E-FILED 2026 OCT 29 9:48 AM BLACK HAWK - CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT

IN THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT FOR BLACK HAWK COUNTY

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE, Plaintiff, v. KAREN SHOWALTER, Defendant.	No. _____ PETITION

Parties, Jurisdiction, and Venue

1. The Republican National Committee (RNC) is the national campaign entity for the Republican Party. See 52 U.S.C. § 30101. It manages the Republican Party's business at the national level, supports Republican candidates for public office at all levels, coordinates fundraising and election strategy, and develops and promotes the national Republican platform.

2. Showalter is the Black Hawk County Auditor. She is sued in her official capacity as the custodian of records related to her duties as the county commissioner of elections.

3. Venue is proper in Black Hawk County because the events giving rise to this action occurred there.

Factual Background

4. The RNC operates an extensive election integrity operation to ensure that its candidates have the maximum opportunity to receive support from Republican voters throughout the Nation.

5. As part of its election integrity operations, the RNC had representatives attend logic and accuracy testing of voting equipment in Black Hawk County on October 1, 2026. This testing was performed in anticipation of the 2026 general election to be held on November 3, 2026.

6. Public access to logic and accuracy testing is guaranteed by Iowa Code § 52.35(1) ("The test shall be open to the public."). In addition, the county commissioner of elections must provide notice to the county chairperson of each political party "so that they may be present or have a representative present." *Id.*

7. The purpose of logic and accuracy testing is to ensure that optical scan tabulating equipment will correctly tabulate votes for each race as cast by voters. The testing is designed to ensure that the tabulation correctly corresponds to the marks placed by voters on a paper ballot and that the tabulation equipment is correctly configured to reject ballots where the voter has marked more choices than permitted for a particular office.

8. Under Iowa Code § 52.35 and Iowa Admin. Code 721—22.43(2)(b), tabulating equipment must be sealed following the completion of logic and accuracy testing. Sealing is accomplished by placing a tamper-evident with a unique number on the equipment. The seal permits the commissioner and the public to determine that the tabulating equipment has not been altered between testing and its use in the election.

9. As an example, seals placed on Polk County tabulating equipment following 2026 logic and accuracy testing are shown below:

POWER ON
23329050

ELECTION
OFFICIAL SEAL
J. Ryan Co.
8612505

10. The seals placed on tabulating equipment following logic and accuracy testing, including the serial numbers written on them, are public records under Iowa Code § 22.1(3)(a) because they are "records, documents…or other information, stored or preserved in any medium," that are maintained by the defendant in the performance of her duties as the county commissioner of elections.

11. Iowa Code § 52.35(4) requires that all persons present for logic and accuracy testing must sign a certificate attesting to the performance of the test. The certificate must be in substantially the following form:

> The undersigned certify that we were present and witnessed the testing of the following tabulating devices; that we believe the devices are in proper condition for use in the election of ..... (date); that following the test the vote totals were erased from the memory of each tabulating device and a report was produced showing that all vote totals in the memory were set at 0000; that the devices were securely locked or sealed; and that the serial numbers and locations of the devices which were tested are listed below.
>
> Signed .....
>
> (name and political party affiliation, if applicable)
>
> .....
>
> (name and political party affiliation, if applicable)
>
> .....
>
> Voting equipment custodian
>
> Dated .....
>
> Precinct Location Serial Number
>
> ....
>
> ....

12. Despite the provisions of law which guarantee the right of the public to witness logic and accuracy testing and which obligate those in attendance to certify the sealing of tabulating equipment, the defendant refused to permit RNC representatives to photograph or otherwise document the seal numbers placed on tabulating equipment.

13. In a follow up email on October 6, 2026, with an RNC representative, the defendant claimed that the seal information was confidential under Iowa Code § 22.7(50) and a resolution of the Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors passed in 2018. See Attachment 1.

14. On October 27, 2026, the Secretary of State informed county auditors that the documents related to logic and accuracy testing were public records and could not be withheld from the public.

15. Despite this direction, on October 28, 2026, Showalter again refused to provide the serial numbers of the seals placed on tabulating equipment to an RNC representative. Showalter repeated her claim that the serial numbers were protected by the county's resolution and section 22.7(50).

16. Under Iowa Code § 22.2(1), "[e]very person shall have the right to examine and copy a public record…" The Iowa Supreme Court has recognized that under Chapter 22, "[t]here is a presumption in favor of disclosure" and "a liberal policy in favor of access to public records." *Mitchell* v. *City of Cedar Rapids*, 926 N.W.2d 222, 229 (Iowa 2019).

17. Because the defendant claims that the security seals are confidential, it is her burden to show they are not subject to inspection and copying under Chapter 22. Iowa Code § 22.10(2).

18. Section 22.7(50) permits government officials to withhold from release "[i]nformation and records concerning physical infrastructure, cyber security, critical infrastructure, security procedures, or emergency preparedness developed, maintained, or held by a government body for the protection of life or property, if disclosure could reasonably be expected to jeopardize such life or property."

19. Disclosure of information which the public has the right to view and certify the existence of cannot, as a matter of law, be information that is "developed, maintained, or held…for the protection of life or property," nor could its disclosure be "reasonably expected to jeopardize such life or property."

20. The specific provisions of section 52.35 and IAC 721—22.43(2)(b) mandating public access must be applied over a general statute that permits certain security information in public records to remain confidential.

21. The board of supervisors cannot alter the legal framework that requires release of records under section 52.35.

22. Because the seals associated with logic and accuracy testing are public records and are not otherwise confidential, the defendant knowingly violated Iowa Code § 22.2 when she refused to permit inspection of them.

Cause of Action – Iowa Code Chapter 22

23. Under the provisions of Iowa Code § 22.10, plaintiff respectfully requests the Court order the following:

a. that defendant must produce the withheld records;

b. that the defendant be enjoined from further violations of Iowa Code Chapter 22, with violations of said injunction punishable by civil contempt proceedings;

c. that the defendant must pay a civil penalty;

d. that the defendant must pay the plaintiff's reasonable attorney fees and the costs of this action.

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