

CANDIDATE PETITION CERTIFICATION REMINDERS

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary of State, Revised January 2022

Candidate petitions for the 2022 election cycle were made available to candidates starting on December 31, 2021 and are now circulating. Additionally, redistricting, which occurs every 10 years, has recently been completed and CVR has been updated. The new districts were effective as of January 3, 2022 so all candidates are running in these new districts. A separate mailing regarding the new districts applicable to your municipality has been sent to officials (by either U.S. mail or email). Please make sure you are aware of the new districts and are certifying petitions accordingly.

This memo outlines the procedure to be followed when certifying a candidate petition. Please note there is a special procedure applicable to only Libertarian Party candidates due to a recent court decision. When certifying petitions for Libertarian candidates, you must be aware of these special provisions described below in the section entitled “Libertarian Candidates”.

Deadlines

- Candidates in a qualified party (Democratic, Green Independent, Libertarian and Republican) must file primary nomination petitions with the Secretary of State by **5 p.m. on March 15, 2022**. Party candidates do not have an earlier deadline for submitting petitions to municipal officials.
- Although the Secretary of State encourages party candidates to file petitions with local officials as soon as possible, you should make arrangements to have an election official available to certify petitions promptly as the filing deadline nears. The Secretary of State strongly recommends that the Registrar or Deputy Registrar be available until 5 p.m. on each filing deadline so that a candidate can get all petitions certified prior to filing with the Secretary of State.
- Unenrolled candidates must file non-party nomination petitions with the Secretary of State by **June 1, 2022**. The statutory deadline for non-party candidates to file petitions with the Municipal Registrar is **by 5 p.m. on May 25, 2022**. **You need to make arrangements to have someone available to accept petitions on these deadline dates until 5 p.m.**
- The deadline for Citizen Initiative petitions to file with Municipal Election Officials is 5 p.m. January 21, 2022. (A memo regarding certification of initiative petitions was provided in November 2021 and is also included in this mailing.) If you get initiative petitions to certify on or before this deadline, you should complete the initiative petitions first before certifying candidate petitions as initiative petitions have an earlier deadline.

Certification Procedure

- Follow the certification procedures for each type of petition (primary and non-party) outlined in Chapter 5 of your *Voter Registration & Elections – The Guide for Maine Election Administrators* training manual.
- CVR should be used to search and verify the signers of petitions as registered voters in your municipality. In CVR, you can search for the person whose signature is on the petition using the **Inquiries – Voter Registration** search function, to determine the person’s registration status. **Do not enter the signatures in the Municipal Petitions Module as this module is designed for only local petitions.** Alternatively, print a current Alpha Voter List (without dates of birth or mailing addresses) to use to look up and certify voters.
- **If the signature is not available in CVR or you have questions about whether the voter’s name on the petition is the voter in CVR, you should always check the voter registration application as the definitive source document for voter information.**
- Complete the certification on the petition form as usual (with a check mark for registered voters and the appropriate code for an invalid signature).
 - Use **NR** to designate people who are not registered to vote in your municipality
 - Use **NE** if the voter is not properly enrolled to sign the petition -- remember, for a primary nomination petition, the voter must be enrolled in the Party named on the petition. (See exception for Libertarian candidates below.)
 - See Chapter 5, pages 11 and 12, for additional codes.

Libertarian Candidates

In the court decision for the Libertarian's challenge to the Secretary of State's disqualification of the Libertarian Party, the judge ruled that Libertarian Party candidates seeking ballot access for the June 14, 2022 primary can collect signatures not only from voters enrolled in the Libertarian Party **but also from unenrolled voters**. This exception applies **only to Libertarian candidates**. If an unenrolled voter has signed a Libertarian Party petition, the code for that signature should be a checkmark as it is a valid signature. If a voter who is enrolled in another qualified party (i.e., Democratic, Green Independent or Republican) signs a Libertarian petition, the signature is not valid and must be coded "NE".

Certification Procedure (continued)

Two important certifications are printed on the reverse side of each candidate petition form, which relate to that petition form and/or the candidate named on the petition. Please review the descriptions of each certification provided below and complete the certifications accordingly.

Circulator's Oath

- The Circulator of a petition must sign the Circulator's Oath for each petition witnessed, in the presence of a Notary Public.
- This Oath **does not** have to be completed prior to the Registrar certifying the candidate petitions.
- If you are a notary and are asked to notarize the oath for a circulator, you may notarize the Oath prior to completing your certification.

Registrar's Certification

- The Registrar must complete the Registrar's Certification on each petition.
- Fill in the municipality name, and the number of Valid and Invalid signatures. This number should match the number of valid and invalid signatures you have marked in the "For Registrar use only" column on the petition.

PRIMARY PETITION

- Signers of a primary petition must be enrolled in the same party within the same district as the candidate (except for Libertarian candidates – see exception above). If a signer of the petition is not in the correct party, the signature is invalid for the reason "NE".

NON-PARTY PETITION

- Signers of a non-party petition must be registered voters within the same district as the candidate. Any voter, regardless of party affiliation, may sign a non-party nomination petition.
- The Registrar must sign and date the Certification.

Candidate's Consent and Certification of Candidate Enrollment/Unenrollment

The Certification of Candidate Enrollment (party candidates) and the Certification of Candidate Unenrollment (non-party candidates) are printed on the Candidate's Consent form.

- If the candidate is a registered voter in your municipality, you must complete this certification once.
- Fill in the candidate's name as it appears in the Central Voter Registration System.
- For a primary candidate, indicate in which party the candidate is enrolled by writing the party name in the blank provided.

NOTE: A candidate who has changed enrollment (i.e. switched from one qualified party to another) after January 1, 2022, is not eligible to file primary nomination petitions. If the candidate has changed enrollment, **do not** complete this certification for the candidate.

- For a non-party candidate, confirm that the candidate is not enrolled in a qualified party after March 1st (or by the date of certification, if before March 1st).

NOTE: Again, if the candidate was enrolled in a qualified party after March 1, 2022, that candidate is not eligible to be a non-party candidate this year - **do not** complete this certification for the candidate.

The chart below summarizes the signature requirements for the various types of candidate petitions.

	State Primary – 6/14/22 – Democratic, Green Independent and Republican	State Primary – 6/14/22 – Libertarian	Non-party – 11/8/22
Date candidates may begin circulating	January 1, 2022	January 1, 2022	January 1, 2022
Filing deadline with Municipal Official	N/A	N/A	May 25, 2022
Filing deadline with Secretary of State	March 15, 2022	March 15, 2022	June 1, 2022
Who May Sign?	Voter enrolled in party named on petition	Voter enrolled in Libertarian Party and unenrolled voter	Any registered voter