

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

August 10, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Attorney General
Department of Justice

The Honorable Kash Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Honorable Bilal A. Essayli
First Assistant United States Attorney
U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California

Dear Attorney General Blanche, Director Patel, and Mr. Essayli:

On July 15, 2026, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (“the Committee”) held a hearing titled “Exposing Fraud in America.”¹ During the hearing, James O’Keefe, the Chief Executive Officer of O’Keefe Media Group (“O’Keefe Media”), testified that entities involved in gathering signatures for ballot petitions, namely 1 Moore Petition, LLC and Urban Signers, were allegedly illegally compensating individuals in exchange for their signatures.² Specifically, Mr. O’Keefe alleged that individuals were paid to forge the signatures of registered voters.³ These entities’ apparent actions risk undermining confidence in our democratic process. Mr. O’Keefe testified that he had been in contact with a United States attorney about these allegations, and to the extent that investigations are not already underway, I write to urge the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to immediately investigate these serious allegations in order to protect the integrity of our elections.⁴

On March 17, 2026, O’Keefe Media and affiliates published the first of a series of videos documenting election fraud occurring in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles,

¹ Exposing Fraud in America, Hearing before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Comm., 119th Cong. (July 15, 2026).

² *Id.* The exchange of cash or other valuable consideration for signatures on ballot petitions violates California state law. *See* Cal. Elections Code § 18603. However, other actions described by Mr. O’Keefe and revealed in the reporting may also constitute federal crimes, including identity fraud as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1028, and/or violations of 52 U.S.C. § 10307, which, *inter alia*, makes it a crime to give false information when registering to vote or to pay or accept payment for registering to vote.

³ Exposing Fraud in America, Hearing before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Comm., Statement of James O’Keefe, 119th Cong. (July 15, 2026).

⁴ *Id.*

California.⁵ The reporting revealed petitioners provided cash, cigarettes, and in some instances marijuana, in exchange for individuals' signatures on various ballot measures and voter registration forms.⁶ One petitioner likened the scheme to a "pyramid game," whereby petitioners receive payment on a per-signature basis and advance a portion of their earnings to the signee.⁷

O'Keefe Media also found petitioners instructing signees to impersonate registered voters using information from a database accessed through SigValid.com, giving signees names and addresses, and then having signees forge signatures.⁸ One petitioner was recorded by O'Keefe Media using SigValid.com and instructing an individual to use the name of a registered voter he had found in the database.⁹ "I'm going to give you a new name," the petitioner told the individual.¹⁰ "This is the last name you're going to use. You're not going to use your name."¹¹

In his testimony before the Committee, Mr. O'Keefe identified two entities, Urban Signers and 1 Moore Petition, LLC, which he alleged to have engaged in this fraud.¹² Urban Signers is operated by Franck Tessemo, an individual alleged to have committed ballot fraud in Switzerland using a similar pay-per-signature petition circulation scheme.¹³ Mr. Tessemo and his apparent employees were filmed admitting that his company's petitioners use "incentives" in the form of cash and cigarettes to secure signatures for ballot petitions.¹⁴ When asked by an undercover reporter pretending to be a prospective employee whether he could exchange cigarettes for signatures, Mr. Tessemo replied, "Sometimes. . . Yeah, sometimes somebody says, 'Give me one signature, I'll give you one cigarette.'"¹⁵ Mr. Tessemo also appeared to have little concern with the legality of his actions, and when asked if the exchange was permitted stated, "Yes, if you want."¹⁶ Mr. Tessemo's apparent knowledge and condonation of illegal signature-harvesting practices, as well as his history of ballot fraud, demands further investigation.

The other entity Mr. O'Keefe identified, 1 Moore Petition, LLC, which is operated by Tony Moore, is connected to Brenda Lee Brown Armstrong, who pleaded guilty on one count of

⁵ CASH FOR BALLOTS PART I: Cash & Drug Exchange for Registering Voters Caught on Tape in California, YouTube, Mar. 17, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzISgxuUg7s>.

⁶ *Id.* at 0:25.

⁷ *Id.* at 18:25.

⁸ California Identity Scam: Petition Fraudsters Log into Database to Supply Real Voter Names, YouTube, (Mar. 31, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBGxxVxBiYc>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.* at 3:10-15.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Exposing Fraud in America, Hearing before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Comm., Statement of James O'Keefe, 119th Cong. (July 15, 2026).

¹³ de Boer, Jan, Forgeries and Fraud: Signature Scandal Rocks Swiss Democracy, (Sept. 3, 2024), <https://www.iamexpat.ch/expat-info/swiss-news/forgeries-and-fraud-signature-scandal-rocks-swiss-democracy>. While his immigration status is unclear, Mr. Tessemo is recorded stating he is not a citizen of the United States; *see* We Exposed California's Election Fraud, YouTube, Mar. 19, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ4dsHEeMrcat> at 11:30.

¹⁴ We Exposed California's Election Fraud, YouTube, Mar. 19, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ4dsHEeMrcat> at 12:15 (Muckraker.com, which conducted this report, is an affiliate of O'Keefe Media).

¹⁵ *Id.* at 13:15.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 13:30.

paying another person to register to vote while she was employed by 1 Moore Petition.¹⁷ When O’Keefe Media asked Mr. Moore about Ms. Armstrong’s fraudulent activity while employed by his company, his response was shocking. Mr. Moore stated bluntly, “We catch people all the time doing fraud. The state does not prosecute. So why should these people care? . . . If there are no consequences to what you are doing, it doesn’t matter.”¹⁸ Mr. Moore appeared to be aware that fraud was being perpetrated by his employees, which begs the question as to whether he referred instances of fraud to state and federal law enforcement.¹⁹

The allegations raised by Mr. O’Keefe in his testimony suggest a much larger pattern of ballot fraud than any one individual. While the Department of Justice earlier this year indicted Ms. Armstrong on a felony charge of paying an individual to register to vote, both her employer and other petition circulation companies that operate under similarly fraudulent schemes appear to continue to conduct business as usual.²⁰ I therefore respectfully request a briefing on federal efforts to investigate and prosecute the individuals and organizations uncovered through the reporting summarized above. In the event that such investigations have not yet occurred, I urge you to undertake them immediately and update the Subcommittee as those investigations progress.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

¹⁷ Press Release, California Woman Federally Charged with Paying Individuals, Including Homeless People on L.A.’s Skid Row, to Register to Vote, U.S. Department of Justice, (May 18, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/california-woman-federally-charged-paying-individuals-including-homeless-people-las-skid-row>; *see also* California Identity Scam: Petition Fraudsters Log into Database to Supply Real Voter Names, YouTube, (Mar. 31, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBGxxVxBiYc>, at 11:24 (showing a check from 1 Moore Petition, LLC to Brenda Armstrong).

¹⁸ California Identity Scam: Petition Fraudsters Log into Database to Supply Real Voter Names, YouTube, (Mar. 31, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBGxxVxBiYc>, at 14:37.

¹⁹ Mr. Moore’s statements suggest that others at his company may have committed similar fraud to Ms. Armstrong in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1028 and/or 52 U.S.C. § 10307.

²⁰ Press Release, California Woman Federally Charged with Paying Individuals, Including Homeless People on L.A.’s Skid Row, to Register to Vote, U.S. Department of Justice, (May 18, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/california-woman-federally-charged-paying-individuals-including-homeless-people-las-skid-row>.