

# Petitions

## General Information on Petitions

These sample forms were prepared by the State Board of Elections. They are all in Acrobat PDF format. You will need the Adobe (TM) Acrobat Reader to view and print them.

These forms can be printed and filled out by hand. Print all petitions on legal size paper. Electronic signatures are not acceptable.

Persons wishing to run for elective office may either be designated by a political party or nominated through the filing of an independent nominating petition. Party members may also circulate petitions to create the opportunity to write in the name of an unspecified person for an office in which there is no contest for a party endorsement. The current official political parties are the Republican, Democratic, Conservative, and Working Families parties. The requirements for all petitions are contained in the Election Law and are summarized below.

## Form of a Petition

The statute requires that all petitions be substantially in the form set forth in the law. Deviations or slight rearrangements of the form of petition are not fatal defects, provided that the petition contains all of the required information.

Each sheet of the petition must correctly set forth:

the date of the election;

the name of the candidate and the office or position sought;

the candidate's residence, and if different, their mailing or post office address;

information about the signer – date of signing, voter's residence address, town or city; and

information relating to the person who witnessed the signatures.

A petition may include a committee on vacancies. Failure to provide such a committee, or naming a committee of fewer than three persons, will not invalidate the petition.

The voter need only sign the appropriate line on the petition sheet. All other information may be filled in by someone else. Corrections may be made to any information on the signature line. However, corrections or alterations in the date or the signature **MUST** be initialed by the person making the correction.

Voters may not sign a petition for more candidates than there are openings for an office. For example, if there is one council seat open, then the voter may only sign one petition for a candidate for that office. If there are 2 seats open, the voter may sign petitions for 2 candidates.

The pages of a petition must be sequentially numbered and securely fastened.

## **Witnesses to a Petition**

Anyone who is qualified to sign the petition may witness the petition. Also, any registered voter residing within the state may circulate and witness a petition of the party in which he or she is enrolled. The information required for the witness statement is mandatory. Omissions, errors, or unexplained alterations/corrections, may invalidate the entire page. When the witness signs the statement of witness, they are making an oath that subjects them to the penalties for perjury if any of the information preceding their signature is false. The information preceding the signature includes the name and residence of the witness, the number of signatures on the page, a statement that each person signed in their presence, and the date they are signing the statement. Witness identification information which follows the witness's signature may be provided by anyone at any time before the petition is filed. This information includes the town or city and the county of the witness's registration.

A Notary Public or Commissioner of Deeds may circulate and witness a petition in any jurisdiction in which he or she is authorized to administer an oath. The Notary Public or Commissioner of Deeds must execute a separate statement in lieu of the statement of witness.

## Cover Sheets

If there are 10 or more pages in a petition, there must be a cover sheet. Multi-volume petitions requires a cover sheet for each volume. pdf\_icon\_mini SAMPLE COVER SHEET.

Cover sheets must contain the following information:

name, residence address, and mailing address if different, of the candidate.

the public office or party position sought.

the name of the party or independent body making the nomination.

a statement that the petition contains a number of signatures equal to or in excess of the number required by statute.

the volume number OR identification number of that volume.

the total number of volumes in each petition OR the identification number for each volume of the petition.

The following information is optional:

the name, residence address, (and mailing address if different) telephone number, and facsimile number of the person designated to receive notice of deficiencies in binding or cover sheet requirements.

There are additional requirements if the petition contains candidates for county committee, and if there are different candidates on the several pages of the petition. Those requirements are contained in the Election Law.

The Board of Elections will provide notice of any correctable errors in cover sheet(s) and binding.

## Designating Petitions

If a party nominates its candidates through the primary election process, party designations for the primary are made on a designating petition. The number of signatures required on a petition vary by office. Only enrolled members of the party qualified to vote for an office are eligible to sign a designating petition. pdf\_icon\_mini SAMPLE DESIGNATING PETITION

## **Independent Nominating Petition**

To run for office on a line other than an official party line, one must file an independent nominating petition. The number of signatures required to qualify the candidacy of a person on an independent party line varies by office. Any registered voter who has not already signed a designating petition, and who is qualified to vote for an office, may sign an independent nominating petition for that office.

pdf\_icon\_miniSAMPLE INDEPENDENT NOMINATING PETITION

## **Opportunity To Ballot Petition**

To create the opportunity to write in the name of an unspecified person for an office in which there is no contest for the party endorsement, party members may circulate an opportunity to ballot petition. The number of signatures required to create an opportunity to ballot is equal to the number of signatures required to designate the party's candidate for that office.

pdf\_icon\_miniSAMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO BALLOT PETITION

## **Certificates**

### **Certificate of Acceptance**

Candidates must file a certificate of acceptance for nominations made by independent nominating petitions, or for designations of persons not enrolled as a member of that party.

pdf\_icon\_mini.jpgSAMPLE CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

## **Certificate of Declination**

A certificate of declination must be filed should the candidate decide not to accept the designation or nomination. pdf\_icon\_miniSAMPLE CERTIFICATE OF DECLINATION

## **Certificate of Substitution**

Should a vacancy in a designation or nomination exist due to the declination, disqualification or death of a candidate a certificate of substitution may be filed. pdf\_icon\_miniSAMPLE CERTIFICATE OF SUBSTITUTION

## **Certificate of Authorization**

A certificate of authorization is required when political parties nominate a candidate who is not an enrolled member of that party. The certificate of authorization must be signed and acknowledged by the presiding officer and the secretary of the meeting at which such authorization is given. pdf\_icon\_miniSAMPLE CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION

## **Filing General Objections and Specifications to Objections**

NOTE: The above information is intended to provide general guidance for candidates and persons who are preparing to circulate petitions, and is not to be used as a substitute for consulting the Election Law for specific petition requirements.