

1. General Information

- Candidates must file a Certificate of Candidacy with the appropriate State or local election office depending on the office sought.
- A Statement of Organization to form an authorized candidate campaign committee must accompany the Certificate of Candidacy (unless the candidate is already associated with a candidate committee or running for federal office).
- Candidates must file a financial disclosure statement in accordance with State or local law (if applicable for that office) prior to or at the time of filing the Certificate of Candidacy.
- A filing fee is not required for a write-in candidate.
- The candidate may file the Certificate of Candidacy by mail or in person.
 - ❖ If mailed, mail all required documents together. Please note that the Certificate of Candidacy and the Financial Disclosure Statement must be notarized for State office.
 - ❖ If filed in person, the candidate must provide identification (preferably a driver's license or official State ID).

Recommendation: We recommend that a write-in candidate **file as early as possible** in order to appear on various candidate lists, including the write-in candidate list on the specimen ballots. Additionally, early filing gives a write-in candidate more time to designate challengers and watchers at voting locations.

2. Deadline

- Write-in candidates must file a Certificate of Candidate by the earlier of:
 - 7 days after total expenditures of at least \$51 is made to promote the candidacy for that election; or
 - 5:00pm on the 7th day preceding the start of early voting. If mailed, the appropriate election office must **receive** the Certificate of Candidacy and all requisite documents by the deadline. Timely postmarked or faxed copies will not be accepted. Original signatures are required. A filing received after the deadline will **not** be accepted.

3. Campaign Finance Entity – Required

- Each write-in candidate except federal write-in candidates must file a Statement of Organization to form an authorized candidate campaign committee. A committee must be formed even if the candidate doesn't plan to have any financial activity.
- The candidate committee is required to file campaign finance reports periodically during the election year. Candidates who don't plan to have campaign finance activity greater than \$1,000 may file an Affidavit of Limited Contributions and Expenditures instead of a detailed campaign finance report. The Affidavit must be filed for every reporting period. Only when the Affidavit is marked final will the filing obligations end.
- Before each reporting deadline, the officers of the committee and the candidate will receive a pre-report notice (blue postcard) in the mail. If you believe the notice was sent in error, please contact SBE immediately, otherwise late fees will accrue. The maximum penalty for a failure to file is \$500 per report.

4. Voting

In a general election, a voter can cast a write-in vote for a candidate whose name does not appear on the ballot.

To cast a write-in vote on a paper ballot:

- Use a black pen and:
 - ❖ Fill in the oval to the left of the Write-in line for the contest in which you wish to cast a write-in vote.
 - ❖ Write the candidate's first and last name on the write-in line next to the filled-in oval.
- Any abbreviation, misspelling, or minor variation in the candidate's name will be disregarded as long as election officials can determine who the intended candidate is. Writing the last name only will constitute a valid vote, unless there is more than one candidate with the same last name.
- Writing in the name of the candidate for President **or** Vice President will be counted as a vote for the joint office.
- Candidates may give out instructions or diagrams showing how to spell the candidate's name. Applying stickers or labels to the ballot with the write-in candidate's name is not permitted.
- If you write in a candidate's name and change your mind, you will need a new ballot. If you are voting during early voting or on election day, ask an election judge for a new ballot. If you have an absentee ballot, contact your local board of elections and ask for a new ballot.
- Failure to fill in the oval for a write-in will not invalidate the vote for that candidate.

To cast a write-in vote using the audio ballot:

- Follow the instructions and use the key pad to select "Write-in."
- Use the keypad to enter, change and confirm each letter as you enter a write-in candidate's name.
- After entering a write-in candidate's name, follow the instructions to continue voting.
- Follow the instructions to change a write-in vote before casting your ballot.

5. Canvassing Write-in Votes

- Each local board of elections will canvass the write-in votes for every filed write-in candidate.
- Initially, each local board of elections will report all write-in votes as one total. During the 10-day canvassing period, each local board of elections will manually review all write-in votes and tally write-in votes for each filed write-in candidate.
- Before a local board of elections certifies election results, the number of write-in votes cast for each write-in candidate will be reported individually.