Re: Concern About Notarization of Incomplete Affidavit of Service

Dear Delena McDuffee,

I am writing to raise a serious concern about an affidavit of service (attached) you notarized in connection with a 30-Day Notice of Lease Termination issued to tenant [redacted] at 303 North First Street, Apt. [redacted] Fairfield, Illinois, dated July 8, 2026.

The affidavit in question appears to be incomplete on its face at the time of notarization. The form lists multiple service methods (personal delivery, substitute service, certified mail with return receipt, posting), but none of these methods were selected or marked. Despite this, the affidavit was signed, sworn, and notarized as if it were a fully completed record of service.

Illinois notary guidance states that a notary should never notarize a blank or incomplete document, because blank spaces or unselected options can later be altered or used to change the meaning of what was signed. In most notary practice rules, including national guidance, notaries are instructed to refuse notarization when the main body of the document contains missing information or blank sections.

In this case, the incomplete affidavit of service was attached to a notice that starts a strict grievance deadline. On its face, the notarized paper makes it appear that service occurred on or around July 8, 2026, which is the date of the affidavit, even though the actual service by a sheriff's deputy Warren occurred later (on July 17, 2026). The combination of an incomplete form and a notarization giving it an appearance of finality creates a risk that:

1. The service date will be misread as July 8 instead of the true date of deputy service.
2. The tenant's 10-day grievance window will be calculated from the wrong date.
3. The notarized document will be used to **run out the clock** on due-process rights, based on a misleading record of service rather than the actual facts.

Because an affidavit of service is intended to be reliable proof of when and how legal notice was delivered, notarizing the affidavit while the service method section remained unmarked undermines the integrity of the service record and exposes the tenant to potential loss of rights.

I respectfully ask that you:

- Review your practices to ensure that you do not notarize documents that are incomplete or contain unselected service options in the body of the form.
- Confirm that, before notarizing any affidavit of service, the service details (method, date, time, and recipient) are fully and accurately filled in.

- Consider whether this particular affidavit should be corrected or replaced with a properly completed and notarized version that accurately reflects the actual service date and method. (IE. “2 Substitute – Handed off to Sherriff dept for service”)
- Please also consider how an unscrupulous, immoral, unethical, or incompetent individual could manipulate incomplete forms for personal gain, including using them to misstate service dates and improperly cut off a tenant’s grievance or due-process rights.

I am not asking you to certify the truth of the underlying allegations; I understand that is not a notary’s role. My concern is limited to the **notarial act itself**: certifying an incomplete affidavit of service that conceals the true method of service and could later be used to misstate deadlines and impair a tenant’s grievance and due-process rights.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for taking steps to ensure that future notarizations comply with Illinois notary rules and best practices.

Sincerely,

[redacted]