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Recall counts on signatures

Election workers begin processing a petition that could force a lawmaker to face a special election.

[By Steve Friess](#)
[Review-Journal](#)

Elections department workers on Friday counted 7,474 signatures on the 959 pages of petitions filed Thursday by a citizens group seeking the recall of County Commission Chairwoman Yvonne Atkinson Gates.

The raw count, conducted twice Friday, is the first step in the process of determining whether Citizens for Honest and Responsible Government met the criteria required to trigger a special election on Atkinson Gates.

The group needed just 4,380 signatures to spark the recall. Deputy Secretary of State Pamela Crowell authorized Clark County Registrar of Voters Kathryn Ferguson to now choose 500 signatures at random to verify.

Ferguson, who has until May 21 to do so, said her office will begin Monday to compare 500 signatures on the forms to the voter registration forms of the same people. If more than 90 percent but less than 100 percent are valid, Crowell will order Ferguson to check all 7,474 signatures until 4,380 valid signatures are found.

A recall election would not



Assistant county Registrar Larry Lomax, left, explains the recall process to Charles Bennion, whose group is trying to recall Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates, Tom Westmoreland, an acquaintance of Bennion's, Aviva Gordon, Gates' attorney, and Torey Lee Witt, Gates' campaign

take place until the last week of June at the earliest, Ferguson said. It would be the first time a Clark County commissioner ever faced a recall election.

manager.
Photo by [Jeff Scheid](#).

The recall bid fails if fewer than 90 percent of the 500 signatures are valid.

The citizens group, led by North Las Vegas Charles Bennion, is angry with Atkinson Gates for alleged ethical lapses. The commissioner, who represents portions of North Las Vegas and downtown Las Vegas, was reprimanded by the state Ethics Commission in January for lobbying casino executives to give her a lease deal on a proposed daiquiri-stand business.

The ethics panel resumes an unrelated inquiry Thursday on whether she voted to give airport concessions contracts to her friends without disclosing her relationships to the vendors.

Terry Akers, a 34-year-old Republican chiropractor, has announced he will run against Atkinson Gates if a special election is held. He will also need to secure at least 4,380 valid signatures to put himself on the ballot.

Atkinson Gates won election to her second term in 1996 with 79 percent of the vote.

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