

Maricopa's 2022 Election: Evidence of Continuing Egregious Signature Verification Practices

By Wendi Strauch Mahoney - January 24, 2023



Shelby Busch Testifies/Jan. 23, 2023/AZ Senate Hearing/Chairwoman Wendy Rogers

With the Kari Lake lawsuit still ongoing, Monday's [Arizona State Senate hearing](#) on the 2022 election substantiated the importance of Lake's fight to restore the integrity of elections in Arizona. Shelby Busch with We the People AZ Alliance brought the receipts with her [presentation](#) about Maricopa County's broken signature verification system. Busch alleges little has been fixed since 2020 in the state's elections concerning the important signature verification process. Senator Wendy Rogers, Chair of the Senate Election Committee, was attentive and gave Busch the time needed to illustrate her material findings adequately. In Tuesday's interview below, Kari Lake told Joe Pagiliano, *"This is serious stuff and resulted in about half a million votes being counted that shouldn't have been counted."*

Busch and her team investigated and supplied [significant evidence](#) collected during her investigation for the [Maricopa Forensic Audit](#) in 2021. She and her colleagues allegedly found ample evidence of fraud and procedural malfeasance in the 2020 election. Busch contends Maricopa County failed in 2020 to follow EAC standards. Moreover, Busch says, *"those failures continue to this day."* Busch said that *"10 percent of the signatures"* her team reviewed for the 2020 and 2022 elections fell in the "egregious" category.

Attempting to remain unbiased, *"We trained our workers to pass a ballot, not to look for a reason not to pass a ballot. Every one [of the ballot envelopes] that fell into this egregious category we believe has zero capability of meeting any of the Secretary of State standards,"*

Sig-Verification in Maricopa Continues to be Underresourced

Busch wants Arizonans to understand that the continued problems with [signature verification](#) have a lot to do with the County's "failure to properly fund and staff" the signature verification process. The implications of her statement are profound. "Signature verification in the 2020 election, the system was never repaired," said Busch. Busch also told UncoverDC there is "no way the county will ever be able to do it properly" if the County continues to "under-resource" the critical process of signature verification.

Notably, her team was powered by about 150 individuals who put in about 5700 combined work hours to verify the ballot image signatures. Busch says her "ultimate overall goal is to help people understand that signature verification is just a terrible way to identify a human being" for something as important as an election.

8 Seconds to Verify a Ballot? Impossible

AZ Alliance calculated the time it would have taken in the 2022 midterms to review ballot signatures. The team concluded it would be impossible to properly validate signatures with the available manpower provided by Maricopa County. Their calculations found that ballots would have had to be "sig-verified" every 8 seconds to get through the ballot envelopes in the allotted time, only 2 1/2 days for election day ballots. Instead, AZ Alliance found it should take about "30 to 40 seconds to adequately review one record." Busch added, "The math just doesn't add up to giving the county what they need to adequately do this job."

Physically Impossible that Ballots were Signature-Verified

- ▶ **1.3M mail-in or in-person early ballots**
- ▶ **28 workstations**
 - 25 for sig-verify**
 - 3 for curing**
- ▶ **2 Shifts**
 - 7 hrs + 3.5 hrs = 10.5 hrs daily**
 - 19 workdays start 18 Oct 22->**



Realistic Time to Verify a Signature

- ▶ Takes 30-45 secs to verify each signature*
- ▶ 298,000 signatures in 2.5 days (26.5 hours)
- ▶ $298,000/26.5 = 11,246$ signatures/hour
- ▶ $11,246/25 = 449$ per workstation per hour

- ▶ No way 1 ballot was sig-verified every 8 secs

The remaining 1,013,734 signatures at 13 seconds each.

* At times not all computers were used for signature verifications. However, we calculated all workstations.

- ▶ *Sig-verify team was trained IAW AZ Secretary of State Signature Verification Manual, July 2020 Edition... same manual used in Maricopa County election signature verification training. Team's data director was employed by Maricopa County elections department and received the official Maricopa County Elections training. Three additional team members were trained by Maricopa County Elections, quality-controlled team implementation.*



We the People AZ Alliance/Sig-Verification Time

However, Busch told UncoverDC that "30 to 40 seconds for sig-verification is a minimum standard." There were many instances when her workers needed *eight to ten minutes* to verify a signature, in some cases because her group was cross-referencing other data points that are not usually used in the standard procedure. Her group was able to be much more attentive to detail without the constraints of election rules. Busch added, "We're looking for patterns, we're looking for phone numbers, we're looking for things you wouldn't normally do. Her team began their work in September but "expanded the team to do a full-on analysis of signature review approximately 45 days ago. It was at that point when we opened a satellite office, brought in more equipment, and went full force with the team."

She contrasted her team's efforts with what usually happens.

"So think about this. The regular signature verification workers worked 19 days, putting in 10 1/2 hour days. They processed 1.9 million ballots on 25 computers for the 2020 election. Give me a break! A total of 19 1/2 days is what was used for the entire 2022 election for 1.3 million ballots and 2 1/2 days to do 300,000 ballots. It's impossible. There is no way a ballot envelope can be verified in 8 seconds."

Signature Verification is the Last Line of Defense

verification process and its essential role in U.S. elections. Signatures in the state continue to fail AZSOS standards:

Signatures Failed AZSOS Standards per Signature Verification Training Manual 2020

Signature verification is the process of comparing:

- The signature on a voter's affidavit envelope or ballot affidavit to
- The voter's signature in the voter registration database.

Signature verification plays an important role in our elections because it:

- Helps ensure that only those individuals eligible to vote have their vote counted.
- By serving as the method of identity verification for mailed ballots, it allows Arizona voters the convenience of voting by mail.

This Guide will help those reviewing ballot affidavit signatures to:

- Determine whether the ballot affidavit signature and
- The voter's signature in the voter registration database were authored by the same person.



We the People AZ Alliance Report/page 3

Signatures Fail Verification About 10 Percent of the Time

Her report allegedly proves that 420,987 of *the 2020 ballot envelopes* failed signature verification, leaving that election “openly vulnerable to fraud.” According to Busch, that means there were allegedly approximately 40,000 ballot envelope signatures, or 10 percent, that was “illegally counted” in the 2020 election. AZ Alliance arrived at their numbers by reviewing *“one-quarter of the 1.9 million envelopes from the 2020 election using 150 trained workers who studied the SOS manual, following the guidelines when they analyzed the ballot images from each voter record individually. Once we got the statistics for that first 25 percent or 400,000 ballots, then it was extrapolated to determine that number.”* Busch emphasized multiple times that nothing about the process has changed—therefore leaving the 2022 election *“equally vulnerable.”*

Busch provided a summary sheet ([Exhibit 3](#)) for a quick overview of her group's signature verification findings *for the 2022 election* from ballot envelope images reviewed since the team began their work about 45 days ago. She explained the exhibit represents *“the overall*

presentation the many types of invalid signatures found during the investigation. Those included but were not limited to blank envelopes, scribbles, mismatched signatures, failed SOS standards, and more. There were 181,378 potential bad signatures, far more than the margin of Hobb's lead in the gubernatorial election.

EXHIBIT 3

Signature Verification Findings (Out of 380,976 Ballots Reviewed)

Unsigned Envelopes	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-550; AZSOS Policy and Procedure Manual	1,870
Someone Other than Voter Signed	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-547; A.R.S. 16-552	542
Inconsistent SEB Policy/ Scribbles	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-549	2,104
Duplicate Voters Processed	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-1016	128
Unreasonably Different Control Signatures	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-152, A, 19	48,117
Signature Does Not Match Until After Election	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-152, A, 19	1,875
Control Signatures that Do Not Match Voter	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-152, A, 19	36,034
Unusable Control Signatures	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-152, A, 19	4,433
Failed SOS Standards	AZSOS July 2020 Signature Verification Training Manual	47,366
Egregious Signature Mismatches	Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-547; A.R.S. 16-552	38,909
		181,378

AZ Alliance Hearing/Exhibit 3/Jan. 23, 2023

Busch interviewed election workers and included [affidavits](#) from [several](#) who worked as 2022 signature verification employees for Maricopa County. Those affidavits and other evidentiary materials concerning the [tabulator errors](#) can be found under "Exhibits" on the We the People AZ Alliance Senate [page](#).

Tabulator Errors: Machines "Failed 235 Times the Regulated Rate"

Busch and her team also investigated the issue of the malfunctioning tabulators that potentially disenfranchised thousands of voters in the November 2022 election. We the People AZ Alliance also received in early January the system log files from the tabulators used in Maricopa County on election day. Their FOIA request also resulted in the receipt of the redacted Cast Vote Record (CVR) files. Busch explained:

"Through analysis, we were able to determine that 1/4 of a million ballot feeds were misread by those tabulators. [So] there are approximately two tabulators in every polling center which means there were 446 tabulators with a quarter of a million voter attempt failures."

That means that "those ballots were fed into the machine and kicked back out," as clarified by Wendy Rogers, Chair of the AZ Senate Elections Committee.

Busch also pointed out "the fact that these tabulators failed at 235 times the election assistance commissions regulated failure rates," a stunning number of failures, if true. Chairman Rogers astutely commented that because of these ballot rejections, "we don't

"There is no record that generates to tell us how that ballot or if that ballot was appropriately tabulated on site. So when you have this many ballots brought into question and this many ballots that are not being adequately fed in and tabulated on site, it creates a lot of questions and doubt and lowers voter confidence."

According to Kari Lake, 59 percent of the election day voting centers had serious problems. And, as was discussed in Lake's trial, the voting centers were printing out a 19-in ballot image on a 20-in ballot. Election vulnerability and cyber security expert Clay Parikh [testified](#) there is no way the printing of a 19-inch image on a 20-inch happened by accident. He told Lake's attorney, Kurt Olsen, there are *"only two ways it can happen,"* and both were intentional. Parikh explained:

"One way is by changing the printer adjustments. That would make the printer adjustments and settings override the image file that was set. The other is from the application side or the operating system side."

Concerning the tabulators, Busch told UncoverDC:

"Every single tabulator in Maricopa County failed to meet the EAC standards. And if we are going to recognize this federal agency as the regulating oversight that tells us what equipment we can use, we must also follow their regulations on the equipment. A 50% failure rate is not an imperfect election. It's an absolute disaster."

Wendi Strauch Mahoney