



SPORTSMAN'S ALLIANCE of MAINE

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www.sportsmansallianceofmaine.org

Testimony in Support of LD 176

LD 176, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Gathering of Signatures for Direct Initiatives and People's Veto Referenda

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Presented by David Trahan, Executive Director, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

February 25, 2015

The Honorable Senator Cyrway, Representative Luchini, members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee my name is David Trahan, I am the Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine and I am testifying in support of LD 176, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Gathering of Signatures for Direct Initiatives and People's Veto Referenda.

Article IV, Part Third, Section 20, of the Maine Constitution defines "circulator" for citizen petitions as, "means a person who solicits signatures for written petitions, and who must be a resident of this State and whose name must appear on the voting list of the city, town or plantation of the circulator's residence as qualified to vote for Governor;" This line in our state constitution appears pretty darn clear that in order to circulate a citizen initiated petition to change a law in Maine, you must be a registered Maine voter and be a resident of this state. Nowhere in Maine law or in the Constitution does it say Maine citizens can act as witnesses for non-residents who want to circulate Maine petitions? I stress this point you must be a Maine resident to "solicit" a petition signature in Maine. So, if the Constitution is clear, why is this bill before you and why is it necessary?

Answer, because groups from out of state, like the Humane Society of the United States have found a shady, if not illegal way to sidestep our state Constitutional requirement to be a citizen of Maine to collect petition signatures by using what they call, "resident witnesses". Their own on-line ads, (provided) prove that this statement is true; in addition, they have used these "witnesses" as some sort of justification for using non-resident signature collectors as migrant mercenaries to qualify for the ballot in Maine and other parts of the country.

I quote their on-line Craig's List ad, "Maine requires petition circulators to be registered Maine voters. We pair you up with an expert out-of-state petitioner who loves this work so you can "witness" the petitions being signed. The expert's home states have no petition work at this time."

In the case of the recently defeated bear referendum, the Humane Society of the United States hired a California company called PCI Consulting, a longtime partner in such initiatives to recruit non-residents to come to Maine and collect signatures. They paid their travel and meal expenses and paid these non-residents for signatures collected. Maine Ethics Commission reports reveal they paid PCI Consulting \$178,574.00 of the total \$228,574.00 spent by HSUS to collect signatures.

Although paying Maine petitioners for signatures is distasteful it is not illegal the Supreme Court has settled this issue in the case Meyer v. Grant, 1988, (<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/486/414/case.html>).

This bill has nothing to do with banning paid Maine petitioners instead this bill addresses a serious abuse of the petition process and establishes a regulatory structure that allows the Secretary of State to enforce the intent of Article IV, Part Third, Section 20.

This is the process HSUS used to subvert our Constitutional requirement that petitioners were Maine residents.

First, HSUS hired PCI consulting of California to recruit non-resident professional signature collectors from all over the country to travel to Maine. These non-resident petitioner's identities are unknown, there are no requirements to register as collectors and no rules to govern their actions, the only way this committee could find out how many non-residents petitioners HSUS used is to ask them and I doubt they will tell you.

PCI Consulting pairs these non-residents with what they call "Maine witnesses" or registered Maine voters. These witnesses act as surrogates that tag along as non-residents petitioners badger, deceive and collect signatures by any means, all for a buck. Because these "witnesses" and non-resident petitioners are unregulated they can sit in the car with the heater going playing handheld video games while non-residents circulate and solicit signatures. These migrant petitioner identities are never revealed. Even a sophisticated sting operation could not determine who is a resident and who is not as petitions are notarized days and weeks after collection by the Maine "witness" not the non-resident petitioners who actually circulated and "solicited" the signatures.

The intent of this bill is create a process by which the public can determine who is collecting signatures, what state they are from and to stop unaccountable non-residents petitioners from misleading Mainers into signing petitions; in addition, these changes will strengthen the ability of state officials to enforce the intent of our Article IV, Part Third, Section 20.

The threshold for courts when determining the reasonable regulation of the First Amendment is rightfully high, but I would ask you this simple question. Does our Citizen Initiated Petition Process really belong to Maine people when anyone in any corner of this world can pay a quarter of a million dollars to a California company to bring paid petitioners to Maine and then buy their way onto the ballot?

Finally, why, if the Maine "witness" is qualified to circulate and solicit petition signatures does HSUS and other groups feel the need to bus non-residents into our state and blatantly abuse our Maine citizen petition process? If that is the signature collection process we are willing to accept as "ok", then this committee should recommend the repeal of Article IV, Part Third, Section 20, of our State Constitution and let chaos rule.

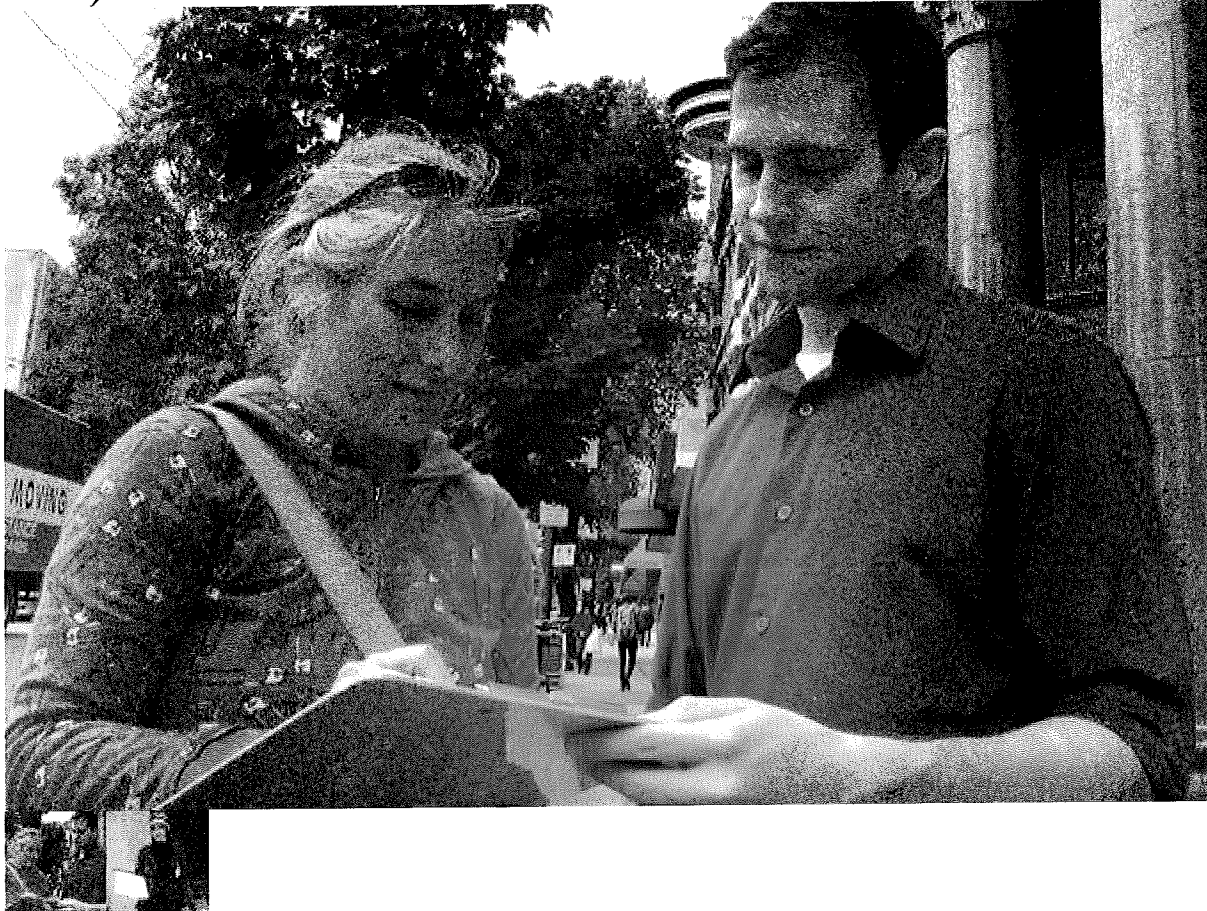
After discussions with lawyers with an expertise in Constitutional law, it is my intent to work with the sponsor of this bill, Rep. Short, to very carefully amend this bill to narrowly focus its provisions-based on settled Supreme Court cases across the country as to insure that it is crafted in a way to best withstand a court challenge and to be careful to respect the right of free speech. We will bring that amendment to the work session.

contact

flag

Posted: 25 days ago

Outdoor work for Maine residents (Portland, Biddeford & area)



PAY:

MINIMUM \$75.00 per day (paid twice a week, so you'll have quick \$ in your pocket).

EASY REQUIREMENTS:

Must be a Maine resident with a car and Maine drivers license.

Some driving involved. We pay for gas.

WHY YOU?

Maine requires petition circulators to be registered Maine voters. We pair you up with an expert out-of-state petitioner who loves this work, so you can "witness" the petitions being signed. The experts' home states have no petition work at this time. You'll be helping collect voter signatures on a Maine state initiative petition to reduce animal cruelty. It will go on the ballot for Maine people to pass into law if they like. !!!

This is a lot of fun. People are doing very well.

We'll help you dress warm if you don't know the tricks!

HOW LONG CAN YOU WORK?

We expect this petition drive to go until January 20th.

Full or part time.

Days off when you need them.

LET'S GO !

We want people right now. There's more people that want to sign the petition than we can get to, so come work with us !

Easy money for a couple of weeks !

Call Blake at 508-274-2341 cell or if no answer call John at 207-518-8060 office from Sunday, 11/12/13 on.

- Location: Portland, Biddeford & area
- Compensation: \$75.00 per day
- This is a part-time job.
- Principals only. Recruiters, please don't contact this job poster.
- do NOT contact us with unsolicited services or offers

post id: 4259498469

posted: 25 days ago

updated: 9 days ago

[email to friend](#)

[best of](#)

Updated 12, 2013

**Ballot Access LLC
BallotAccessLLC@gmail.com
207-518-8060**

**MAINE Bear Baiting and Trapping
Limits bear trapping and baiting.**

\$2.00 PER SIGNATURE

Maine should go through Jan. 13th and possibly as late as January 20th.

**All signatures are \$2.00 with a minimum of
only 350 signatures weekly.**

Room and travel covered

**This is a "witness state". You MUST stick with your witness.
The witness helps organize your boards and collect signatures,
so they add to your totals. Everyone is doing well here.**

**Maine of course is non-access. You separate your signers
by town like we do in Massachusetts.**

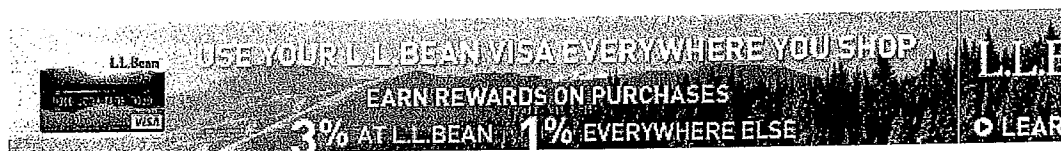
**You can come if you're honest and there's no chance you will
lose you witness, otherwise please don't inquire.**

Maine gets cold!

**Don't inquire if you're a Cal sissy or are inexperienced with
non-access states or unwilling to stick with the witness. Bring
your longjohns !**

Call John Michael if you're interested

207-518-8060



[Home \(/\)](#) / [General Labor Jobs \(/general-labor-jobs/\)](#) / Very Good paying and fun outdoor Ut work

Very Good paying and fun outdoor Ut work

Frito Lay Jobs (Hiring)

Posting ID : B1024209635

Date Posted : 2014-01-31

Category : [General Labor Jobs \(/general-labor-jobs/\)](#)

Earn \$19-\$24/Hour. No Experience
Required. *10 Positions Available

Petition work available starting January 31, 2014 in Davis and Weber Counties and area.

PAY:

MINIMUM \$80.00 per day (paid twice a week, so you'll have quick \$ in your pocket).

WHAT?:

Utah is one of only 22 states that allow the citizens to pass laws THEMSELVES by placing proposals on the ballot via a petition drive. Utahns then vote yes or no to pass the law.

The state requires petition circulators to be residents of Utah. We pair you up with expert petition circulators from other states that are real good at this. You "witness" the voters signing the petitions.

You'll be helping collect voter signatures on a Utah state initiative petition to increase voter participation by allowing everyone to vote in primary elections. It will go on the ballot for Utahns to pass into law if they like this November. !!!

After you get the hang on it you can go out yourself and make a bunch more money.

EASY REQUIREMENTS:

Must be a Utah resident with Utah ID.

Car is needed. There's some driving around but we pay for gas.

This is a lot of fun. People are doing very well !

HOW LONG CAN YOU WORK?

We expect this petition drive to go untill the end of March.

Full or part time.

Days off when you need them.

LET'S GO !

We want people right now. There's more people that want to sign the petition than we can get to, so come buddy up with an expert circulator and help improve Utah !

Easiest temporary money you'll ever see, and it will go well into March !

Call Blake and Jana right in the field to get going at 508-274-2341 cell, or feel free to call the Salt Lake office at 801-738-6000 and we'll assist you.

Response - Report Abuse

0

Some Other Postings

- 1987 Wellcraft 192 Powerboat w Cuddy (/1024209634.html) - Boats By Owner (/boats-by-owner/)
- Vance & Hines Pipes For 86 -13 Softails \$250 Obo (/1024209633.html) - Motorcycle Parts Accessories By Owner (/motorcycle-parts-accessories-by-owner/)
- 2011 Bmw 328i - original warranty + extended maintenance! (/1024209632.html) - Cars Trucks By Owner (/cars-trucks-by-owner/)
- 2007 Gmc Sierra Crew Cab 4wd Z71 (/1024209631.html) - Cars Trucks By Owner (/cars-trucks-by-owner/)
- New Hp Officejet Pro 8600 Premium Wireless Color Printer Copy Scan Fax (/1024209630.html) - Computers By Owner (/computers-by-owner/)
- 1 Bedroom - 3 or 4 month sublease (/1024209629.html) - Sublets Temporary (/sublets-temporary/)
- Cashmere wool Red Large British Men's Driving Cap Hat Golf skimmer (/1024209628.html) - Clothing Accessories By Owner (/clothing-accessories-by-owner/)
- Brand New / In Box / Never Used Hamilton Beach Stainless Steel Kettle (/1024209627.html) - Household Items By Owner (/household-items-by-owner/)
- 2005 750 Brute Force Trade For Car Or 4 X 4 Truck (/1024209626.html) - Cars Trucks By Owner (/cars-trucks-by-owner/)
- March 29 - Save The Date - 1st Annual Staley Falcon Club Rummage Sale (/1024209625.html) - Garage Moving Sales (/garage-moving-sales/)

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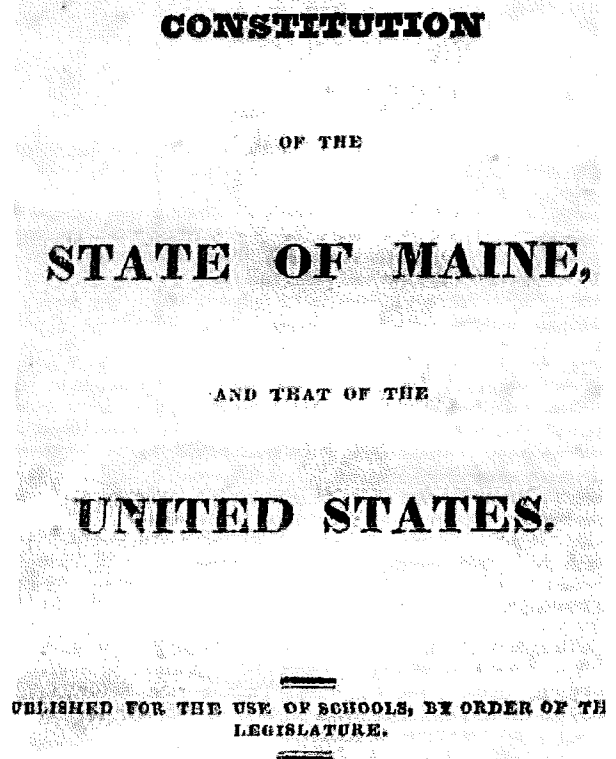
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How the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Exploited Maine's Citizen Initiative Petition Process

By David Trahan

Executive Director:
Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

The Maine Constitution says that **only a Maine citizen can be a signature collector, or petition "circulator"**. (Article 4, Part Third, Section 20: *"circulator" means a person who solicits signatures for written petitions, and who must be a resident of this State and whose name must appear on the voting list of the city, town, or plantation of the circulator's residence, as qualified to vote for Governor.*)



Portland:
PRINTED BY TODD AND SMITH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE
1825.

How the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Exploited Maine's Citizen Initiate Petition Process

By David Trahan

On December 13, Don Loprieno of Bristol, animal rights activist and a member of the "Yes on 1" bear referendum campaign, wrote a rebuttal letter to the editor in the *Kennebec Journal*, taking me to task for a column I wrote about lessons learned about the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) during the referendum. His letter, titled, "Maine's Wildlife Can Be Managed without Cruelty", is primarily just a rehash of old arguments -- except for one question he asked me to answer. I will be happy to do that.

In his December 13, 2014 letter in the *Kennebec Journal*, Loprieno wrote:

"What, then, accounts for the nearly 78,000 Mainers who signed the petition to put the referendum on the ballot, and the more than 278,000 of our citizens who voted for it? Apparently, we all were duped by a devious, out-of-state conspiracy. But Mainers are not that easily fooled".

Why, indeed, did all those Mainers sign that petition? The true reason is very revealing.

First, let's look at what Maine's ballot referendum process is supposed to be.

If Maine citizens are not happy

with certain legislation or conditions, and feel their Legislators are either not responding to their concerns, or moving too slowly, the referendum process allows the citizens to bypass the Legislature and put their concerns on the ballot. Ballot initiatives are intended to be grassroots efforts, coming only from citizens, and arising from widespread concern about an issue. This is why those proposing

a referendum are required to collect a large number of signatures; they have to prove extensive citizen support.

The Maine Constitution says that only a Maine citizen can be a signature collector, or petition "circulator". (Article 4, Part Third, Section 20: "*circulator*" means a person who solicits signatures for written petitions, and who must be a resident of this State and whose

HSUS Craig's List Ad Below
contact

Posted: 25 days ago

Outdoor work for Maine residents (Portland, Biddeford & area)



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MINIMUM \$75.00 per day (paid twice a week, so you'll have quick \$ in your pocket)

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- Location: Portland, Biddeford & area
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- This is a part-time job.
- Principals only. Recruiters, please don't contact this job poster.
- do NOT contact us with unsolicited services or offers

post id: 4259498169

posted: 25 days ago

updated: 9 days ago

name must appear on the voting list of the city, town, or plantation of the circulator's residence, as qualified to vote for Governor.)

Yet, fully two-thirds (2/3) of the signatures approved for the bear referendum, and probably thousands more, were bought and paid for by PCI Consulting, a professional petition signature collection firm from California.

Some interesting facts:

According to Maine Ethics Commission reports, on November 30, 2013, HSUS kicked off their Maine bear referendum petition signature-gathering efforts by reporting a \$50,000 check paid for "signature gathering support". They filed it under "In kind contributions", which allowed them to use a loophole in Maine law that lets them avoid reporting the individual or organization the payment was made to. But it is likely to have been paid to PCI Consulting, a long-time HSUS referendum partner. **During the next few months, HSUS would pay PCI Consulting a total of \$178,574.00 for "managing" the signature gathering effort.** Translation: To pay for the services of professional signature gatherers, many of them from out-of-state, so HSUS could buy their way onto the ballot.

Here are the two Maine Ethics Commission 2014 quarterly reports filed by HSUS and Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting:

January 2014 Quarterly Report

•11/15/2013 - \$4,300.00 paid to PCI Consulting, by Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting.

•11/30/2013 - \$50,000.00 for "Signature Gathering Support" (undisclosed recipient), paid by HSUS.

•12/19/2013 - \$103,626.50 paid to PCI Consulting, by Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting.

April 2014 Quarterly Report

•1/10/2014 - \$63,913.50 paid to PCI Consulting, by Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting.

•1/29/2014 - \$6,734.00 paid to PCI Consulting, by Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting.

Total paid for signature gathering management - \$228,574.00.

(According to the Secretary of State, Mainers for Fair Bear

Hunting submitted 63,626 certified signatures. That means HSUS and Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting paid \$3.59 for every signature they collected.

PCI Consulting and HSUS

PCI Consulting is a professional petition signature collection firm, with a long history of referendum campaigns all over the United States, and with a wide array of wealthy, politically connected clients, ranging from the likes of anti-gun rights billionaire George Soros to organizations advocating the legalization of marijuana. PCI Consulting has worked extensively with HSUS for more than a decade, collecting and managing signature-gathering efforts on other state ballot initiatives. Some examples: Public Act 520, MI (Keep Michigan's Wolves Protected); Bill I-1130, WA (Farm Animal Cruelty Prevention); Proposition B, Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention

Updated 12, 2013

Ballot Access LLC
BallotAccessLLC@gmail.com
207-518-3069

MAINE Bear Baiting and Trapping...
Limits bear trapping and baiting.

\$2.00 PER SIGNATURE

Maize should go through Jan. 15th and possibly as late as January 20th.

All signatures are \$2.00 with a minimum of
only 350 signatures weekly.

Room and travel covered

This is a "witness state". You MUST stick with your witness. The witness helps organize your boards and collect signatures, so they add to your totals. Everyone is doing well here.

Maize of course is non-access. You separate your signers
by town like we do in Massachusetts.

You can come if you're honest and there's no chance you will lose your witness, otherwise please don't inquire.

Maize gets cold!
Don't inquire if you're a Calassy or are inexperienced with non-access states or unwilling to stick with the witness. Bring
your longjohns!

Call John Michael if you're interested
207-518-3069

Re: paying \$1 per signature for I-594

by Orphan » Fri Jul 19, 2013 2:42 pm

kevinmqr wrote: I found this on Craigslist.

<http://spokane.craigslist.org/lab/3936454787.html>

"Signature Gathering (Spokane)
I 594 Background checks on Gun Sales.

Details

We need Registered Washington voter signatures !!!!

Your job is to get signatures; work whenever you want, set your own schedule.

Pay is \$1 for every valid signature

We should all go pick up 10 signature sheets each.

Call 508-274-2341 for more details"

<http://www.spokaneguntrader.com/viewtopic.php?t=59582&p=273501>

This ad was on Craig's List and captured by
Spokane Gun Trader,

<http://www.spokaneguntrader.com/viewtopic.php?t=59582&p=273501>

Act, MO (Missourians for the Protection of Dogs); Livestock Care and Standards, OH (Ohioans for Humane Farms); and Proposition 2, Humane Farms, CA (Californians for Humane Farms).

Some of their other referendum clients have been the anti-gun Washington Alliance for Gun Responsibility, and the anti-trapping, sometimes anti-hunting Sierra Club.

Who did PCI Consulting and HSUS hire to collect petition signatures in Maine?

According to documents supplied by the Secretary of State, and Internet ads paid for by PCI Consulting contractors, PCI and HSUS paid for the signature collection services of several separate groups, which included sev-

eral current and previous Maine Legislators. In addition, they employed an out-of-state middleman named Blake, from Salt Lake City, who has ties to at least two other state referendums in Utah, and a gun control referendum in Washington State.

The Lewiston Team

Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting and PCI Consulting hired Auburn resident John Michael, a 7-term, ex-State Legislator, to manage the hiring and daily operations of paid signature collectors. John Michael is not new to paid signature efforts; he and his friend, ex-State Legislator Stavros Mendros, (not involved in this effort) are often employed as hired guns to collect

referendum signatures. Their actions are not illegal, but they are virtually unregulated, and very secretive. They have no interest in the referendum policies for which they collect signatures; their motives are financial.

The Green Party Connection

State Representative Ben Chipman, Green Party, Portland, is also a professional signature collector and campaign organizer who was deeply involved the effort to collect bear referendum signatures. Chipman collected signatures, and acted as a Notary for petitions. In what can only be described as a potential conflict of interest, he also served in the Legislature when the referendum bill was heard.

Additional members of the Maine Green Party who collected signatures include: ex-State Representative Jon Eder; David Marshall, Portland City Council; Asher Platts, former Green Senate candidate; and Anna Trevorow, elected to the Portland Charter Commission, and, according to the Green Party website, a staffer for the three elected Independent Legislators in Augusta (<http://www.gp.org/anna-trevorow>). She was also a Notary for the campaign. Another Green, Carrie Bell Hoerth, was employed as a staffer by Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting. There were an additional four collectors with public links to the Greens.

Without regulations to govern the actions of John Michael and the Greens, it is nearly impossible for the average citizen, or even experienced Ethics Commission

representatives, to insure the fair collection of petition signatures, or determine who got paid what, and whether they followed the rules. Fortunately, there is a paper trail for those knowledgeable in referendums. For the trained eye, there is a process that can determine, fairly accurately, who John Michael and the Greens employed, and how many signatures each team collected.

How Their Operation Works

The referendum process is designed to allow Maine citizens, on occasion, to bypass the Legislature and take an issue directly to the people for a vote. After citizens file forms of intent to circulate a petition, the Secretary of State prepares the actual petition language, and on the petition includes the proposed statutory changes circulators hope to get on the ballot. On the petition are several sections governing the circulation of petitions, including a section that requires the circulator to swear an oath in front of a Notary that **they witnessed each signature**, and that **they were the person collecting signatures**. In the case of paid operators like John Michael and the Greens, he already has a team of seasoned collectors and Notaries he employs regularly.

Without a requirement to register or report to the state about who is a paid collector, there is only one way to connect the dots with paid operatives -- the Notary. The way Michael's operation works is that each day his paid operatives fan out over the State, targeting popu-

lated neighborhoods, department stores -- anywhere there is heavy human traffic. Dozens of petitioners collect signatures from citizens representing many towns. To save time, the campaign employs the services of a few friendly Notaries. In this case Michael used a long-time friend, ex-Legislator Belinda Gerry. The Greens used their fellow Greens, Rep. Ben Chipman and Anne Trevorrow. At the end of the day, petitioners are instructed to meet at a predetermined spot to notarize petitions, and get paid for the day's work. By linking petitions notarized by Gerry and the two Green Notaries and their corresponding circulators, you can determine who has a link to John Michael and the Greens.

Review of petition documents supplied by the Secretary of State, revealed that Michael had at least 28 petitioners with the Gerry connection, and the Greens had nine. In addition to Michael and the Chipman crew, paid staffers of Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting also collected signatures. Their Notaries included Constance McCabe and Elise Baldacci, also paid by Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting.

In total, using the Notaries to track the paid effort, over 38,000 certified signatures can be linked to the paid staff of the bear referendum campaign. That represents nearly two-thirds (2/3) of the signatures used to place the issue on the ballot!

Out-of-State Signature Collectors

During the bear referendum, Michaels and his fellow contractors did something out of the ordinary. **They advertised for out-of-state signature collectors**, which violates the part of the State Constitution that says a signature gatherer "*must be a resident of this State ... whose name must appear on the voting list of the city, town or plantation of the circulator's residence, as qualified to vote for Governor.*"

Why did HSUS hire professional out-of-state petitioners? Because **the bear referendum was not a home grown effort**. It was concocted completely in Washington D.C, by HSUS. They had **no** grassroots support or manpower for a referendum; quite simply, hunting bears over bait was basically a non-issue in Maine. There was absolutely no public outcry over how bears were hunted. In order to gin up signatures for their artificial issue, HSUS had to buy their way onto the Maine ballot by using professional paid out-of-state signature collectors. HSUS and organizations like them are experts at exploiting the state referendum systems.

In the past there have been rumors of campaigns hiring out-of-state petitioners, but never has an organization made the use of nonresidents the **centerpiece** of their efforts. In a Craig's List ad, HSUS boldly revealed their strategy to avoid using Maine residents to gather signatures. **HSUS advertised for paid Maine signature witnesses**, under an ad titled, "Outdoor work for Maine residents (Portland, Biddeford

& Area)". The ad stated, "MINIMUM \$75.00 per day (paid twice a week, so you'll have quick \$ in your pocket)." The ad continued, "We pair you up with an expert out-of-state petitioner who loves this work, so you can 'witness' the petitions being signed. The experts' home states have no petition work at this time."

If Maine residents who are hired (or for that matter volunteer) are eligible to legally collect petition signatures, why did HSUS have to bring in out-of-staters, and pair them with a Maine resident witness? First, because there simply weren't anywhere near enough Maine citizens willing to volunteer to do it. Remember, there was no public outcry to do anything about bear hunting; it was a non-issue. Second, because those non-residents had a very powerful motivation to get signatures — money. In addition to being paid for their travel, lodging, meals and other expenses, they were paid per signature. They have no interest in the referendum issue itself, but since each signature made them good money, many were willing to say or do anything for one.

Stories of deceit to get signatures were common. A *Bangor Daily News* outdoor writer highlighted the deceptive nature of the bear referendum petitioners in this January 16, 2014 article, "Signature-gathering tactics under fire in bear referendum". This excerpt from the article says it all: "I was approached by a big guy with a clipboard who asked me if I was against animal cruelty," Beckwith said. "I said that I most certainly

was against animal cruelty. Then I asked the man if the petition in his hand was to stop bear baiting in Maine."

Beckwith, who sometimes guides bear hunters, was astounded by the man's reply. "He responded that you cannot bear bait in Maine, that it was already against the law, that baiting animals in Maine was illegal."

Beckwith continued, "I informed him that he was partially correct, with the exception of a few species, when baiting was allowed to achieve scientific-based harvest goals that are governed by the DIF&W and state biologists. That

includes bear hunting."

Beckwith said the man had absolutely no idea what the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife was. He was asking people to sign a petition to "prevent animal cruelty".

There were numerous other stories of people being misinformed to get them to sign.

(It's interesting that of the 76,841 signatures collected, 13,215 were ruled invalid [duplicate, not registered to vote, etc.]. That's over 17% of the total, an unusually high percentage, and another indication that the paid signature

Very Good paying and fun outdoor Ut work

Posting ID : B1024209635

Date Posted : 2014-01-31

Category : General Labor Jobs

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Response - Report Abuse

<http://www.pandahi.com/1024209635.html>

gatherers were more interested in numbers and money than the legitimacy of the names.)

Under What Authority?

Where did HSUS and Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting get the authority to use witnesses to get around the Constitution? In a recent conversation with lawyers and the Attorney General's office, we learned that there is no guidance from previous court challenges, and the Maine Legislature has never defined the word "solicitor" in the Maine Constitution as it relates to the legality of using non-residents and "witnesses" to collect petition signatures. Lawyers with HSUS are exploiting an untested loophole in the law, and intentionally violating the intent of our petition residency requirement.

Internet and Craig's List ads, paid for by John Michael and Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting, prove they solicited and used non-resident mercenaries to collect signatures. There is no way to determine who or how many participated, because the Maine resident "witnesses" complete all petition certification and oaths. The mercenaries' hands are clean, as there is no registration requirement or law requiring non-resident collectors to Notarize a petition. And because the tax returns of private campaign contractors is confidential, there are no tax records showing who got paid, and how much.

In other words, PCI Consulting was acting in this case as a shell company, shielding HSUS

and Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting from reporting their use of non-residents to collect petition signatures, and thus avoiding accusations of violating our Constitution.

Because of this deceptive side-stepping of our laws using "witnesses", these migrant signature gatherers travel from state to state following the latest trail of referendums, looking for a quick buck. They can use intimidation, lies, and deceit to gather signatures, and they do so with impunity. No one knows who they are, and when they're done they melt back into the woodwork, returning to their state or country of origin, with no one the wiser. If this use of non-resident petitioners is allowed to continue, no one on earth, including citizens of other nations, illegal aliens, criminals, etc., would be disqualified from petitioning the Maine Legislature, and in time (if not already), Mainers will lose their unique power of the local grassroots-issue driven ballot campaign.

To illustrate this point, we examined the backgrounds of a few of the Maine petitioners hired by the campaign.

•One man from Mechanic Falls was convicted of manslaughter in the early 1990s after killing another man near Auburn Lake. He was initially sentenced to 40 years and later his sentence reduced to 20 years. He served 12. He collected 1,835 signatures for the bear campaign.

•Another woman from the mid-

coast was convicted of fraud in New Hampshire. She appealed her case to the Supreme Court and eventually lost, paying a large settlement. Ironically, the case involved horses and their foals.

The point is that we have no idea who these out-of-state petitioners are. Given that we already know the HSUS campaign used a convicted killer and a fraud, one must ask, is the public safe? Who is on the other side of the petition clipboard?

Who Is Blake?

There is a common name and phone number in the HSUS and Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting ads that solicit non-resident petitioners. That name is Blake, which is his first name; he does not reveal his last name. Using his cell phone number and information collected from the Internet, he can be connected to referendums in Utah (ballot access), and Washington State (universal gun sales background checks). He appears to be a contractor or middleman for PCI Consulting. From what we can gather, Blake's job is much like John Michael's, except at the national level -- deliver signatures by any means necessary!

Because we have no idea how successful Blake and John Michael were in recruiting out-of-state mercenaries paired with Maine "witnesses", we cannot determine how many of the remaining third (1/3) of the certified signatures were collected by paid petitioners. Given that the campaign paid PCI

Consulting nearly \$230,000.00 for management of the paid collection process, we can assume that additional number is in the many thousands.

Katie Hansberry, HSUS State Director and spokesman for Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting, claimed they used thousands of Maine volunteers to collect the petition signatures. That is clearly a farce! **The truth is, HSUS bought their way onto the Maine ballot by using questionable means, and exploiting our Constitution.**

The Maine bear referendum was a Hollywood production from start to finish, purely manufactured. Bear hunting methods were literally a non-topic for Mainers until HSUS paid for signatures and then flooded the media with deceptive ads. It was a classic tempest in a teapot.

Left unchecked, wealthy organizations like HSUS and similar special interests with deep pockets and no conscience are free to run roughshod over individual state referendum processes. Wayne Pacelle, current CEO for HSUS, said: *"We are going to use the ballot box and the democratic process to stop all hunting in the United States ... We will take it species by species until all hunting is stopped in California. Then we will take it state by state."* (*Full Cry Magazine*, October 1, 1990.) Pacelle is obviously keeping his promise.

What We're Doing in Response

In response, we will introduce sweeping reforms to the Maine

petition process, and hope that other states will do the same. The most fundamental component of democracy is the right of petition. HSUS has taken this sacred right and exploited it for their own narrow agenda. We are not interested in destroying this right, but we do believe we should respect the rule of law. Rep. Stanley Short, D-Pittsfield, has agreed to sponsor this legislation on our behalf:

An Act to Make the Gathering of Signatures for Ballot Initiatives More Transparent and Accountable.

This bill would require that **any-one being paid** to gather signatures (petition circulator), in order to qualify for a ballot initiative, must:

- **Register with the Maine Ethics Commission;**
- **Disclose whether they are a resident or non-resident;**
- **Disclose whether they have ever been compensated previously for the collection of signatures in another state, and where;**
- **Be required to wear a name badge including their first and last name, who is paying them, and city and state of their residence, while in the act of gathering signatures;**
- **Disclose how and how much they are being compensated;**
- **Disclose how many signatures**

they have gathered on a monthly basis;

• **Make available scanned copies of the petitions they are circulating on a quarterly basis.**

This bill would also require that any organization or individual that is compensating individuals in excess of \$5,000 (in total aggregate) must post a \$2,000 bond per individual petition circulator, for the enforcement of any illegal actions. This bond may be recouped after the Secretary of State has certified the signatures.

Any organization or individual that compensates others for the gathering of signatures would also be required to provide a copy of the IRS form 1099 for each individual compensated for the gathering of signatures, to the Maine Ethics Commission, for public review on an annual basis.

This bill would also clarify that **only registered Maine voters** are allowed to ask other registered voters to sign a petition. **Non-resident petitioners would only be allowed to provide information about the initiative, not ask for signatures.** They would also not be allowed to physically handle a petition in any manner.

Lastly, this bill would make violation of these new legal requirements a Class E crime.

Summary: *This bill creates petition circulator registration and reporting requirements with the Maine Ethics Commission, that are similar to those required of lobbyists.*