



Petition Cop Stop

February 24, 2026

“Petition fraud investigator hired by Arkansas secretary of state’s office,” [headlined](#) an article in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, “checks canvassers at church.”

Patrick Hall was the government agent who whipped out his badge on a couple of Arkansans. Why? They had been wantonly using their First Amendment rights to petition their government last week outside Little Rock’s Unitarian Universalist Church.

“I did feel a little bit intimidated,” volunteer petitioner Julie Taylor acknowledged, after being questioned and ID’d by Barney Fife—er, Mr. Hall.

Samantha Boyd, a spokesperson for the secretary of state’s office, confirmed that Hall had stopped the petition circulators, demanding and photographing their IDs.

“Our office would like to emphasize that no one is ever required to provide proof of identification or engage with our employees,” she said, defending his actions, “it is voluntary,”

She further explained that Hall’s was a “non-law enforcement position created to organize any reports of petition fraud.” So, why brandish the badge? And what reports did he hope to “organize” by playing cop?

Amusingly, one of Officer Hall’s questions regarded whether Taylor needed to check his ID to collect his signature on her two petitions. While a statute requiring petitioners to view the government ID of every would-be petitioner had passed Arkansas’s legislature, it was recently blocked by a federal judge because it “likely infringed on First Amendment rights.”

So, here is Secretary of State Cole Jester’s office using a pretend policeman to harass citizens engaged in First Amendment activity in order to push compliance with a law that has been enjoined for its obvious unconstitutionality.

One of the petitions Taylor was carrying “would give citizens a fundamental right to sign and circulate petitions,” and—as the organization that sponsored it (Protect AR Rights) puts it—“protect the process from irregular, unauthorized, or politically motivated interference.”

Viva la initiative!

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.