

STATE OF MICHIGAN

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF WAYNE

CHERYL A. COSTANTINO and EDWARD P.
McCALL, JR.,

Plaintiff,

-vs-

CITY OF DETROIT; DETROIT ELECTION
COMMISSION; JANICE M. WINFREY, in
her official capacity as the CLERK OF THE
CITY OF DETROIT and the Chairperson of
the DETROIT ELECTION COMMISSION;
CATHY M. GARRETT, in her official
capacity as the CLERK OF WAYNE
COUNTY; and the WAYNE COUNTY
BOARD OF CANVASSERS,

Defendants.

AFFIDAVIT OF ZACHARY
LARSEN

FILE NO: 20-_____-AW

JUDGE

David A. Kallman (P34200)
Erin E. Mersino (P70886)
Jack C. Jordan (P46551)
Stephen P. Kallman (P75622)
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AFFIDAVIT

The Affiant, Zachary Larsen, being first duly sworn, hereby deposes and states as follows:

1. My name is Zachary Larsen, I am over the age of eighteen, have personal knowledge of the facts stated in this Affidavit and, if sworn as a witness, I am competent to testify to these facts.

2. I am an attorney in private practice and licensed in the State of Michigan. Prior to my entry into private practice, I served as an Assistant Attorney General for eight years from January 2012 through January 2020, where I was recognized with an award for the quality of my work and served the state on several high-priority litigation matters.

3. In September 2020, I volunteered to serve as a poll challenger for the Michigan Republic Party's election day operations to ensure the integrity of the vote and conformity of the election process to the election laws of Michigan.

4. In preparation for my service, I attended an elections training, reviewed materials relating to the conduct of elections, and read pertinent sections of Michigan's election law.

5. On Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, 2020, I served as a roving attorney and credentialed poll challenger with a group of attorneys and visited approximately 20-30 voting precincts in Lansing, East Lansing, and Williamston, Michigan to confirm that the election was conducted in accordance with law, and on a few occasions, to address complaints raised by specific voters.

6. During my visits to precincts on Election Day, I was allowed to visually inspect the poll book without touching it at every precinct where we asked to review it. In each instance, I was allowed to stand a respectful distance behind the election officials while remaining close enough to read relevant names and numbers.

7. The following day, on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, I arrived at the former Cobo Center, now known as the TCF Center, in Detroit, Michigan to serve as a poll challenger for the absent voter count occurring in Detroit and arrived between 9:30 and 9:45 a.m.

8. Prior to my admission to the floor where the absent voter count was occurring, I received credentials from the Michigan Republican Party and further instruction regarding the process for handling ballots at absent voter counting boards (“AVCBs”).

9. Thereafter, I received a temperature scan from election officials that confirmed I did not have an elevated temperature. I arrived inside, and I was “checked in” by an election official who reviewed my driver’s license and confirmed my credentials and eligibility to serve as a challenger. I was admitted at approximately 10:30 a.m.

10. When I arrived at a counting table and began to observe the process, I noticed immediately that part of the process that was being implemented did not conform to what I had been told in my training and the materials that I had received.

11. Specifically, the information I had received described the process that was supposed to be occurring at the tables as follows.

12. A first election official would scan a ballot. If the scan did not confirm a voter in the poll book, that official would then check the voter against a paper copy “supplemental poll book.”

13. The official would then read the ballot number to a second election official and hand the ballot to that official, who would remove the ballot (while still in the secrecy sleeve) and confirm the ballot number. That second official would then hand the ballot (in the secrecy sleeve) to a third official who would tear the stub off of the ballot, and place the stub in a ballot stub envelope, then pass the remaining ballot to a fourth official.

14. The fourth official would then remove the ballot from the secrecy sleeve, flatten the ballot to ensure it was capable of processing, and visually inspect for rips, tears, or stains before placing the ballot in the “ballots to be tabulated box.” However, if that fourth official identified a

concern, she would place the ballot back in its envelope and into a “problem ballots” box that required additional attention to determine whether they would be processed and counted. A copy of a diagram that I had received on this process is attached as Exhibit A to this affidavit.

15. What I observed immediately was that the secrecy of the ballot was not being respected.

16. Instead, the second official at the table where I was observing was repeatedly placing her fingers into the secrecy sleeve to separate the envelope and visually peek into the envelopes in a way that would allow her to visually observe the ballot and identify some of the votes cast by the voter.

17. Sometimes, the third official whose job was merely to remove the stub from the ballot would likewise remove the ballot from the secrecy sleeve or otherwise peek to observe the ballot. Sometimes a ballot would be removed completely from the secrecy sleeve and then placed back inside and passed along this process.

18. I conferred regarding this issue with another challenger at a nearby table, and he indicated he had observed similar irregularities regarding the use of the secrecy sleeves.

19. When that challenger raised the issue with a supervisor, and he was immediately asked “why does it matter?” and “what difference does it make?”

20. Beyond the legal requirements for maintaining ballot secrecy, both of us were concerned that the violations of the secrecy of the ballot that we witnessed could be or were being used to manipulate which ballots were placed in the “problem ballots” box.

21. Later that morning, at another table, a challenger identified concerns that ballots were being placed into “problem ballots” boxes purportedly based on the reason that the voter had failed to place the ballot in the secrecy sleeve, while other ballots at the same table were being

passed along and placed into the “ballots to be tabulated” box that also did not have secrecy sleeves.

22. I personally observed that several ballots were placed into the “problem ballots” boxed and marked with a sticky note indicating that they were “problem ballots” merely because of the lack of a secrecy sleeve.

23. When I spoke with a supervisor regarding this issue, he explained that these ballots were being placed in the “problem ballots” box for efficiency.

24. From my experience at the first table I had visited (addressed in Paragraphs 15 through 17 above), I had also witnessed ballots that were placed into the “ballots to be tabulated” box that had arrived without a secrecy sleeve. So the differentiation among these ballots despite both ballots arriving in secrecy sleeves was perplexing and again raised concerns that some ballots were being marked as “problem ballots” based on who the person had voted for rather than on any legitimate concern about the ability to count and process the ballot appropriately.

25. Just before noon, I arrived at another table (which I later contemporaneously noted as AVCB # 23), and I conferred with the Republican challenger who had been observing the process from a viewing screen and watching the response of the computer system as ballots were scanned by the first official.

26. I asked the challenger if she had observed anything of concern, and she immediately noted that she had seen many ballots scanned that did not register in the poll book but that were nonetheless processed. Because she needed to leave for lunch, I agreed to watch her table.

27. As I watched the process, I was sensitive to her concern that ballots were being processed without confirmation that the voter was an eligible voter in the poll book, so I stood at the monitor and watched.

28. The first ballot scanned came in as a match to an eligible voter. But the next several ballots that were scanned did not match any eligible voter in the poll book.

29. When the scan came up empty, the first official would type in the name “Pope” that brought up a voter by that last name.

30. I reviewed the running list of scanned in ballots in the computer system, and it appeared that the voter had already been counted as having voted. Then the first official appeared to assign a number to a different voter as I observed a completely different name that was added to the list of voters at the bottom of a running tab of processed ballots on the right side of the screen.

31. That same official would then make a handwritten notation on her “supplemental poll book,” which was a hard copy list that she had in front of her at the table.

32. The supplemental poll book appeared to be a relatively small list.

33. I was concerned that this practice of assigning names and numbers indicated that a ballot was being counted for a non-eligible voter who was not in either the poll book or the supplemental poll book. From my observation of the computer screen, the voters were certainly not in the official poll book. Moreover, this appeared to be the case for the majority of the voters whose ballots I had personally observed being scanned.

34. Because of this concern, I stepped behind the table and walked over to a spot behind where the first official was conducting her work.

35. Understanding health concerns due to COVID-19, I attempted to stand as far away from this official as I reasonably could while also being able to visually observe the names on the supplemental poll book and on the envelopes.

36. Partly inhibiting my ability to keep a distance, the tables were situated so that two counting tables were likely a maximum of eight feet apart. In other words, you could not stand more than four feet behind one without being less than four feet from another.

37. As soon as I moved to a location where I could observe the process by which the first official at this table was confirming the eligibility of the voters to vote, the first official immediately stopped working and glared at me. I stood still until she began to loudly and aggressively tell me that I could not stand where I was standing. She indicated that I needed to remain in front of the computer screen.

38. I responded, "Ma'am, I am allowed by statute to observe the process." As I did, a Democratic challenger ran towards me and approached within two feet of me, saying "You cannot speak to her! You are not allowed to talk to her." I responded, "Sir, she spoke to me. I was just answering her."

39. The first official again told me that the only place I was allowed to observe from was at the computer screen. A second official at the table reiterated this. I said that was not true.

40. Both officials then began to tell me that because of COVID, I needed to be six feet away from the table. I responded that I could not see and read the supplemental poll book from six feet away, but I was attempting to keep my distance to the extent possible.

41. Just minutes before at another table, a supervisor had explained that the rules allowed me to visually observe what I needed to see and then step back away. Likewise, on Election Day, I had been allowed to stand at equivalent distance from poll books in Lansing and East Lansing precincts without any problem. With this understanding, I remained in a position where I would be able to observe the supplemental poll book until I could do so for the voter whose ballots had just been scanned and did not register in the poll book.

42. Both officials indicated that I could not remain in a position that would allow me to observe their activities and they were going to get their supervisor.

43. This seemed particularly concerning because the Democratic challenger who raised concerns over my verbal response to the official had been positioned behind the second official (the one who confirms ballots as described in Paragraph 13) no further away than I was from the first official at that time and had not been stationed at the computer screen as the officials repeatedly told me was the only place that I could stay.

44. When the supervisor arrived, she reiterated that I was not allowed to stand behind the official with the supplemental poll book, and I needed to stand in front of the computer screen. I told her that was not true, and that I was statutorily allowed to observe the process, including the poll book.

45. The supervisor then pivoted to arguing that I was not six feet away from the first official. I told her I was attempting to remain as far away as I could while still being able to read the names on the poll book.

46. In an attempt to address her concerns, I took a further step away from the table and indicated I would try to keep my distance, and that I thought I was about six feet away from the first official. The supervisor then stood next to the chair immediately to the left of the first official and indicated that I was “not six feet away from” the supervisor and that she intended to sit in the chair next to the official with the poll book, so I would need to leave.

47. This supervisor had not been at the table at any time during the process, and she had responsibility for numerous ACVBs. Further, the supervisor’s choice of chairs was approximately three feet to the left of the first official and therefore in violation of the six-foot distance rule.

48. Accordingly, I understood that this was a ruse to keep me away from a place where I could observe the confirmation of names in the supplemental poll book. The supervisor began to repeatedly tell me that I “needed to leave” so I responded that I would go speak with someone else or fill out a challenge form.

49. I went to find another attorney serving as a challenger and returned to discuss the matter further with the supervisor. When I returned, she reiterated her assertions and insisted that there was nowhere where I could stand in conformity with the six-foot rule that would allow me to observe the supplemental poll book. Ultimately, to avoid further conflict with the supervisor, I agreed that I would leave that counting table and move to another table.

50. Between 1:30 p.m. and 2 p.m., my colleague and I decided to return to the suite that housed the Republican challengers to get lunch. We left the counting floor and went up to the Republicans second-floor suite.

51. About 30 to 45 minutes later, an announcement was made that challengers needed to return to the floor. As we attempted to return, we were made aware that the officials admitting people had limited the number of election challengers to another 52 people who would be allowed inside. I displayed my credentials and walked up to near the door where a small crowd was gathering to be let in.

52. Shortly thereafter, a man came out to announce that no one would be let in (despite the prior announcement) because the room had reached the maximum number of challengers. As he was asked why we would not be let in, he explained that the maximum number of challengers were determined from the number of names on the sign-in sheet, regardless of how many people had left the room.


53. Many Republican challengers had left the room for lunch without signing out, including myself and my colleague. Accordingly, we were being arbitrarily “counted” towards this capacity limitation without actually being allowed into the room to observe.

54. When challengers raised this issue with the man at the door, he refused to discuss any solutions such as confirming the identify of challengers who had been previously admitted.

55. To the best of my recollection, I was never informed that if I left the room and failed to sign out that I would be refused admission or that there would be no means of confirming that I had been previously admitted.


56. The above information is true to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.

57. Further affiant says not.



Zachary Larsen

On this 8th day of November, 2020, before me personally appeared Zachary Larsen, who in my presence did execute the foregoing affidavit, and who, being duly sworn, deposes and states that he has read the foregoing affidavit by his subscribed and knows the contents thereof, and that the same is true of his own knowledge and belief, except as to those matters he states to be on information and belief, and as to those matters he believes them to be true.



Stephen P. Kallman
Notary Public, Eaton County, Michigan
My Commission Expires: 11/26/2025