

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President and members of the Legislature, here is the frustration I'm having. First of all, we're told by people who say that they are in favor of petition circulating, talking about the rights of the people and how serious this is. How serious are we to take them when they're us people who sign these petitions don't even know how they signed their name in registering to vote? That's what we're dealing with, not where somebody else is giving a rendering of their name, where they wrote it. And the bill, the section of statute we're dealing with has language following that which we're talking about that says this. The express purpose of the comparison of names and addresses with the voter registration records, in addition to helping to determine the validity of such petition, the sufficiency of such petition, and the qualifications of the signer shall be to prevent fraud, deception and misrepresentation in the petition process. Is it too much to ask of a person signing a petition to know how he or she signed his or her name? Is it too much to ask that that signer put his or her address on the petition the way he or she wrote it when registering to vote? All of this that we're doing here not only clouds the issue, it does create problems for election commissioners and clerks. If the law is clear and the clerk can say, your name does not match what you...the name you wrote when you registered, the address does not match, I cannot say that your signature is valid. However, you can present other evidence to show that this signature is you. Then that person may bring other documents which clearly was signed by this person standing before the election commissioner or the clerk where that form of his or her name is on a document. Let's say that I registered Ernest W. Chambers. I sign a petition Ernie W. Chambers and the commissioner says the names don't match, I am allowed to bring, under this law that we have, other information to show it. Maybe I'll bring the contract from my car. Maybe I'll bring letters that I have written to show that this is the way I signed my name, this document relates to me. And by providing that other evidence which is there under the law, the problem can be solved. But we're talking right now about that first, initial decision, and I know that was a redundancy but I'm saying it for emphasis, when the issue is raised as to whether this signature is to be counted. That's what we're talking about. The clerk sees that the signature as written does not match the signature that appears on the registration form and says, this is not a match and this signature can't be counted. The person then can bring this other information or evidence to show why it ought to be