

Prepared by Stephanie W. Telles, Candidate for Albuquerque City Council, District 1

Ethics Complaint Against Scott Forrester, Campaign Manager for Ahren Griego

I, Stephanie W. Telles, am submitting this timeline and summary in support of my ethics complaint. I am Candidate A in this matter, and these events directly involve me.

Event Timeline (date and timestamped below)

On July 11, 2025 I had a telephone conversation with Scott Forrester where I was offered assistance in “retiring” or paying down my campaign debts if I would agree to withdraw my challenge contesting the verified signature petition count.

This offer was presented explicitly as an inducement to drop my effort to remain in the race.

I understood this offer to be made on behalf of Candidate B’s campaign, for the purpose of altering the outcome of the ballot qualification process.

During this conversation, it was also communicated that if I chose to proceed with my challenge and successfully qualified for the ballot, Candidate B’s campaign or others would file a lawsuit to challenge my place on the ballot and attempt to have me removed regardless.

This was stated in a way that I understood as an effort to pressure or intimidate me into withdrawing my legal challenge.

Based on my experience as a candidate, a fraud examiner, and an educator, I believe that offering to pay or help retire a rival’s campaign debts in exchange for withdrawing from a legal ballot contest is an unlawful inducement and constitutes bribery and attempted election fraud.

Additionally, I believe that threatening to initiate further litigation as a means of pressuring me to abandon my legitimate legal challenge may constitute extortion or coercion when combined with the offer of financial benefit.

I rejected the offer and chose to continue pursuing my challenge of the petition signature count.

I am reporting these events out of a commitment to transparency, accountability, and the integrity of the electoral process. I believe it is in the public interest that these allegations be thoroughly investigated by the appropriate authorities.

I certify that the information provided herein accurately reflect my personal knowledge of these events to the best of my ability.

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Friday, July 11, 2025:

- 12:51pm: Missed a phone call from Friend/Volunteer 1. No voicemail due to my full voicemail box.
- 1:38pm: Returned call to Friend/Volunteer 1. Left a voicemail.
- 3:50pm: Received text message from Friend/Volunteer 2 to call her when I have a few minutes.
- 3:52pm: Called Friend/Volunteer 2 in response to text message. Outgoing call, 7 min. 58 sec.

Details of conversation: Friend/Volunteer 2 informed me that Scott had called her to ask how seriously she thought I was about continuing with the contestation of the petition signatures. She stated that she told Scott that I am very serious.

Wherein he stated that he has already done a review of the petition signatures and that his review shows that more accurately the review would show that I missed the required 500 signature count by more than 7. That far more duplicates exist, and my valid signature count be down and closer to 440 adding that both Ahren and Daniel would also lose approved signatures due to the number of duplicates, but not enough to have them removed from the ballot. Friend/Volunteer 2 then informed me that Scott stated if I withdrawal my contestation he would help me retire any campaign debt owed. She further stated that Scott shared that if I continued with the contestation and I earned enough signatures that one or both, but at least one of the campaigns would move forward with a lawsuit to have me removed from the ballot. Friend/Volunteer 2 then stated to me that she told Scott she would let me know what he offered.

- 4:18pm: I sent a text message directly to Scott that read: "You know you could have just called me."
- 4:21pm: Scott replied: "Can you talk now?"
- 4:23pm: Me: "I'm on my way home, I'll text you when I get there."
- 4:23pm: Scott: Ok
- 4:55pm: Me: "Home and free when you are."
- 4:55pm: Received call from Scott. Incoming call, 12 min. 47 sec.

Details of conversation: We exchanged pleasantries, chatting about our kids. I had just gotten home from taking my daughter to the cat café and getting an oil change. We chatted a bit more about what the cat café was like and more about our kids. The conversation then turned to the topic of the campaign. I let him

know that I spoke with Friend/Volunteer 2 and she shared with me what he wanted to offer to me regarding the status of my campaign. I asked why he called Friend/Volunteer 2 (and Friend/Volunteer 1, confirmed later) rather than calling me directly. He said, typically campaign staff discuss matters with other campaign staff and don't generally engage directly with the candidate. I informed Scott that I do not have any campaign staff, that I am the campaign. I also let him know that Friend/Volunteer 1 and Friend/Volunteer 2 and my very close kind, and generous friends who stepped up to help and support me when I separated from my former campaign manager.

He began by sharing that this isn't a comfortable conversation to have, he never expected to have this conversation with me. We both acknowledged the friendly relationship we've had over the years due to our work.

He then proceeded to share the same information and make me the same offer he shared with Friend/Volunteer 2 and she then shared with me.

He informed me that he IPRA'd the petition information and their review shows that there are far more duplicates than what has been tallied and that my contestation and audit request will hurt my tally dropping it closer to 440 than above the 500 needed. He further stated that this will also have an impact on the signature tallies for Ahren and Daniel, but not to the extent it would have on mine and they would still have the 500 signatures required.

He then stated that, if the tally after the review doesn't match his analysis and I win the contestation and earn my place on the ballot that he knows for certain that one of the campaigns or both or anyone else will file a lawsuit to challenge the decision and have me removed from the ballot. I said, let them and that I didn't really care what they choose to do that it's their choice. They have a choice, and I have a choice and mine is to go forward with the process thoroughly. The election code allows for review and rehabilitation and the results should be accurate regardless of how it may change my position.

He then said, he knows that I have this ambition and that he knows I want to be the city councilor and there will be other opportunities in the future. I told him that I believe I have a responsibility to my supporters who endorsed me and to the voters who supported me to ensure I use every tool available in the process to ensure their voices are heard and that is what I intend to do.

The conversation continued for a few minutes more, including Scott saying again that he is not happy that we had to have this conversation and that he respects me along with other generally kind compliments. I thanked him and then asked him a question but stated I didn't expect an answer and asked honestly who he thought

was the most qualified candidate for this race. He responded very adamantly that he would not answer and that Ahren is his client. I told him that I didn't expect him to answer, and I respect his commitment to his client. I added that I know and understand this is his livelihood and it's his job and he has to do what he has to do for his business and family. He said he's fine financially and doesn't need to worry about his family being taken care of. I then told him that he should know I earned the 573 signatures without a staff, with a campaign manager who never believed in me, with the help and support of friends and supporters and all while taking care of my family, my work, and my mom who is dying and was moved into a memory care house and put on hospice during the qualifying period. I let him know that I planned her funeral during this process and to again consider if he still believes that my contesting the narrow miss by 7 signatures has anything to do with me or ambition. I said, I'm doing it because it's the right thing to do, regardless of how the outcome impacts me. The conversation ended very shortly after we exchanged pleasantries and a bit more about our kids and the cat café.

7:57pm: I texted Friend/Volunteer 2, again. "I'm sorry to bug, can you tell me again what he said? I'm just doing dishes so, if you want to call rather than text. But I also don't want to interrupt your evening."

8:00pm: Received call from Friend/Volunteer 2. Incoming 14 mins 52 secs.

Details of conversation: We spoke about our kids and activities of the day for a few minutes and then I said I had just been thinking about our respective conversations with Scott and that I wanted to be sure that I understood what he shared with her and if she could just go over her conversation with me one more time. She said, sure and stated again that he told her that the tally is actually more duplicates than it's saying there is and that his analysis shows that my tally of approved signatures will go down to closer to 440. That the other candidates' tallies will also go down and more signatures will be rejected for them, too, but they have so many more that they will remain on the ballot. She added that Scott told her if I withdrawal and don't move forward that they will help me retire any campaign debt that I have, but if I go forward, they will challenge it in court if I win the signature review.

I responded to Friend/Volunteer 2, okay that is what he told me, too.

Friend/Volunteer 2 also said that he had the same conversation with Friend/Volunteer 1, and it all sounded consistent, that he told the three of us the same thing.

I said yes, he offered bribery to all three of us. Friend/Volunteer 2 was a bit caught off guard, and at first thought that it was not bribery, but I told her that is the exact

definition of bribery. That this is what I do for a living and that I wonder if he forgot that I am a fraud examiner and this could be a case study for bribery. She acknowledged that it was bribery. I added that he also threatened me with a lawsuit in addition to bribery. We both acknowledged the threat and bribery.

We chatted for a little bit longer about our kids and activities and ended the conversations.

8:28pm

Received call from Friend/Volunteer 1. Incoming call, 26 min 33 sec.

This began as just a call between friends, and we had a normal conversation about kids, husbands, family, and other mundane topics. She was driving from working in Santa Fe.

After a little while the call pivoted to the campaign and the conversation between me and Scott. I shared the exchange he and I had. Friend/Volunteer 1 shared that her conversation with Scott was the same as the conversation he had with Friend/Volunteer 2. We confirmed again that there was an offer of bribery and the threat of a lawsuit.

Our conversation continued for a while more. I shared that the whole situation is wrong and unethical. I said that with this turn of events I have an even greater obligation to go forward with the process as intended and it's shady situations like this have people so disillusioned with the state of politics, and also why they have so little trust in our government and leaders.

The call turned back to kids and ended shortly after because my daughter was calling for me.

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