



Voters warned about petitions

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The Arizona Republic
Jun. 12, 2007 12:00 AM

Arizona Secretary of State Jan Brewer is reminding voters to carefully read petitions before signing them after several people complained that signature gatherers for a redistricting campaign told them it would lower gas prices.

Brewer sent a letter to the Fair Districts, Fair Elections campaign on Friday urging them to stop using such a "blatant bait and switch tactic" in their efforts to put the initiative to amend the state's redistricting process on the fall 2008 ballot.

Deputy Secretary of State Kevin Tyne said several voters, including Brewer's son, complained to the state and to the Maricopa County Elections office that they had been misled about what the initiative would do.

"All of the complainants were approached and asked if they would sign on for an initiative to lower gas prices," Tyne said. "That is, in our mind, deceptive about what the initiative really deals with."

In one instance, the complainant said the petition gatherer insisted that the redistricting initiative would somehow lead to lower gas prices, then said his superiors instructed him to mislead voters, Brewer said in her letter.

Ken Clark, a former state representative from Phoenix who is chairing the campaign, and Andrew Chavez, owner of Petition Partners, dispute that. They say that they take the complaints seriously and that two independent contractors behind the complaints were fired. They said they believe the signature gatherers were luring voters with a do-nothing petition on gas prices before hitting them up with the redistricting petition, a practice they don't approve of.

The bipartisan Fair Districts, Fair Elections campaign seeks to amend the redistricting process in the state constitution to create more competitive voting districts where members of more than one party have a reasonable shot at getting elected.

The campaign needs 230,047 signatures from registered voters by July 2008 to make the fall 2008 ballot.