

STATE OF INDIANA

IN THE ST. JOSEPH _____ COURT

SS:

COUNTY OF ST. JOSEPH

CAUSE NO.

KARINA ESCOBAR-PEREZ

DOB: 2-17-1998

ILLINOIS OLN: [REDACTED]

**AFFIDAVIT FOR PROBABLE CAUSE FOR
COUNTERFEITING IC 35-43-5-2 Level 6 Felony**

Your affiant, **First Sgt. Brooks Johnson PE 5914** swears that he believes:

1. Your affiant is a Det. First Sgt. with the Indiana State Police. Your affiant has been employed with the Indiana State Police for over thirty years and has been a detective and/or detective supervisor with the State Police since 2008. Your affiant has investigated multiple types of crime to include theft, battery, human trafficking, identity theft, and perjury.
2. On January 29, 2024, I received a voicemail from St. Joseph County Deputy Clerk Trisha Carrico in reference to election fraud involving petitions.
3. On January 30. 2024, I spoke to Carrico on the phone in reference to the complaint. Carrico advised that an individual named Dean Phillips was running for president of the United States. Carrico advised that in order for Dean Phillips to be on the Indiana ballot, he needed 500 signatures on petitions per congressional district in the State of Indiana. The bottom of the petition states the following petition carrier certification: "I affirm under the penalties for perjury that I have no reason to believe that any individual whose signature appears on this page is ineligible to sign this petition or did not properly complete and sign this page." The petition carrier certifications on Dean Phillips's petitions were signed by "Larry Booker," "Lonnie Horne," "Antonio Escobar" "Jocelyn Escobar," and "Shannon Bradford."
4. Carrico advised me that on January 25, 2024, an individual named Karina Escobar (further identified through Illinois BMV Records and her own admission as being Karina Escobar- Perez) attempted to drop off Indiana Petition For Presidential Primary Ballot Placement Forms at the St. Joseph County Clerk's Office. Carrico

- advised that the forms were rejected due to not containing a city or zip code for the person who signed the petition.
5. Carrico advised that on January 26, 2024, Karina Escobar returned to the St. Joseph County Clerk's Office and dropped off fifty-three petitions.
 6. Carrico advised that clerk's office staff later began reviewing the petitions and observed the following issues: addresses that did not match up to the address on file for the registered voter, petitions that contained a city, state, and zip code but no residential street address, and petitions that contained multiple signatures that did not match up to the signature for the registered voter.
 7. I later met with Carrico and obtained copies of the petitions. I also reviewed a St. Joseph County Elections and Voter Registration Office Receipt of Petition Forms that was signed by Karina Escobar on January 26, 2024. The receipt noted that it was for fifty-three petition forms. Carrico also advised me that Karina Escobar was on video when she dropped off the petitions.
 8. Carrico advised me that she contacted the Indiana Secretary of State's Office and was advised to report the matter to the Indiana State Police.
 9. Carrico advised that she also spoke to the Dean Phillips Campaign and spoke to Phillips Campaign Manager, Zach Grauman. Carrico told Bronson about the inconsistencies with the signatures, addresses, and zip codes. Grauman then asked Carrico if she thought they were trying to pull a fast one. Grauman further asked Carrico if he could have the petitions back.
 10. I then spoke to Zach Grauman and learned that the Dean Phillips campaign had hired a private company named Campaign Engineers to take care of getting the required signatures to get Dean Phillips on the Indiana Ballot. I asked Grauman if they provided voter information to Campaign Engineers and Grauman advised that they offered to. However, I confirmed that the Dean Phillips Campaign never actually provided voter information to Campaign Engineers. Grauman advised me that Campaign Engineers refused to tell him what method of verification they were using.
 11. On February 2, 2024, I obtained the video for the time when Karina Escobar dropped off the petitions at the St. Joseph County Clerk's Office.
 12. On February 5, 2024, I obtained a search warrant to seize the petitions. I then served the petition to Trisha Carrico at the St. Joseph County Clerk's Office. Carrico provided the petitions to me.
 13. On February 12, 2024, I met with Detective Artie Smith in reference to this case. Det. Smith then began reviewing the petitions and advised that he would interview a sampling of individuals whose names were used on the petitions.

14. Det. Smith interviewed numerous persons whose names and “signatures” were listed on the petitions. These persons advised that they never signed the petitions to get Dean Phillips on the Indiana Ballot. One individual listed on one of the petitions was found to have died in 2016.
15. On February 22, 2024, I spoke to Chris Smith on the telephone. Smith is the President of Campaign Engineers. Mr. Smith advised that he hired an individual named Jenni Whitfield to run canvassers (petition carriers) in the State of Indiana. Mr. Smith advised that Jenni Whitfield hired the canvassers and denied that he knew the canvassers (petition carriers). Smith advised that the petition carriers send Campaign Engineers the signatures and spot-checks are conducted. Smith advised that he spot-checked the petitions and did not see issues. Smith also advised that the petition carriers do not have voter files.
16. On March 6, 2024, I obtained Illinois DMV Images for Shannon Bradford, Lonnie Horne, Larry Booker, Jocelyn Escobar, and Antonio Escobar. The digital images also included the signature of the license holder. I later compared the signatures from the DMV Images and learned that the signatures for Jocelyn Escobar and Antonio Escobar did not match the signatures for Jocelyn Escobar and Antonio Escobar that were noted on the election petitions. I am not trained in handwriting analysis, but I did observe that the writing of the name Escobar on the petitions was consistent with the writing on the name Escobar on the St. Joseph County Clerk’s Office Receipt that was filled out by Karina Escobar.
17. On October 3, 2024, I spoke to Illinois State Police Master Sergeant Monika Cisek in reference to this case. Master Sgt. Cisek advised me that she would have Illinois State Police Special Agents Wendy Corona and David Juergensen interview Karina Escobar in reference to this case.
18. On May 1, 2025, Karina Escobar was interviewed by Special Agent Corona and Special Agent Juergensen. Escobar advised that she was paid five thousand dollars by a woman named Jen to be disbursed among people she recruited to help collect petition signatures for Dean Phillips. Escobar advised that she had five days to obtain the signatures and was under a lot of pressure. Escobar advised that she had her siblings sign petition carrier forms even though they never collected the signatures. Escobar advised that she paid her siblings fifty dollars for the signatures, and she collected the rest of the money. Escobar advised that she signed the Petition Carrier Certification portion for several carriers that worked in St. Joseph, Indiana but that she did not remember the names of the signatures she forged. Escobar advised that she was directed by Jen to file the forms at the Indiana Elections and Voter Registration Office located at 227 W. Jefferson Blvd in South Bend, Indiana. Escobar advised that when she filed the forms she was turned away

due to incomplete information on the petition signature portion of the forms. Escobar advised that she went to her car, called Jen, and was instructed to fill out the incomplete portion of the forms. Escobar advised that she filled in the missing city and zip codes by using her phone to look up addresses. Escobar also advised that she spent approximately thirty minutes filling out the forms and then filed fifty-three forms at the Elections and Voter Registration Office of St. Joseph County, Indiana.

I affirm under the penalties for perjury that to the best of my personal knowledge and belief that the foregoing representations are true.

Dated this 18th day of July, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brooks Johnson".

Brooks Johnson, Indiana State Police.

DETENTION CONSIDERATIONS

The State has no further information concerning the Defendant's substantial risk of flight or danger to self or others.

I affirm under the penalty for perjury that the foregoing representations are true.



Stephanie M. Rahl
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney