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THE STATE OF ARIZONA  
CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Phoenix, Arizona  
November 28, 2025  
9:00 a.m.

By: Kathryn A. Blackwelder, RPR  
Certified Reporter  
Certificate No. 50666

**CERTIFIED  
TRANSCRIPT**

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<p>1 VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING BEFORE THE CITIZENS 2 CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION convened at 9:00 a.m. on 3 November 28, 2025, at the State of Arizona, Clean 4 Elections Commission, 1110 West Washington, Conference 5 Room, Phoenix, Arizona, in the presence of the 6 following Board Members: 7 8 Mr. Mark Kimble, Chairman 9 Mr. Galen Paton 10 Ms. Christina Werther 11 Mr. Sam Crump 12 Mr. Steve Titla 13 14 OTHERS PRESENT: 15 Thomas M. Collins, Executive Director 16 Paula Thomas, Executive Officer 17 Mike Becker, Policy Director 18 Gina Roberts, Voter Education Director 19 Bill Richards, Richards &amp; Moskowitz 20 Samantha Fox, Richards &amp; Moskowitz 21 Cathy Herring, KCA 22 Paul Johnson, No Labels Party Chairman 23 Dana Lewis, Pinal County 24 Lisa Marra, EAC 25 Ted Hinderaker, Member of the Public Anthony Ramirez, Member of the Public Jacob Leavitt, Member of the Public Michael Zepeda, Member of the Public Mark Stegeman, Member of the Public Richard Grayson, Member of the Public Dr. Stephen Neal, Member of the Public Capitol Media Services David Scott, Member of the Public Christian Leavitt, Member of the Public Zen Benefiel, Member of the Public Sarah Smallhouse, Member of the Public</p>	<p>1 seeking reversal or delay of the Secretary of 2 State's October 16th, 2025 decision to grant request of 3 No Labels Party to change its name to the Arizona 4 Independent Party. 5 Commissioners, as you know, I sent a letter 6 on our behalf to the Secretary of State's Office on 7 November 21 asking the Secretary to reverse or delay 8 for the election cycle this effort by the No Labels 9 Party to change its name to the Arizona Independent 10 Party. Late Wednesday we received an e-mail from the 11 Secretary of State's attorney stating that "The 12 Secretary's position on his legal duties has not 13 changed." In other words, Secretary of State's 14 position seems to be that only a court order or 15 legislative action will change his mind. 16 With that said, I'd like to proceed in the 17 following order. First of all, I'd like to see if any 18 of my colleagues on the Commission have any prefatory 19 remarks or questions they would like to address in open 20 session. I'll also ask Mr. Collins and other staff 21 members if they have anything they want to say. 22 Second, I'd like to see if we have anyone here who 23 wishes to make a comment to the Commission on this 24 item. Third, unless we have any additional questions 25 or comments on that time, I'd like a motion to go into</p>
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<p>1 P R O C E E D I N G 2 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Good morning. I'm Mark 3 Kimble. Agenda Item I today is the call to order. I 4 hope you all had a pleasant and peaceful Thanksgiving. 5 It's now 9:00 a.m. on November 28th, 2025. I 6 call this meeting of the Citizens Clean Elections 7 Commission to order. 8 With that, we will take attendance. 9 Commissioners, please identify yourselves for the 10 record. 11 COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Christina Werther. 12 COMMISSIONER PATON: Galen Paton. 13 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: I heard Commissioner 14 Werther, I heard Commissioner Paton. 15 COMMISSIONER TITLA: Yeah, Steve Titla here. 16 Good morning. 17 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Good morning, 18 Commissioner Titla. 19 COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Sam Crump. 20 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Good morning, 21 Commissioner Crump. 22 We have all five of us here. We have a 23 quorum this morning. 24 Item II, discussion and possible action on 25 authorizing outside counsel to file a judicial action</p>	<p>1 executive session. 2 So with that in mind, do any of my colleagues 3 on the Commission have any remarks or questions they'd 4 like to get answered before we hear from staff? 5 (No response.) 6 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Okay. Let's proceed 7 with -- Tom, anything you'd like to say to open this 8 up? 9 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman, I just think that 10 I wanted to, you know, tell you, since, you know, the 11 letter we sent on the 21st, as Chairman Kimble said, we 12 received sort of a terse response to that. We have, 13 you know, continued to interact with and talk with 14 other election officials about how this decision 15 impacts things for their operations and we have, you 16 know -- you know, continued to understand that that's a 17 serious issue for them as well, for many of them. And 18 I think that, you know, we -- and I'll just -- you 19 know, in our efforts here as staff, we've yet to 20 receive any information that would alter the analysis 21 that we provided at our last meeting to you with 22 respect to the -- both the legal and policy 23 implications of this decision and the legal process or 24 not process that was followed. 25 I think that Gina had a couple of practical</p>

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<p>1 points that I think would help put some of this in some</p> <p>2 context from an administrative perspective, in that</p> <p>3 vein.</p> <p>4 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Tom.</p> <p>5 Gina.</p> <p>6 MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners,</p> <p>7 good morning. Just a few -- again, with what Tom was</p> <p>8 saying, this is just some information on the candidate</p> <p>9 nomination process and how Clean Elections is impacted</p> <p>10 directly as well, so what our procedures are, things to</p> <p>11 that effect.</p> <p>12 So I just wanted to clarify, when a candidate</p> <p>13 is running -- so as we've mentioned in previous</p> <p>14 meetings, there are five recognized parties in the</p> <p>15 state of Arizona. So a candidate can choose -- if they</p> <p>16 are registered as a member of one of those recognized</p> <p>17 political parties, they would have to circulate</p> <p>18 petitions and qualify for the primary election ballot</p> <p>19 under their party's banner. They would compete in the</p> <p>20 primary against their fellow party opponents; and if</p> <p>21 they win, they are then advanced to the general</p> <p>22 election, where they compete against all other primary</p> <p>23 nominees from the other parties, as well as our</p> <p>24 independent candidates, which we commonly refer to as</p> <p>25 16-341 candidates. That's the process that they</p>	<p>1 contributions, and again, this would dictate who is,</p> <p>2 you know, signing their petitions, which -- are they</p> <p>3 running as an independent candidate, are they running</p> <p>4 as a partisan candidate, are they qualifying correctly</p> <p>5 with their \$5 qualifying contributions, how much</p> <p>6 funding does Clean Elections disperse based off of</p> <p>7 that. And then, depending on how those candidates are</p> <p>8 running, are they in the primary or are they a general</p> <p>9 election only candidate. That also dictates their</p> <p>10 eligibility for Clean Elections voter education</p> <p>11 programs, such as our Voter Education Guide. Do we</p> <p>12 include them in the primary, are they included in the</p> <p>13 general only, which debates are they eligible to be</p> <p>14 invited to, things like that.</p> <p>15 So from a procedural standpoint, the pathway</p> <p>16 that a candidate chooses to run and qualify for</p> <p>17 the ballot does impact Clean Elections directly. And</p> <p>18 again, just wanted to share some procedural background</p> <p>19 information for you on that.</p> <p>20 To clarify a point as well, if we have a</p> <p>21 candidate who is truly an independent candidate, but</p> <p>22 they decide that they want to run under a recognized</p> <p>23 party's banner in the primary, they do have to change</p> <p>24 their voter registration, because they have to be a</p> <p>25 qualified elector of that party, so they would change</p>
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<p>1 qualify under.</p> <p>2 So to get your name on the ballot on the</p> <p>3 primary, again, you're submitting petition signatures,</p> <p>4 you're going through the qualification process. If</p> <p>5 you're running as an independent candidate, you are</p> <p>6 skipping the primary. You do not have a primary; you</p> <p>7 are not campaigning in the primary. What you're doing</p> <p>8 is you're going -- you don't have to win a primary.</p> <p>9 You're advancing directly to the general</p> <p>10 election ballot. There are different signature</p> <p>11 requirements for both process. When you are running as</p> <p>12 a 16-341 independent candidate, you do have a higher</p> <p>13 signature threshold that you have to meet for your</p> <p>14 nomination petitions.</p> <p>15 Now, the path that the candidate chooses to</p> <p>16 take impacts Clean Elections a number of ways. So when</p> <p>17 we have candidates who are -- who are running as Clean</p> <p>18 Elections candidates, they can qualify for funding</p> <p>19 either as an independent candidate, where they would</p> <p>20 get a percentage of funding based off of them being</p> <p>21 directly on the general election ballot, or if they're</p> <p>22 running in the primary they would get funding for the</p> <p>23 primary election, and then if they win their primary</p> <p>24 another funding amount for the general election.</p> <p>25 So they have to submit their qualifying</p>	<p>1 their voter registration from unaffiliated --</p> <p>2 unaffiliated independent to that recognized party's</p> <p>3 political affiliation on their voter registration form.</p> <p>4 And again, with the voter registration and signature</p> <p>5 requirements, there is a difference for those primary</p> <p>6 nominees and those general election candidates as well.</p> <p>7 And again, the pathway that those candidates are</p> <p>8 choosing to proceed impacts Clean Elections in how do</p> <p>9 we distribute their funding, how do we determine what</p> <p>10 they're qualified for in terms of funding, and then</p> <p>11 also what voter education programs are they eligible</p> <p>12 for.</p> <p>13 So, again, that's just some background</p> <p>14 information on how this process can impact us as staff,</p> <p>15 as election administrators, so I just wanted to share</p> <p>16 that brief information. But as we go through the</p> <p>17 meeting today, I'm happy to help -- or, answer any</p> <p>18 questions that you have about the process.</p> <p>19 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Gina.</p> <p>20 Next I'd like to see if we have anyone here</p> <p>21 who'd like to make public comments. I assume that we</p> <p>22 do. If you want to make a comment, use the raise hand</p> <p>23 function and I will call on -- on you then.</p> <p>24 We don't have a formal time limit on public</p> <p>25 comment, but we would ask that you be as concise as</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 possible, because it helps us better understand your 2 argument for or against the Commission's position on 3 this. And when you begin speaking, please state your 4 first and last name for the record. 5 Mr. Hinderaker. 6 MR. HINDERAKER: Sorry about that. Thank you 7 very much, and thank you for the opportunity to address 8 this forum. 9 First of all, I want to say that I've always 10 been a fan of Clean Elections Commission and the 11 intention of the Clean Elections Act, and I'd like to 12 sort of briefly read what that is. 13 You know, the people of Arizona declare their 14 intent to create a clean elections system that will 15 improve the integrity of Arizona state government by 16 diminishing the influence of special interest money, 17 will encourage citizen participation in the political 18 process, will promote freedom of speech under the U.S. 19 and Arizona Constitutions. Campaigns will become more 20 issue oriented and less negative because there is no 21 need to challenge the sources of campaign money. 22 So I have a little bit of cognitive 23 dissidence in your position here, because it seems like 24 you're taking a position that is directly contrary to 25 your enabling legislation, your constitutional duties.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 As Ms. Roberts described, there is a process for 2 independents to get to the ballot, but it's -- it's a 3 very arduous process. It's almost impossible to occur. 4 There's not currently an independent that serves in the 5 state legislature, I don't believe that there ever has 6 been, maybe one many, many years ago, and the reason is 7 the system is stacked against independents. 8 You have to have six times the number of 9 signatures to get on the ballot as an R or a D; you 10 have, as you know, less Clean Elections money because 11 you're running just in the general election; you have 12 very limited access to voter -- voter registration 13 rolls; and it just becomes a barrier of entry that 14 becomes insurmountable. 15 So what this new party is doing and the 16 intention here is not to circumvent those rules, but to 17 create a path so that someone who may not be 18 politically aligned or ideologically aligned with one 19 of the two parties has access to the general 20 election ballot. And that promotes everything that the 21 enabling legislation, that constitutional amendment was 22 designed to protect. It makes it -- it makes it 23 accessible for independents to get to the ballot. They 24 do have to register as a political party, but it 25 creates a forum for people to address issues, rather</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 than strictly having to adhere to a political ideology. 2 And the notion that this is somehow going to 3 be confusing or people aren't going to be able to 4 understand it I think is just hogwash. There are -- 5 there are at least five or six states currently that 6 have parties with independent in the name. There's an 7 Independent Party of Oregon. There's an Independent 8 Party of Delaware. There's an Independent Party of 9 Connecticut. There's an Independent Party of Florida. 10 There's an Independent Party of Louisiana. And in 11 fact, Arizona has recognized an American Independent 12 Party in 1968 and 1972. 13 So this smacks very much of politics. It 14 smacks of the fact that the existing political parties 15 who appointed all the Commissioners here do not want a 16 challenge, do not want somebody that interferes with 17 the current status quo, and that's what seems to be at 18 play. 19 So I would just urge you to take a step back, 20 look at what your enabling legislation is, look at what 21 your lane is as an administrative agency, because it's 22 not to interfere with the political party process. 23 It's to promote -- it's to promote access to 24 the ballot, it's to make things fairer, and you're 25 doing exactly the opposite.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 So, again, I've always been a fan of Clean 2 Elections, I think you serve an important function, but 3 please take a look inside at what you're doing and 4 really contemplate whether this is the right course of 5 action. Thank you. 6 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you very much, 7 Mr. Hinderaker. 8 Tom, is there any comment you'd like to make 9 at this time? 10 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman, I just had a 11 quick follow-up for Mr. Hinderaker just to clarify a 12 couple of things, if he's still... 13 MR. HINDERAKER: Yeah, I'm here. 14 MR. COLLINS: So Mr. Chairman, 15 Mr. Hinderaker, in your comments there you referred to 16 the Arizona Independent Party as a new party, so two 17 questions related to that. First, what is your role 18 with the Arizona Independent Party or the No Labels 19 Party, and is it your view that the Arizona Independent 20 Party is -- will be a new party at the time this 21 decision takes effect? 22 MR. HINDERAKER: Let me clarify. The answer 23 is, I'm a volunteer at this point, right. I'm just a 24 volunteer. I was very involved with Proposition 140, 25 which was the Make Elections Fair Initiative, that</p>
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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 would have created an open primary. And that, to me, 2 is the gold standard. If you have an open primary, you 3 wouldn't need an Arizona Independent Party necessarily. 4 No, this is not a new party. The No Labels 5 Party qualified for the ballot, they performed all the 6 functions you're required to qualify for the ballot. 7 But the political parties in Arizona have -- and across 8 the country have been allowed -- or, across the country 9 have been allowed to change their names. And that's a 10 function for the Secretary of State to determine; it's 11 not a function for the Clean Elections Commission to 12 interfere with. 13 So we -- we polled -- "we," the people that 14 are supporting the No Labels Party and the Arizona 15 Independent Party, polled our voter -- registered 16 voters, we have over 40,000 of them, and almost two to 17 one the answer came back that they would like to change 18 their name to the Arizona Independent Party, hence the 19 reason for the name change. So hopefully that answers 20 your question. 21 MR. COLLINS: Well, it partially does. I 22 guess the other question is, with respect to the poll, 23 when was that conducted? 24 MR. HINDERAKER: I would defer to Paul 25 Johnson on that.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 MR. COLLINS: Okay. That's fine. That, I 2 can hold the -- I have some other follow-up questions 3 along those lines, but I can defer them. Thanks. 4 Mr. Chairman, I'm... 5 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thanks, Tom. Thanks, 6 Mr. Hinderaker. 7 Next person is Anthony Ramirez. 8 Mr. Ramirez. 9 MR. RAMIREZ: Good morning. Thank you, 10 Mr. Chairman. My name is Anthony Ramirez, attorney for 11 the Arizona Independent Party and for the candidates 12 whose rights are being directly implicated by this 13 proceeding. 14 Let's begin with what this Commission is 15 supposed to be, a non-partisan protector of voter 16 choice, a safeguard against entrenched power, a 17 guardian of clean, fair elections. But today your 18 actions are not protecting voters, they're not 19 protecting clean elections. They are protecting the 20 Democratic and Republican duopoly, a duopoly that 21 Arizona voters are abandoning in record numbers. 22 Your letter to the Arizona Secretary of State 23 does not identify fraud, wrongdoing, or any statutory 24 violation. It relies instead on speculative concerns, 25 vague confusion, and generalized administrative burden,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 precisely rationales the U.S. Supreme Court has warned 2 government officials cannot be used to suppress new or 3 independent parties. 4 Let's briefly review the law so it's clear 5 for the record. In Williams v. Rhodes the United 6 States Supreme Court struck down a scheme that made 7 life easy for the Democrats and Republicans while 8 making it virtually impossible for new parties to grow. 9 In Anderson v. Celebrezze the court rejected early 10 filing burdens and said states cannot hinder 11 independent candidates with broad unproven fears. In 12 Burdick v. Takushi the court held that when government 13 action imposes a meaningful burden on political 14 participation, the State must offer a compelling 15 justification. In Illinois State Board of Elections 16 versus Socialist Workers Party, the court struck down 17 unequal signature burdens because they favored major 18 parties over new ones. 19 The legal message is consistent: The Arizona 20 Clean Elections Commission cannot protect the comfort 21 of the two major parties by burdening new competitors, 22 and yet here we are. 23 The Arizona Independent Party followed the 24 law. The Secretary of State's Office reviewed and 25 approved the name change under the statutes that have</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 governed political parties for decades. Now this 2 Commission, which has zero authority over political 3 party formation, has inserted itself into the process 4 to ask the Secretary of State to walk back a lawful 5 decision. This is not your role, this is not your 6 mandate, and it is absolutely not your legal authority. 7 Clean Elections was not created so a group of appointed 8 officials could act as brand managers for the 9 Democratic and Republican parties. 10 Let me speak plainly, because that's the 11 language that my clients deserve. If this Commission 12 steps outside its mandate to interfere with a lawful 13 political party, then it will discover very quickly 14 that my clients will respond. You are not being asked 15 today to administer clean elections. You are being 16 asked, through political pressure, to shield the 17 two-party system from competition. 18 And here is a truth you already know. When 19 the largest voting bloc in the state is independent, 20 when political trust is at historic lows, when voters 21 demand choice beyond the same two teams they've been 22 stuck with for decades, attempting to block a 23 legitimate independent party is not clean, it's not 24 neutral, and it's not defensible. 25 I'm going to say this with the professional</p>
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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 respect you should have shown my clients: If this 2 Commission chooses to exceed its authority, it will 3 also discover the limits of that authority. Decisions 4 have consequences: Legal, political, and historical. 5 The people of Arizona created Clean Elections to fight 6 corruption and concentrated power, not to preserve it, 7 not to protect the duopoly, not to gate keep new 8 parties, not to silence competition. 9 If you vote today to interfere in a lawful 10 party process approved by the Secretary of State, then 11 mark my words, Arizona will remember this day long 12 after every name on this Zoom screen is forgotten. My 13 clients will respond appropriately, professionally, and 14 forcefully through every legal channel available. 15 Respect the statute, respect the Constitution, respect 16 the voters, and step back inside your mandate. 17 And let me close with this so there's no 18 misunderstanding. The Arizona Independent Party is 19 exactly the kind of client my firm is built to 20 represent at trial. Whether intentionally or not, this 21 Commission has stepped squarely into a Fourteenth 22 Amendment equal protection issue and a First Amendment 23 freedom of association issue, and that level of 24 constitutional intrusion demands strict scrutiny. 25 So understand this: If this Commission</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p> <p>1 acting the way you are -- 2 Let me speak -- let me speak like I'd speak 3 to a constituent. Let me break this down of how 4 somebody -- a layperson would understand this, and 5 maybe that would help you just a bit. When listening 6 to the comments -- and I forget her name, I do 7 apologize -- what this breaks down to is you guys are 8 here to protect money. And by adding more parties, 9 there's less money to give to other parties. That's 10 what -- that's what your constituents are going to 11 hear. So you're giving more money to parties that -- 12 As my partner, Mr. Ramirez, stated, the 13 Republican and the Democrats, those parties, people are 14 done with them. I'm done with them. I've had nothing 15 do with them -- neither of them speak to me in their 16 full. Now, there's pieces and parts, and that's what 17 the independent party is to do, and I think the 18 Democrats and Republicans should be shaking in their 19 boots. Because the independents, the people who are 20 actual free thinkers, are going to join this party and 21 it's going to take over a lot of elections. 22 What you are doing, in my opinion, and more 23 people would understand this, is an Eleventh Amendment 24 violation, right, where -- we're not sure exactly where 25 the right comes from, but it falls squarely within the</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 chooses to persist in its overreach, every step you 2 take beyond your lawful authority only strengthens our 3 case and our platform. And if you force this fight, we 4 will take it into open court and into the public arena, 5 where every Arizonian will be able to see precisely how 6 independent voters have been treated. We prefer 7 cooperation, but we are fully prepared for 8 confrontation. Thank you. 9 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Ramirez. 10 Tom, do you want to respond or -- we'll move 11 on. 12 Okay. Thank you, Mr. Ramirez. 13 MR. RAMIREZ: Thank you, sir. 14 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Next we have Jacob Leavitt. 15 Mr. Leavitt. 16 MR. LEAVITT: Good morning, Commission. I 17 appreciate this time to speak. To lay out for 18 Mr. Collins, you probably want to know my role, I'm a 19 pro bono trial attorney. I've been asked to come in 20 and comment on a few things here. 21 I just want to point out, after taking a look 22 at all of this, I think you guys -- the Clean Elections 23 committee here has got some constitutional issues. 24 You're violating, in my opinion, the First, which is 25 the freedom of speech, freedom of choice. And by</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p> <p>1 Eleventh Amendment and, again, the Fourteenth 2 Amendment. 100 percent you guys are violating the 3 Fourteenth Amendment. 4 Let me give you the -- when I saw this, I 5 thought of Brown versus Board of Education. That's 6 what I thought of. You've got the people -- the 7 racists, who did not want to give the lower -- the 8 lower community or the minorities an equal share. 9 That's what's happening here. That's exactly what's 10 happening here. To me, it's a Brown versus Board of 11 Education type of concept that's coming -- that's 12 coming down the pipe, because what you're doing is 13 you're creating a hurdle -- an impossible hurdle for a 14 minority group. That is: One, unconstitutional; two, 15 un-American; three, disgusting. That's all I have. 16 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Leavitt. 17 Next we have Michael Zepeda. 18 Mr. Zepeda. 19 MR. ZEPEDA: Thank you, Commissioner. 20 First off, I'd like to say that I appreciate 21 Anthony Ramirez for representing us. I am an 22 independent voter who wants to run for office. 23 Signature requirements have made it impossible for me 24 to do so. The Arizona Independent Party has given me 25 the opportunity to do so without having to join any one</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 of the ideological parties that currently exist who are 2 part of the problem. I find the name incredibly 3 important because I want to be able to express that I 4 see things from an independent point of view. Thank 5 you.</p> <p>6 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Zepeda. 7 Next we have Paul Johnson. 8 Mr. Johnson. 9 MR. JOHNSON: There we go. I apologize. I 10 didn't know how to put the chat hand up. 11 So let me -- let me start with this. First, 12 I want to thank the committee. I have appointed 13 thousands of people to represent different committees 14 inside the City of Phoenix. I know you guys put in a 15 lot of work. I know that you guys give up a lot of 16 your time to be able to make these things work. And I 17 think that's not only respectable, but it's really 18 important to our government. So before I say anything, 19 I just want to tip my hat to you and to say thank you, 20 because I do think that what you're doing is important. 21 What I'd like to do, though, is just start 22 with a little bit of history on how we got to where we 23 are, because I think it's important in that process. 24 We started a long time ago believing that independents 25 and unaffiliated voters just simply didn't have the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 By the way, our -- one good thing is our voters 2 actually did understand that they were being excluded 3 from the system because they've registered as 4 unaffiliated or independent voters. 5 When we lost, the No Labels Party had a party 6 here that had been sued by the State as well, and they 7 were told they had to open every primary. I personally 8 thought that was a good idea. But we reached an 9 agreement with them. I became the chairman of that 10 party. It is a party that is -- it's the same party as 11 it was before, but we wanted to make certain that we 12 were creating an environment where independents and 13 unaffiliated, if they wanted to run, they could, 14 without having to get these onerous signature 15 requirements. 16 If you want to run as an independent today -- 17 if you run as a Democrat or Republican, you need 6,000 18 signatures. You need 45,000 signatures to run as an 19 independent. I promise you, that is a barrier you 20 can't get across, because I've looked at that with 21 candidates. The 45,000 is going to cost you about 22 \$2 million to start your race. And then if you get the 23 signatures, you're going to get challenged. So before 24 you can even start, you've got to show that you can get 25 across that hurdle. And that becomes not only</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 right or the same access that all voters had. And so 2 three, four years ago we began working with a group of 3 citizens to try to change the rules, to try to change 4 the system itself, so that we could create a primary 5 system where anyone could compete and where 6 independents and unaffiliated would be treated the same 7 as everyone else. 8 Now, the reason we see that as being 9 important, we think that we have a system today where 10 the -- where people run in these partisan primaries in 11 districts that are so gerrymandered, and the candidates 12 oftentimes never have to go out and talk to people on 13 the other side. As an example, in Congress only 35 14 districts out of 435 are competitive. Now, what that 15 means is that when you get a list and you go run, you 16 only talk to people inside your primary, and then the 17 race is so gerrymandered that you never end up speaking 18 to independents or people in the other party. And 19 that's created a system that's falling apart. 20 Democrats and Republicans no longer seem to 21 have the ability to reconcile with one another, and we 22 wanted to try to change that. We thought changing the 23 system -- we still think changing the system is the 24 best way to do that. 25 But we ended up with 41 percent of the vote.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 impossible to do, you couldn't do it with the Clean 2 Elections money that's available. 3 So this gives those candidates who want to 4 reregister into the party the opportunity to do that. 5 We're not ideologically driven. Certainly they could 6 join the Democratic Party or the Republican Party or 7 they could join the Green Party or the Libertarian 8 Party, but those parties are more driven ideologically. 9 We've removed that. 10 Like if you want to know our number one 11 slogan -- we have a list of 14 beliefs -- I'll tell you 12 what's at the top. I should be able to love those 13 people who I disagree with. That's at the top. By the 14 way, that's really controversial today in politics. 15 That's like something that almost doesn't work at the 16 Thanksgiving dinner table any -- any longer. Our goal 17 is to change that. 18 Now, it's not -- you haven't asked me for 19 this advice, but I'm going to give it anyway. This is 20 the wrong decision for the Clean Elections Commission, 21 it just is. I have polled people. I've polled -- over 22 the years, because I've been involved in this issue 23 very deeply, I polled independents, unaffiliated, 24 people who vote in the primaries, Republicans and 25 Democrats who don't vote in the primaries. What I can</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 tell you about the independent and unaffiliated voter 2 is, they actually are very patriotic. They actually -- 3 A lot of people think that they don't like 4 politics and that's why they've disconnected. That's 5 not true. They don't like the ideological bent of the 6 two parties. They want to be independent. We want to 7 allow them to be independent and allow them to be an 8 independent voter. That's important to us also. But 9 if they want to run, we want to give them the ability 10 to do so. We want to be fair to them. 11 Now, if you guys have the authority, the 12 standing in court to be able to sue the Secretary of 13 State to say that he didn't have the right to make the 14 decision to allow us to change our name, then you 15 probably also have the standing to stand up and get 16 involved in Anthony Ramirez's case of equal protection, 17 of making certain that independent and unaffiliated 18 voters can't be discriminated against like they are 19 today. We wouldn't have even gone to a political party 20 if that one would have been fixed. We would have just 21 simply helped organize candidates. But it's the only 22 option. It's the only one that they have. 23 I would tell you, if you don't do this, it 24 isn't going to matter. This is lawfare. This isn't 25 just politics. This isn't just -- this isn't just a</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 legal issue. This is lawfare by candidates and by 2 parties who don't want the 35 percent of the people who 3 are independents to be able to participate. If you 4 don't sue, somebody else is going to -- I just can tell 5 you that -- because it's lawfare. The design is to try 6 to utilize groups or organizations as a front to show 7 that it's not the candidates, it's not the parties, but 8 eventually it's going to get down to that's who 9 actually is supportive of this. 10 And I just think it's the wrong thing for the 11 Clean Elections Commission to be involved in. In fact, 12 I think you ought to be involved in our fight. With 13 everything that you've done -- you've done good things. 14 You've helped people be able to run that wouldn't be 15 able to run otherwise. Don't utilize this as a means 16 that will sully the name of the Clean Elections group 17 by saying that you don't think that that group should 18 have the same access. 19 Again, I appreciate your participation. I 20 appreciate what you do. I hope when you're in 21 e-session you'll consider at least what it is that 22 we're trying to do here, and I thank you. And if Tom 23 has questions, I'll gladly answer them. 24 By the way -- I'm sorry. Go ahead. 25 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: No. No. Go ahead,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 Mr. Johnson. 2 MR. JOHNSON: I was going -- I was going to 3 say that we had, as he knows, Andrew Pappas, who was 4 our lawyer. You guys conflicted him out. He would 5 have been here today answering questions for us, 6 because he's been involved with us from the very, very 7 beginning. I will do my best to answer the questions, 8 but we don't have anyone representing internally the 9 party on all the different political questions and 10 legal questions that we have to face until we're done 11 with this particular measure. 12 MR. HINDERAKER: Hey, Paul. Mr. Collins had 13 a question about our polling of the registered -- No 14 Labels registered voters. And I believe you had 15 your -- we did a sampling of voters. Maybe you could 16 describe how that process worked and what the results 17 were. 18 MR. JOHNSON: Sure. There are 40,000 19 members. We have about 11,000 phone numbers. We -- we 20 utilized every one of those phone numbers to send them 21 a text message regarding a poll. And the poll was a 22 Google poll. We ended up getting about 1,800 that 23 responded, so it was a pretty high response rate. 24 We also went on social media and tried to 25 identify people who were either -- people who were</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 inside the party first, but we also took a look at 2 people who were outside the party. We kept the results 3 separate so that we'd know who were actual voters 4 inside the party and outside the party. 5 And in both cases, overwhelmingly changing 6 the name to the Independent Party was -- was, by about 7 a two-to-one margin, was the recommendation of the 8 people who were being polled. 9 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Okay. Thank you. I wasn't 10 sure who -- who was asking Mr. Johnson that question. 11 MR. JOHNSON: That was Ted Hinderaker. 12 MR. HINDERAKER: I'm sorry. That was me. 13 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Okay. Thank you. If you 14 want to ask something, let me call on you first to 15 make -- to help out the court reporter. 16 MR. HINDERAKER: My apologies. 17 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: That's okay. 18 Thank you, Mr. Johnson. 19 Tom, is there anything you want to say before 20 we move on? 21 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman, I just had a 22 couple of kind of clarifying questions, which I don't 23 think are -- I don't intend them to be super technical. 24 One of the questions that we're trying to understand is 25 what it is that you can do as the Arizona Independent</p>
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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p> <p>1 Party that you are unable to do as the No Labels Party. 2 MR. JOHNSON: What can we do? We can let 3 independents know that this is a party designed for 4 them if, in fact, they're interested in being able to 5 run for office, and we think it does a better job of 6 that. 7 MR. COLLINS: And when you -- you submitted 8 this request on October 8th. That is a week after the 9 Election Procedures Manual went to the Governor and the 10 AG from the Secretary of State's Office. How did you 11 settle on October 8th to make this request, as opposed 12 to sometime in the last, you know, year, year and a 13 half, that -- 14 MR. JOHNSON: Just -- Tom, just timing. You 15 know, we took over the party. When we took over the 16 party -- I can't remember the exact dates. If you 17 would like, we can try to put those together, but I'll 18 tell you kind of our process. 19 So the -- when we lost the -- when we lost 20 the open primary issue, we began sitting down, the 21 group of us, and saying, okay, what -- what should we 22 do? Should we just drop the idea, should we let it go, 23 should we try to go out and organize? What's the 24 action that we should take? And we did that for, I 25 don't know, a couple of months. We brought in</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p> <p>1 And they -- what they did is they utilized 2 the phone number at the Secretary of State's Office to 3 call and to make certain that that was clear. Well, 4 unfortunately, the number had been turned off at the No 5 Labels group, and so the No Labels group had to turn it 6 back on. Nonetheless, all that took time. 7 And as soon as we were completed with that 8 process, we submitted it. We -- this document that you 9 said that was handed to the Governor, I have -- until 10 you just mentioned it, I didn't know that there was a 11 document that was submitted to the Governor. So we 12 certainly weren't basing it on that document for our 13 timing. 14 MR. COLLINS: So -- fair enough. So when you 15 say that you took over the party and that the party's 16 number was disconnected prior to that, so what sort of 17 agreement -- and you mentioned this earlier -- what 18 sort of agreement did you reach with the existing No 19 Labels Party to take it over? 20 MR. JOHNSON: We agreed that Sarah and I 21 would go on the board with the two existing board 22 members, so there would be four board members, and then 23 we would begin having a discussion with them about 24 drafting new bylaws and about changing the name and 25 about the role and the process that we might play. And</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p> <p>1 pollsters and campaign consultants and others and began 2 talking to them. 3 And then the connection was made between us 4 and No Labels, and we began having a discussion with 5 them. I don't recall the date that we closed on it, 6 but there were a whole series of things that we had to 7 do to be able to be successful. And one of the things 8 is we wanted to go out and poll the name, figure out 9 whether or not the public was -- whether or not the 10 people who were inside the No Labels group was wed to 11 the existing name, whether they'd like to see a change. 12 And by the way, we didn't know that answer. We didn't 13 start out with some preplan as to how to make that 14 work. 15 In addition to polling people, one of the 16 things -- again, I'm not -- I've been a candidate 17 several times, but I've never run a political party. 18 As -- one of the things that was complicated is that 19 you can't just call people to poll them. And the 20 reason you can't just call them to poll them is because 21 there's federal law that says that you have to go 22 through a peer-to-peer type of network, and the 23 peer-to-peer network had to justify that we actually 24 were a party and that we had the control that we said 25 that we did.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p> <p>1 that's what we did, we did that and entered and engaged 2 in a discussion with them after Sarah and I went on the 3 board. 4 MR. COLLINS: And so does the -- either the 5 No Labels Party now or the No Labels Party before you 6 took over, does it have a state committee? 7 MR. JOHNSON: Are you talking about the 8 national group or are you talking about the local -- 9 MR. COLLINS: Well, I'm talking about -- 10 MR. JOHNSON: -- no Labels of Arizona? 11 MR. COLLINS: -- you know, 16 -- in Chapter 12 5, you know, there's a -- state parties are required to 13 have state committees that meet -- 14 MR. JOHNSON: Yes. So the state -- 15 MR. COLLINS: How do you operate in view of 16 that? 17 MR. JOHNSON: We have right now a four-person 18 committee -- a three-person committee, Sentari Minor, 19 Sarah Smallhouse, and Paul Johnson, and we're -- as 20 part of our bylaws change, we're expanding that. 21 MR. COLLINS: When you were work -- when -- 22 so there was -- this was discussed sometime originally, 23 it looks like, based on some of the reporting -- in 24 August there was a public reporting that you were 25 contemplating this name change. Was that before or</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p> <p>1 after you had taken over the No Labels Party?</p> <p>2 MR. JOHNSON: That was after.</p> <p>3 MR. COLLINS: Okay. So sometime between</p> <p>4 August and October you're getting all this lined up to</p> <p>5 make the request, is that accurate?</p> <p>6 MR. JOHNSON: Well, I'm not certain of the</p> <p>7 question you're asking. We -- we had discussions with</p> <p>8 No Labels national, we had discussions with the No</p> <p>9 Labels board here locally. We then went on the board.</p> <p>10 Then we did our press conference, where -- I think</p> <p>11 that's where you would have heard or seen the comments</p> <p>12 that you made. And those were kind of the beginning</p> <p>13 points of what we were looking to do.</p> <p>14 I can tell you, we have a lot more than that</p> <p>15 that we're planning to unveil, but those were the two</p> <p>16 main issues that, after we went on the board, we</p> <p>17 decided to do. We took a vote, we recorded the vote,</p> <p>18 we kept minutes of the vote. So if any of that's in</p> <p>19 question, we certainly have the records for it to show</p> <p>20 you.</p> <p>21 MR. COLLINS: Did you -- did you get any</p> <p>22 prefiling -- I mean, before you filed -- so, you know,</p> <p>23 you have this press conference, you're doing this</p> <p>24 stuff, then October 8th you file. Did you get any</p> <p>25 prefiling, you know, advice from the Secretary of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p> <p>1 That's the thing that you're avoiding, Tom, right.</p> <p>2 And again, the answer is, if you have</p> <p>3 standing on this issue, if you have authority over the</p> <p>4 Secretary of State, if that's true, then my guess is</p> <p>5 you also have authority to stand up and support that</p> <p>6 group of voters and go for an equal protections claim.</p> <p>7 But we've seen nothing from you on that, we've seen</p> <p>8 nothing from other groups on it.</p> <p>9 So our answer is, why don't we -- if this is</p> <p>10 really a concern, we're willing to sit down and have a</p> <p>11 conversation with you about names and a whole series of</p> <p>12 things. We've never cut you out of this process. But</p> <p>13 let's work on trying to make certain that we solve the</p> <p>14 primary problem, which is how do those people who</p> <p>15 register that way have a chance to be able to run for</p> <p>16 office. And if we could do it through just making</p> <p>17 certain that when you -- when you become an independent</p> <p>18 you have to go through the same signature count as</p> <p>19 everyone else, to be honest with you, you solve</p> <p>20 90 percent of what we're trying to deal with.</p> <p>21 MR. COLLINS: Well, Mr. Chairman, if I may.</p> <p>22 Mr. Johnson, I mean, I think that -- the</p> <p>23 Clean Elections Act only uses the word independent to</p> <p>24 refer to voters that are not part of a party, just --</p> <p>25 just to be clear about that.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p> <p>1 State's Office or any discussion with them before you</p> <p>2 decided to file on October 8th?</p> <p>3 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, we -- we -- I spoke to</p> <p>4 people in the Secretary of State's Office. I can't</p> <p>5 remember her name, but we did speak to them to find out</p> <p>6 like what the process was, how they saw the process,</p> <p>7 what was important in it, and they laid out what the</p> <p>8 requirements were and we tried to follow those.</p> <p>9 MR. COLLINS: So and then -- and then just</p> <p>10 more generally, you know, you acknowledge at least,</p> <p>11 right, that the -- that the word independent as used</p> <p>12 in -- is used in Arizona statute, it's used in the</p> <p>13 Clean Elections Act as the designation for voters who</p> <p>14 are not a part of -- registered with a political party,</p> <p>15 right? I mean, that's --</p> <p>16 MR. JOHNSON: Well, there's a number of</p> <p>17 names, I believe, aren't there, Tom? Some people call</p> <p>18 themselves unaffiliated. Some people call themselves</p> <p>19 party not disclosed. I think the State recognizes most</p> <p>20 of them as party not disclosed. But yes, there are</p> <p>21 people who say, hey, I'm an independent.</p> <p>22 In fact, all of the candidates that we have</p> <p>23 spoken to, 20 of them, were all registered as</p> <p>24 independents, and they see that this is their only way</p> <p>25 to run. And that's the bigger issue you're missing.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p> <p>1 But it seems to me that what you've said</p> <p>2 indicates that your issue is that the existing law for</p> <p>3 voters who are independent raises the threshold of</p> <p>4 signatures that they have to get, and so -- and you</p> <p>5 need the name change so that people who are independent</p> <p>6 can get around the threshold that is established by</p> <p>7 law.</p> <p>8 MR. JOHNSON: That's not true. That's not</p> <p>9 true.</p> <p>10 MR. COLLINS: How is it not true? I don't --</p> <p>11 I'm -- I guess I missed something there.</p> <p>12 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. What I would say is, you</p> <p>13 used the word "get around" as if they were doing</p> <p>14 something underhanded or sleazy or that we were looking</p> <p>15 for a way to try to cheat the system. The answer is,</p> <p>16 they have to join the party, that is true. The</p> <p>17 independent, to be able to run as a candidate, they</p> <p>18 have to join the party.</p> <p>19 Now, it -- from their standpoint, making</p> <p>20 certain that they feel comfortable, this name is a much</p> <p>21 more comfortable name for them to be able to join with.</p> <p>22 It's not confusing. It's the Arizona Independent</p> <p>23 Party. That word party at the end of it is, by itself,</p> <p>24 an indicator -- excuse me -- that you're joining</p> <p>25 something differently. My guess is, most of the voters</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p> <p>1 that we're going to get are going to come from 2 candidates who go out and solicit them. That's going 3 to be where most of them end up signing up. But 4 they're not getting around anything. 5 In fact, we were trying to change the system. 6 When we couldn't change the system, we decided to work 7 within the system that gives a set of privileges to 8 parties. I don't think those privileges should exist, 9 but that's me. My own personal opinion is, it ought to 10 be an open primary and it shouldn't be a partisan 11 primary. But the fact that it is, we're working within 12 the system to give that group of voters access that 13 they haven't had before. 14 MR. COLLINS: So I guess -- and I don't mean 15 to belabor this, but what is important to you about 16 having this name change be effective December 1st, 17 2025, instead of in the beginning of the next election 18 cycle? 19 MR. JOHNSON: Sure, I can tell you. We have 20 candidates who want to run now. I can tell you that we 21 want it to be a matter of being -- of being settled. 22 So let me -- let me tell you what our 23 experience has been. So when we did the open primary, 24 when we put up the open primary, we had multiple 25 discussions with lots of elected officials; very few of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p> <p>1 to be able to run as well and to run without these 2 burdensome signature requirements. If you tie those 3 two things together, we're open to having a discussion 4 about it. 5 But if you're not willing to have that second 6 part of the discussion, the answer is we're going to 7 follow our constitutional rights, as laid out by 8 Anthony, and we're going to make a fight out of this. 9 We're not just going to walk away from it. But that's 10 not what we prefer. What we prefer is to work within 11 the system, to not play this lawfare game that's 12 utilized as a means to try to push some other type of 13 political agenda, and have a discussion. 14 And I'm always open, especially with the 15 Clean Elections group, to having a constructive 16 discussion about how do we fix this. I'm open to 17 having one with the Recorders. I think the Recorders 18 have a very tough job. I want to make certain that 19 what happens with them is solved. But not without 20 people having to address the key issue, and the key 21 issue is, you only have to have 6,000 signatures to run 22 as an -- as a Democrat or Republican, you have to have 23 45,000 to run as an independent or unaffiliated voter. 24 And that's not fair and I don't think that's legal. 25 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Okay. Thank you,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p> <p>1 whom -- who were incumbent supported it. We -- it 2 actually was easy to get people who had been in office 3 to support it. We had Terry Goddard and Fife 4 Symington, on both sides, but incumbents were 5 difficult. We had a discussion with the Governor, who 6 was very clear that they were not happy with what we 7 were doing, that they -- that she did not -- or, at 8 least they as an office did not like what we were 9 trying to do. 10 We end up in litigation at the end. Now, the 11 litigation created a delay. The delay was strategic. 12 It was smart on their behalf, even though they didn't 13 win. And that did harm to our ability to be 14 successful, because we couldn't raise any money until 15 the litigation was solved, and it was just solved 16 months beforehand. 17 We've stepped up early, gotten the name 18 change. Our candidates are seeing it, they're liking 19 it, they're involved in it. It's part of our branding. 20 It's part of what we're putting out as a message. It's 21 part of our website. 22 I would reverse this on you. If this is 23 important, why don't we have a discussion about how do 24 we change this over the next year legislatively, but 25 when you do that include the right of every candidate</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p> <p>1 Mr. Johnson. 2 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. 3 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Let me next call on Mark 4 Stegeman. 5 Mark. 6 MR. STEGEMAN: Thank you. I'm sorry I wasn't 7 able to make my Zoom hand work. 8 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: That's quite okay. 9 MR. STEGEMAN: Doesn't speak well for my 10 general competence, I suppose. 11 So I am Mark Stegeman, a professor at the 12 University of Arizona. I served on the Tucson School 13 Board for more than 10 years. That's a nonpartisan 14 position. I'm currently a registered Democrat, but was 15 for most of that time a registered independent. 16 I would not have been confused by the name of 17 this party, and I think that this does not need to be 18 confusing. Voter registration is a conscious and 19 deliberate act in this state, which requires effort. 20 If the Secretary of State requires that registration 21 materials clearly explain the consequences of party 22 registration, then I think there will be very little 23 confusion, very few accidental registrations. 24 My second point is that the name Independent 25 Party I think has particular meaning in this time.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p> <p>1 Registration with this party provides a way to 2 participate in a politically viable organization that 3 explicitly seeks to stand apart from the extreme 4 partisanship of the moment. I think that addresses a 5 current need in a way that might not have been true 20 6 or 30 years ago.</p> <p>7 And now, based on the discussion, I have a 8 third point, which I had not intended, and that's 9 concerning the history of No Labels. The No Labels 10 Party has a brand, and for whatever reason it's not a 11 very effective brand. New political parties splitting 12 off from existing parties is a long established 13 tradition in American politics. That is how the 14 current Republican Party formed during the 1850s. I do 15 not have a detailed knowledge of the current situation 16 or history, but it seems like the relationship between 17 the two parties should be a nonissue.</p> <p>18 That's my comment, thank you -- my three 19 comments, thank you.</p> <p>20 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Stegeman. 21 Next, Richard Grayson. 22 Mr. Grayson. Mr. Grayson, you're on mute. 23 MR. GRAYSON: Is that better? Can you hear 24 me? 25 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: I can hear you.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p> <p>1 I believe, because they were trying to get on 2 the ballot with a presidential candidate, 15,000 people 3 joined by April and it just kept growing and growing. 4 These people registered for a party name, the No Labels 5 Party. And I think that just as the attorney for the 6 Arizona Independent Party said that First and 7 Fourteenth Amendment rights are impacted, I think 8 they're impacted also on the part of every voter who 9 signed up for the No Labels Party and suddenly they 10 find they are members of the Arizona Independent Party.</p> <p>11 I have seen no evidence, except what I've 12 heard today, about any kind of a poll. I was very 13 visible, obviously, as a No Labels Party candidate in a 14 primary and in a general election; no one ever 15 contacted me. And I've spoken to a couple of other 16 registrants of the No Labels Party, so I -- I just have 17 never seen any physical evidence of this poll. The 18 whole process of the change in the party has seemingly 19 come from -- been done somewhat secretly until it was 20 announced in the press.</p> <p>21 The other thing I'd like to just mention is 22 that -- the idea that calling the party independent 23 means you are not, either like the Republicans, 24 Democrats, Libertarians, or Green, an ideological 25 party. I've looked -- one reason -- after the primary</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p> <p>1 MR. GRAYSON: Hi, I'm Richard Grayson. I was 2 the No Labels Party candidate in the special election 3 in Congressional District 7 in September. I won the 4 primary with one write-in vote, so I didn't bother 5 getting signatures and there's a way I managed. The 6 Green Party candidate in the special election also won 7 a contested race as a write-in candidate.</p> <p>8 Previously, I won the Green Party primary in 9 2010 and was on the ballot against Congressman Flake 10 in -- as the Green Party candidate in 2010. And 2012 11 again I won a write-in -- as a write-in primary 12 candidate in the Americans Elect party, which existed 13 for a while. That was 2012. And I believe in 2018 I 14 won a Green Party primary for state representative in 15 Legislative District -- then Legislative District 16.</p> <p>16 So there is a way, aside from the signatures 17 that are -- that are talked about as very hard to get 18 on the ballot, to run as a write-in candidate with a 19 new party under Arizona statutes.</p> <p>20 Secondly, I guess I would like to say that my 21 general position is that any change of name affects 22 those of us, like myself, who registered as a No Labels 23 Party voter. It was very surprising to people that 24 within a couple of months, I think it was by April or 25 May when the No Labels Party of 20-- last year, 2024,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p> <p>1 I've gone to another party, changed my registration, 2 is -- in the front web page of the Arizona Independent 3 Party there's things saying we believe in this, we 4 believe in that, we support this, we oppose that. I 5 disagree with some of those things, so -- it's not an 6 independent party. They have an ideology.</p> <p>7 And I guess I don't think I have anything 8 else to say. But I would support the Commission in a 9 lawsuit, although, frankly, I believe that what should 10 be done here is a new petition, just as the No Labels 11 Party did, as the Green Party did in 2024, and let them 12 really start a new party. Thank you.</p> <p>13 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Grayson. 14 COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Mr. Chairman, 15 Commissioner Crump here. I just have a question for 16 Director Collins, if I may.</p> <p>17 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Go ahead. 18 COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Tom, can you -- based on 19 something Mr. Grayson just said, I wasn't clear if we 20 discussed it, are the existing registrants of No Labels 21 Party, do they -- as things stand now, do they 22 automatically get reregistered as Arizona Independent 23 Party registrants? 24 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman, 25 Commissioner Crump, what the Secretary of State's</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p> <p>1 Office has said is that that is what will happen. How 2 that will be executed is still a little bit unclear, 3 whether or not that is something that they execute by 4 changing the label in the statewide voter database or 5 whether that is something where it is entered at the 6 County level, because both have access to those 7 changes, but it will be a -- as far as we know, it will 8 be -- essentially on day one you will be a No Labels 9 Party member, on day two you will be an Arizona 10 Independent Party member. 11 The -- what that will do, if the Secretary 12 were to unilaterally do this without the County, the 13 result of that would be to essentially leverage the 14 Counties in the sense that -- like right now, at least 15 our view, and I think what the law is, is that the 16 Secretary doesn't have the authority to do this at all, 17 right. But the Secretary can -- if the Secretary goes 18 into the database and says, these -- these people are 19 now in this new party, right, we now have this new 20 party called Arizona Independent Party, it will be 21 then -- the Counties will then have the obligation, 22 even if it's not a legal obligation, to tell those 23 folks why they have a new party assigned to them. 24 And so -- so that is how we understand 25 currently the Secretary is planning on undertaking this</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p> <p>1 And I would just say that the name change 2 probably, if it does damage to anyone, it does damage 3 to us, right, in this way. If you decide, when you get 4 the name change, that you don't want to take part in 5 it, you can go online and in two minutes change your 6 party registration. There's nothing that stops you 7 from doing that. 8 So the idea that somehow or another that's a 9 big deal, I just see it as a ruse. It's not really 10 what's driving this. And again, I would say what we 11 ought to be focused on is how do we try to create a 12 system where people can run regardless. 13 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Okay. Thank you, 14 Mr. Johnson. 15 Let me next call on Dr. Stephen Neal. 16 Dr. Neal. 17 DR. NEAL: Thank you. Pretty much 18 Mr. Johnson actually -- actually responded to the 19 statement by Mr. Garrison (sic), because this is not a 20 new party. If you look how it is, like he said, it is 21 very difficult -- I'm actually a candidate. As an 22 independent there's -- like he said, those -- getting 23 those signatures, over 40,000 -- or, 40-plus-thousand 24 signatures would be impossible. 25 No Labels have stepped up and allowed us a</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p> <p>1 is that either the Counties will do it for the 2 Secretary, or the Secretary will do it through its 3 access to the statewide voter registration database and 4 then, because the Counties will want to make sure that 5 their voters whose party has been changed know why that 6 has happened, they will communicate that. So -- so the 7 bottom line being that our understanding is there is no 8 pre-change notice that will be given to members of the 9 No Labels Party that they are going to be part of a 10 different organization, I think as Mr. Johnson has 11 essentially told us today, than they were when they 12 registered and that they will be under a different 13 name. There is not going to be any pre -- just as 14 there was no pre-decision notice about the Secretary's 15 decision here, there will be no pre-decision notice to 16 voters, that I'm aware of. 17 COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Okay. Thank you, 18 Mr. Chairman. 19 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Mr. Johnson, I see you've 20 raised your hand. Do you have something to address on 21 this point? 22 MR. JOHNSON: Tom mischaracterized what I 23 said to him. I didn't say that this was effectively a 24 new organization. I think we've been very clear it's 25 not. It's the same organization.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p> <p>1 position in order to be part of that party because we 2 believe in working together, we believe in having 3 solutions to pressing issues that -- that goes beyond a 4 political party's agenda. So like I always say, love 5 students not politics, love people not politics. 6 And what happened is, even as an independent 7 you -- when it comes to vote, and I've attended a lot 8 of different LDs for both Democrats and Republicans -- 9 when they actually go to vote, they have to request 10 a ballot of either a Democrat or a Republican. And 11 you've got independents that are sitting in there, but 12 those are the only two ballots and they feel like 13 that's the only voice that they actually have. 14 By changing the name, that allows people to 15 know, hey, we have another party out here that speaks 16 in our behalf. Because we want to be able to solve 17 problems, we want to be able to have that civic 18 engagement and feel safe within an environment, but 19 have that common sense -- like I'm having -- my tour is 20 called a common sense tour -- but have those open 21 discussions among each other. And by changing the 22 name, that allows people to understand, oh, we do have 23 a voice and we do have a say in the political realm. 24 When I told people that the name was being 25 changed, they were so excited about it. They are</p>

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<p>1 thrilled about the name change because now they 2 understand we are speaking for the people. For anyone 3 to actually say that it's a new party or it's 4 different, they're far from wrong. 5       Like Mr. Garrison was say -- Grayson was 6 saying that, well, it allows him to do this, this, 7 this, and this. I was down in CD 7 a lot of times 8 promoting, helping out, and doing my own campaign. I 9 didn't even know a No Labels person was actually 10 running for CD 7. And this is where, as a candidate, 11 you have to be big in the community, you have to be 12 able to go beyond your horizon of your comfort level 13 and talk to the different groups. 14       I think Mr. -- Mr. Johnson has been very open 15 and up front with everything within the party. He 16 reached out to me as soon as he heard that I was part 17 of the No Labels Party, but now it's being switched to 18 the Arizona Independent. He's very visual and vocal 19 and he actually speaks out for the party. So I would 20 take with a grain of salt what was just said about 21 keeping the name, because we are visual. We're not 22 someone who's secretly hiding. 23       Now, we cannot control what the media does, 24 we all know that, because they are there to protect the 25 two political systems, the Democrats and Republicans.</p>	<p>1 it -- or, a member on it that was on the No Labels 2 committee. It's no different than -- you know, the 3 current parties, Democratic, Republican, whatever, they 4 change state committee members all the time, they 5 change chairmen all the time. This is no different. 6 So that's a false characterization. 7       And, you know, again, I just hope that the 8 Commission stays true to its mission. Again, reading 9 from the enabling legislation, it's to give -- you 10 know, it's to prevent incumbents from having an 11 unhealthy advantage over challengers, you know, it's to 12 prevent the influence of money over the system. 13       What we're trying to do is to comply with all 14 those goals. And if you -- you know, if you're 15 successful in overturning our attempts to change the 16 name, what you're doing is disenfranchising all the 17 candidates who are appearing here, right, and it's just 18 not right. So thank you very much for your 19 consideration of our concerns. 20       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you. Thank you, 21 Mr. Hinderaker. 22       I believe I've called on everyone who has 23 indicated they wish to speak. If I'm wrong, this is 24 your chance. Do something to get my attention and I 25 will call on you.</p>
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<p>1 They're going to protect them, they're going to put 2 whatever is out there. But as active people, and I can 3 see some of my other fellow constituents out here, we 4 want the name change so we can go solve problems and be 5 as one and cross those aisles to bring -- unite people 6 together. 7       And I want to thank you guys for having us, 8 but pray that you guys agree with the name change. 9       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, Dr. Neal. 10       I see Mr. Hinderaker wants to speak again, 11 but before then, is there anyone who has not spoken who 12 wishes to speak? If you have problems raising a hand, 13 wave at me and I'll try to see you on the screen. 14 There's a number of people here who have not spoken. 15 If you want to speak, somehow get my attention and I 16 will call on you. 17       (No response.) 18       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: I'm not seeing anyone. 19       Mr. Hinderaker. 20       MR. HINDERAKER: I just had a short comment 21 in response to Mr. Collins' characterization of this as 22 a new party -- new, which you keep coming back to. 23 It's not. As Paul Johnson indicated, we've taken pains 24 to comply with all the statutory requirements. We have 25 a state committee. The state committee has members on</p>	<p>1       Otherwise, are there any questions from the 2 Commission before we decide whether we're going to go 3 into executive session? 4       (No response.) 5       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Hearing none, I would 6 entertain a motion to go into executive session on this 7 matter to consult with our attorneys. 8       COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Mr. Chairman, I move 9 that we go into executive session for legal advice on 10 this matter. 11       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, 12 Commissioner Werther. 13       Is there a second? 14       COMMISSIONER CRUMP: I'll second. 15       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you, 16 Commissioner Crump. 17       It's been moved and seconded that we go into 18 executive session to consult with our attorneys on this 19 matter. I will call the roll. 20       Commissioner Werther. 21       COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Aye. 22       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Crump. 23       COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Aye. 24       CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Paton. 25       COMMISSIONER PATON: Aye.</p>

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<p>1 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Titla.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER TITLA: Aye.</p> <p>3 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Chair votes aye.</p> <p>4 The vote is 5-to-nothing. We're going to go</p> <p>5 into executive session. We'll have a brief break</p> <p>6 before then as we get set up for executive session. At</p> <p>7 the conclusion of the executive session, we will come</p> <p>8 back into regular session. Thank you very much.</p> <p>9 (The following section of the meeting is in</p> <p>10 executive session and bound under separate cover.)</p> <p>11 * * * * *</p> <p>12 (End of executive session. Public meeting</p> <p>13 resumes at 11:11 a.m.)</p> <p>14 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: We are back in open</p> <p>15 session.</p> <p>16 Does any Member of the Commission wish to</p> <p>17 make a motion?</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like</p> <p>19 to make a motion.</p> <p>20 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Werther.</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER WERTHER: I move to authorize</p> <p>22 outside counsel to initiate litigation in this matter</p> <p>23 that's agendized, including any related litigation</p> <p>24 relating to the proceedings, involving Secretary of</p> <p>25 State decision on 10-16-2025 to grant the request of</p>	<p>1 The motion is approved 4-to-1. Thank you.</p> <p>2 Item III, public comment. This is the time</p> <p>3 for consideration of comments and suggestions from the</p> <p>4 public. Action taken as a result of public comment</p> <p>5 will be limited to directing staff to study the matter,</p> <p>6 rescheduling it for further consideration, or</p> <p>7 responding to criticism. Please limit your comments to</p> <p>8 no more than two minutes.</p> <p>9 Does anyone on Zoom wish to make a comment?</p> <p>10 Either use your raise hand feature or wave or somehow</p> <p>11 make yourself known.</p> <p>12 (No response.)</p> <p>13 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Seeing or hearing no one.</p> <p>14 The public may also submit comments by e-mail</p> <p>15 at ccec@azcleanelections.gov.</p> <p>16 Item IV, adjournment. At this time, I would</p> <p>17 entertain a motion to adjourn.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Mr. Chairman, I move</p> <p>19 to adjourn.</p> <p>20 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you,</p> <p>21 Commissioner Werther.</p> <p>22 Is there a second?</p> <p>23 COMMISSIONER PATON: This is Paton. I'll --</p> <p>24 I'll second it.</p> <p>25 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: It's been moved by</p>
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<p>1 the No Labels Party to change its name to the Arizona</p> <p>2 Independent Party.</p> <p>3 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Thank you,</p> <p>4 Commissioner Werther.</p> <p>5 Is there a second?</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER PATON: This is Paton. I'll</p> <p>7 second it.</p> <p>8 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: It's been moved by</p> <p>9 Commissioner Werther, seconded by Commissioner Paton.</p> <p>10 Commissioners, you've heard the motion. I</p> <p>11 will call the roll.</p> <p>12 Commissioner Crump.</p> <p>13 COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Aye.</p> <p>14 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Werther.</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Aye.</p> <p>16 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Paton.</p> <p>17 COMMISSIONER PATON: Aye.</p> <p>18 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Titla.</p> <p>19 Do we have Commissioner Titla with us? I</p> <p>20 don't --</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER TITLA: Yeah. Can you hear me?</p> <p>22 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Yes, I can hear you,</p> <p>23 Commissioner Titla.</p> <p>24 COMMISSIONER TITLA: I vote nay.</p> <p>25 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Okay. Chair votes aye.</p>	<p>1 Commissioner Werther, seconded by Commissioner Paton</p> <p>2 that we adjourn. I will call the roll.</p> <p>3 Commissioner Crump.</p> <p>4 COMMISSIONER CRUMP: Aye.</p> <p>5 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Werther.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER WERTHER: Aye.</p> <p>7 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Paton.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER PATON: Aye.</p> <p>9 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Commissioner Titla.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER TITLA: Aye.</p> <p>11 CHAIRMAN KIMBLE: Chair votes aye. We are</p> <p>12 adjourned. Thank you very much.</p> <p>13 (The meeting concluded at 11:15 a.m.)</p>

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1 STATE OF ARIZONA )  
 ) ss.

2 COUNTY OF MARICOPA )

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4 BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing proceedings  
5 were taken by me; that I was then and there a Certified  
6 Reporter of the State of Arizona; that the proceedings  
7 were taken down by me in shorthand and thereafter  
8 transcribed into typewriting under my direction; that  
9 the foregoing pages are a full, true, and accurate  
10 transcript of all proceedings had and adduced upon the  
11 taking of said proceedings, all to the best of my skill  
12 and ability.

13

14 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am in no way related  
15 to nor employed by any of the parties hereto nor am I  
16 in any way interested in the outcome hereof.

17

18 DATED at Tempe, Arizona, this 2nd day of  
19 December, 2025.

20

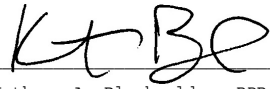
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Kathryn A. Blackwelder, RPR  
Certified Reporter #50666



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