respectfully,

Rebekkah Shaw
Executive Secretary
State Records Committee
346 S. Rio Grande Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1106
(385)386-1955
SRCsecretary@utah.gov

State Records Committee Executive Secretary



Re: Appeal to the CAO for Request #000275 Inbox x Print Email

 **Brody Bailey** <babailey@utah.gov>
to me, SRC, LGOrerecords, Rebekkah

Mon, Dec 30, 2024, 4:47PM Star Smile Reply More

Mr. Clara,

I hope this email finds you well, and that you have had an enjoyable holiday season.

Utah Code § 63G-2-704 allows our office to set its own policies "to handle requests for classification, designation, fees, access, denials, segregation, appeals to the chief administrative officer, management, retention, and amendment of records." Per this office's audit policy, the CAO has 20 business days to respond to an appeal ([Section G-402 \(2\)\(a\)\(i\)](#)). Because December 25th was a state holiday, today is the 20th business day. Your appeal to the SRC is therefore untimely.

Let me provide a measure of clarification in relation to your request. It appears there may have simply been an issue of timing in relation to when you filed your GRAMA request with the Attorney General's Office versus when the packets in question were turned over to them. At the time of your request to the Attorney General's Office, the packets had not yet been turned over for their review. The packets in question are now in their possession.

Utah Code § 63G-2-305(10) explicitly exempts records from release that "reasonably could be expected to interfere with investigations undertaken for enforcement" or "enforcement proceedings." For this reason, your initial request was denied, and I once again affirm the denial on those same grounds.



On Mon, Dec 30, 2024 at 5:08 PM Michael Clara <donmiguelslc@gmail.com> wrote:

Brody,

As I understand it, the Davis County Clerk completed the signature verification process of the Cox signatures around March 15, 2024. The letter from AG Burton stating they were not conducting an investigation is dated August 7, 2024.

What I understand you to say is that the Lieutenant Governor's Office held on to questionable Cox signature packets for at least four months, before turning those over to the AG office?

Un abrazo,

Michael Clara

Re: Appeal to the CAO for Request #000275 ➔ Inbox x



✉ **Brody Bailey** <babailey@utah.gov>

to me ▾

Jan 7, 2025, 11:27 AM



Hello Michael,

The records in question were turned over to the Attorney General's Office in April of last year. Beyond that, our office cannot comment on ongoing investigations. Please direct any further questions to the Attorney General's Office.

Regards,
Brody





Derick Brown Utah Attorney General

IN THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT - SALT LAKE COUNTY DISTRICT
COURT
SALT LAKE, STATE OF UTAH

JON MICHAEL CLARA,

Petitioner,

v.

UTAH STATE RECORDS
COMMITTEE and the OFFICE OF
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,

Respondents.

Respondent Office of the Utah Attorney General (the "AGO"), pursuant to Rule 56 Utah Rules of Civil Procedure, moves for summary judgment on Petitioner Jon Michael Clara's Petition for Judicial Review.

MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT AND SUPPORTING MEMORANDUM

Case No. 240907236

Judge Honorable Kara Pettit

INTRODUCTION

Utilizing the mechanisms of Utah's Government Records and Management Act ("GRAMA"), Petitioner Jon Michael Clara seeks from the AGO production of any "RECORDS of the investigation pertaining to the signature gathering nominating petitions for Spencer Cox for the 2024 election cycle." These records, however, do not exist, as the AGO never performed an investigation involving signature gathering related to Governor Cox's gubernatorial candidacy. On numerous occasions, Clara has been informed by the AGO and the State Records Committee (the "SRC") that no such investigation has taken place, and no corresponding records have ever been created or maintained by the AGO. Despite thorough investigation by numerous AGO employees returning no records, Clara continues his pursuit.

Following denial of an appeals hearing before the SRC upon a determination that no evidence of maintenance of such records by a governmental entity exists, Clara now petitions this Court for judicial review of the SRC determination. Clara asks this Court to dispense with the SRC's denial and force the SRC to hear his appeal. This Court, however, cannot remand this matter because Clara sets forth no new issues to be decided, and this Court cannot provide Clara with relief because the documents he seeks for production do not exist.

Summary judgment is appropriate because there is no genuine dispute of material fact and Clara cannot establish that the AGO maintains records responsive to his request. Accordingly, Clara's Petition should be dismissed.

From: Ryan Cowley <ryancowley@utah.gov>
To: Lori Schiess <lschiess@co.davis.ut.us>
CC: Brian McKenzie <bmckenzie@co.davis.ut.us>, Shelly Jackson <shellyjackson@utah.gov>
Date: 3/18/2024 4:31:38 PM
Subject: Re: Immediate Response needed

Lori, in reading the code I don't see anything that would allow us to require documented proof of the circulator's age. That being said, given the ongoing investigations regarding forgeries and circulator ID fraud, it is in their best interest to provide that documentation upfront. We support Davis County's policy on verifying the age/ID. If the candidate and gatherer want to circumvent that safeguard then that is their choice, but if there is a challenge to their packets or other issues, there may not be time to remedy any problem(s) that may arise.

On Mon, Mar 18, 2024 at 3:48 PM Lori Schiess <lschiess@co.davis.ut.us> wrote:

Ryan,

If we are unable to verify the age of the signature gatherer through voter registration or documents provided by the gatherer company - should we accept the signature on the oath as sufficient evidence of the gatherer's age?

Lori

Lori Schiess

Elections Manager

Davis County Elections

PO Box 618

Farmington, UT 84025

801-451-3537

lschiess@co.davis.ut.us



Ryan Cowley | Director of Elections
OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
LTGOVERNOR.UTAH.GOV
801-538-1041



March 18, 2024



Deidre Henderson

Utah Lieutenant Governor

GRAMA Request #00200790 Inbox x

Lt. Governor: Record Requests via evxkOu5fxaws... Fri, Apr 25, 4:26 PM (12 days ago) i Smiley Inbox :

to me ▼

Dear Mr. Clara,

This email is in response to your GRAMA request, originally submitted on April 11, 2025. As a reminder, your request sought the following records:

On March 10, 2025, KSL published a story about 11 signature gatherers charged with forging signatures. KSL reports that one signature gatherer with the last name of Angilau turned in multiple packets with only "84 signatures were deemed valid". I am requesting the list of names of the 84 signers as outlined in Utah Code §63G-2-305.5.

On May 23, 2024, you submitted a GRAMA request for a list of the nomination petition signers; this was provided to you **on June 6, 2024**. That list represents all of the signatures that were counted towards the threshold needed for the candidate to qualify for the primary ballot. Thus, any valid signatures circulated were already provided to you.

Additionally, the signature packets referenced in your request are part of an ongoing investigation and are therefore classified as protected records under Utah Code § 63G-2-305(10)(a)-(c). As such, we are unable to provide any records related to the packets at this time.

Lastly, the signatures you reference were never counted towards the required threshold or entered into the petition processing system. Because GRAMA states that an entity is not required to create, compile, or format a record (Utah Code § 63G-2-201(7)(a)(i)), even in the absence of an investigation, a list could not be provided to you.

For these reasons, your request is denied.

Re: GRAMA Requests #00195605 and #00190359 Inbox x

Brody Bailey Thu, Apr 10, 3:08 PM i Smiley Inbox :

to me ▼

Hello Mr. Clara,

I hope this email finds you well. I write in response to your CAO appeal for GRAMA requests #00195605 and #00190359 dated March 31, 2025. You sought the following records:

On March 10, 2025, KSL published a story titled: 11 Signature Gatherers Charged with Forging Signatures for Utah Candidates. KSL noted: "...Benson Tohikoula Angilau ... turned in 48 packets with more than 2,000 signatures ...only 84 signatures matched the voter's official signature and were deemed valid..." Accordingly, I am requesting the form titled: "CIRCULATOR VERIFICATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PETITION CIRCULATOR ONLY)" - attached to the packets wherein those 84 signatures were penned. Additionally, I am requesting the first page titled "Candidate Nomination Petition" of those petition packets. I am requesting a fee waiver as I believe the requested records are in the public interest.

*On March 10, 2025, KSL published a story about 11 signature gatherers charged with forging signatures. KSL reports that one signature gatherer with the last name of Angilau turned in multiple packets with only "84 signatures were deemed valid". I am requesting the forms, * titled: Candidate Nomination Petition (cover sheet) and Circulator Verification (verification sheet) attached to the packets wherein those 84 valid signatures were penned. *see pg. 14 of the State of Utah 2024 Candidate Manual for an example of the form I am requesting "Cover Sheet" and "Verification Sheet"*

The packets you are referencing are currently in the possession of the Attorney General's Office as part of an ongoing investigation. For this reason, they are considered a "protected" record under Utah Code § 63G-2-305(10)(a)-(c), and not subject to release. I must therefore deny your appeal.

The Attorney General's Contradictory Position

Claims No Investigation Exists

The Attorney General's office has repeatedly denied the existence of any investigation into Governor Cox's 2024 signature petition list when pressed for records.

This denial serves as the legal basis for refusing to release any documentation related to the irregular handling of signature packets.

Yet Prosecutes Related Case

Despite claiming no investigation exists, the Attorney General is actively prosecuting Benson Angilau for allegedly submitting fraudulent signatures for Governor Cox's 2024 petition.

This prosecution necessarily requires an investigation into the very signature list they claim has not been investigated, creating an irreconcilable contradiction.



A person signs a petition for a candidate, who is gathering signatures to qualify for the primary election, at a meet-and-greet in Midway on Monday, March 11, 2024. | Kristin Murphy, Deseret News



By Emma Pitts

Emma is a staff writer for the Deseret News where she covers housing, business and cross-generational issues.

The Justice Division of the Utah Attorney's General's Office filed 11 lawsuits related to alleged forgery and forgery-related charges concerning candidate petitions on Monday.

UTAH POLICE/COURTS UTAH POLITICS UTAH

Utah Attorney General's Office charges 11 defendants in signature gathering case

AG's Justice Division says defendants face multiple counts of forgery and related charges

Published: March 10, 2025, 7:23 p.m. MDT

VIEW 35 COMMENTS

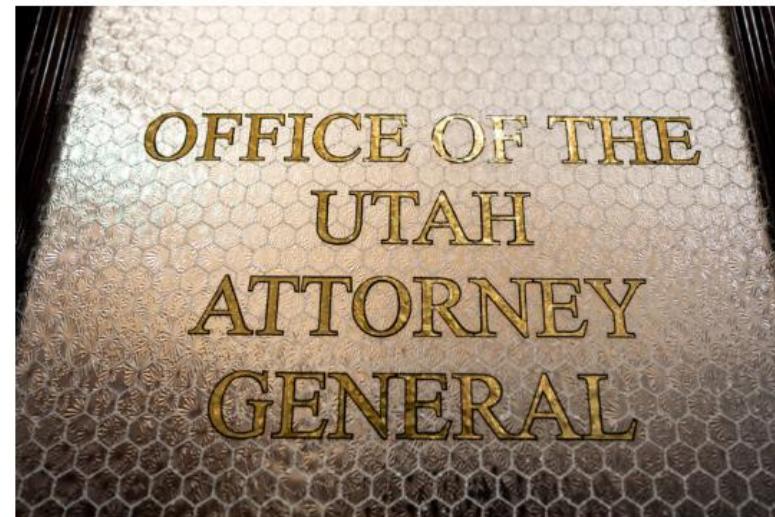
SHARE

GOV & POLITICS PUBLIC SAFETY

Eleven people charged with forging signatures to help candidates qualify for 2024 primary election

BY: KYLE DUNPHEY - MARCH 11, 2025 8:04 PM

Share



 The office of the Utah Attorney General at the Capitol in Salt Lake City is pictured on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024. (Photo by Spenser Heaps for Utah News Dispatch)

Eleven people were charged on Monday with forgery and other crimes in connection to the signature gathering process that helped candidates qualify for the 2024 primary election.

Candidates in Utah have two options to get on the primary ballot – they can rely on their party's convention, where delegates choose their preferred candidates, or they can collect enough signatures from registered voters.

In the leadup to the primary election, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox and a number of other candidates chose the signature gathering process, hiring a company called Gathering Inc. to help with the canvassing. Per Utah code, voters are required to sign "packets" approved by the

The top navigation bar for Utah News Dispatch includes a menu icon, the website name, "PART OF STATES NEWSROOM", and a search icon. Below the main article, there are two smaller sections: "GOV & POLITICS" and "PUBLIC SAFETY".

Utah News Dispatch  PART OF STATES NEWSROOM

GOV & POLITICS PUBLIC SAFETY

Eleven people charged with forging signatures to help candidates qualify for 2024 primary election

BY: KYLE DUNPHEY - MARCH 11, 2025 8:04 PM

Share

A large, gold-colored logo for the "OFFICE OF THE UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL" is displayed on a textured, gold-colored wall. The text is arranged in five lines: "OFFICE OF THE" on the first line, "UTAH" on the second, "ATTORNEY" on the third, "GENERAL" on the fourth, and "by Spenser Heaps for Utah News Dispatch" on the fifth line at the bottom.

 The office of the Utah Attorney General at the Capitol in Salt Lake City is pictured on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024. (Photo by Spenser Heaps for Utah News Dispatch)

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The top navigation bar for The Salt Lake Tribune includes a menu icon, the website name, "SUBSCRIBE", and "LOG IN".

The Salt Lake Tribune

OFFICE OF THE UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL

 The office of the Utah Attorney General at the Capitol, Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023. (Chris Samuels | The Salt Lake Tribune)

By Emily Anderson Stern | March 12, 2025, 7:48 a.m. | Updated: March 14, 2025, 10:51 a.m.

 Comment

Utah Attorney General Derek Brown announced this week that 11 contractors with signature gathering companies are facing "forgery and forgery-related charges."

6 of the 11 Charged

Defendant	_packets	Total Signatures	Valid Signatures	Charges
Arkemi Robinson	10 (8 reviewed)	212	43 (20.3%)	10 Counts Felony Forgery
Denton Williams	4	99	4 (4.0%)	8 Counts Felony Forgery
Phyllif D. Karpeh	16 (7 reviewed)	383	182 (47.5%)	7 Counts Felony Forgery
Sakura Jordan	4	115	32 (27.8%)	6 Counts Felony Forgery
Robert R. Edwards	15 (10 reviewed)	249	45 (18.1%)	5 Counts Felony Forgery
Kevin W. Jeong	5	176	71 (40.3%)	4 Counts Felony Forgery



Charges for Gathering Inc. Employee

Defendant	Paid	Packets	COX LIST	Total Signatures	Valid Signatures	Charges
Benson Angilau	\$4,516.00	48	?	2,243	84 (3.7%)	10 Counts Felony Forgery
Rocko Huntsman	\$4,809.00	?	9 Packets	?	?	8 Counts Felony Forgery
Colton Drake *	?	?	5 Packets	?	?	2 Counts Felony Forgery
Axel Burt *	?	7	7 Packets	?	?	6 Class A Misdemeanor
Joseph Wilde *	?	10	6 Packets	?	?	4 Class A Misdemeanor

* Packets submitted to Washington County Clerk (only)



The Angilau Prosecution Paradox

1

Prosecution

Benson Angilau being prosecuted for fraudulent signatures on Governor Cox's petition

0

Investigations

Attorney General claims no investigation into Cox's signatures exists

0

Documentation

No official record of Angilau as a signature collector for Governor Cox

This paradoxical situation raises profound questions about the basis for prosecution. How can fraud charges be pursued without an investigation? How can someone be prosecuted for fraudulent signatures when they're not officially listed as a signature collector? These contradictions suggest either deliberate misrepresentation or serious procedural deficiencies.

The Role of Benson Angilau



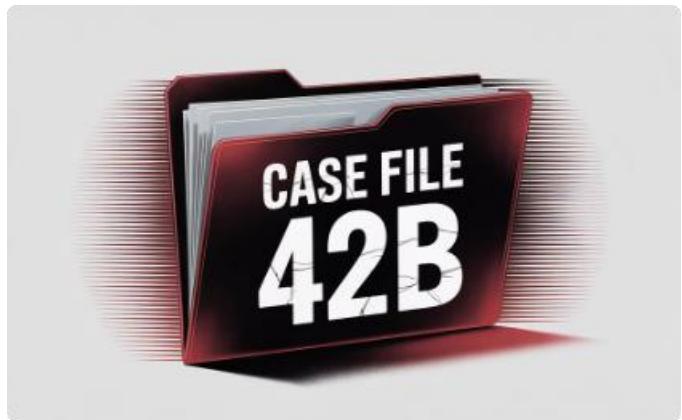
Missing on Governor Cox List

Benson Angilau does not appear in official records as a registered signature collector for Governor Cox's 2024 campaign, raising fundamental questions about how he could be prosecuted for collecting fraudulent signatures.



Prosecution Without Foundation

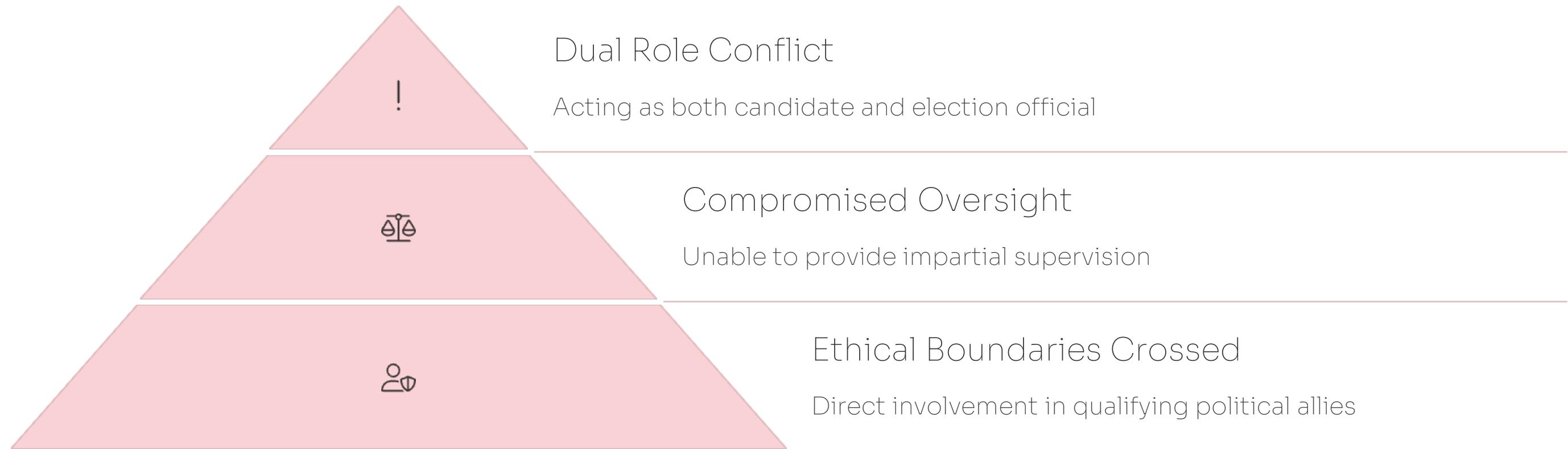
The Attorney General's prosecution of Angilau lacks logical foundation if no investigation into Cox's signatures occurred, suggesting either procedural irregularities or deliberate misrepresentation.



Missing Evidence Chain

Without proper documentation of how Angilau's alleged fraudulent signatures were identified, verified, and investigated, the prosecution appears to exist in a procedural vacuum.

The Lieutenant Governor's Conflict of Interest



The Lieutenant Governor's position created an inherent conflict as they simultaneously participated in the election while overseeing its administration. This fundamental conflict violates basic principles of electoral oversight and creates an environment where impartiality is impossible to maintain.

By directly handling flagged signature packets for a fellow candidate, the Lieutenant Governor compromised the independence of the verification process, raising serious questions about whether all candidates received equal treatment under the law.



YOUR VOTE. YOUR FUTURE.



UTAH ELECTIONS

Implications for Election Integrity

Precedent of Selective Enforcement

When verification standards are applied inconsistently, it creates a precedent where election officials can use discretion to favor certain candidates. This undermines the fundamental principle that all candidates must meet the same requirements.

Erosion of Procedural Safeguards

Each deviation from established protocols weakens the overall integrity of the system. Once exceptions are made for influential candidates, the entire framework of procedural safeguards begins to crumble.

Destruction of Public Trust

When voters observe preferential treatment in the electoral process, they lose faith in the system's fairness. This erosion of trust has lasting consequences beyond any single election cycle.



Public Confidence Undermined

Trust Deficit

Citizens can no longer trust that election officials are operating with impartiality when such blatant conflicts of interest are permitted. The foundation of democratic elections—that rules apply equally to all participants—appears to have been violated.

Perception of Favoritism

The selective application of verification standards creates the perception that different rules apply to different candidates based on their political connections rather than consistent application of the law.

Legitimacy Questions

When candidates directly influence their own qualification process, it raises fundamental questions about the legitimacy of their position on the ballot and, by extension, the entire electoral outcome.

Call to Action: Restoring Electoral Integrity

Demand Full Disclosure

Utah voters must demand the immediate release of all documents related to Governor Cox's signature verification process, including the flagged packets, transfer records, and verification documentation. Only complete transparency can begin to restore confidence in the system.

Call for Independent Investigation

An independent, non-partisan investigation into the handling of Governor Cox's signature packets is essential. This investigation must have the authority to compel testimony under oath from all officials involved in the verification process.

Support Procedural Reforms

Long-term solutions require systematic reforms to Utah's signature verification process. These should include strict recusal requirements for officials with conflicts of interest, mandatory documentation standards, and enhanced public access to verification records.

Hold Officials Accountable

If investigations confirm procedural violations, those responsible must face appropriate consequences. The integrity of Utah's elections is too important to allow violations to go unchallenged or unpunished.