

# Independent Candidate Ballot Access

Those not qualifying through a political party may obtain ballot access by submitting a petition to the secretary of state, if seeking a state or federal office, or to the probate judge if seeking a county office. There is no qualifying fee.

For ballot access in the 2016 General Election, the petition must be filed no later than **the date of the primary, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016**.

For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Probate Judge for the petition deadline.

## **Federal Candidates**

### *Signatures ...*

A congressional candidate must submit a petition with enough signatures to meet or to exceed **three percent** of the qualified electors who cast ballots for the office of governor in the last General Election for the district in which he/she is running [**§17-9-3 (a) (3), Code of Alabama, 1975**]. For the number of signatures needed in each district, call the Office of Secretary of State's Elections Division at (334) 242-7210. Candidates seeking a U.S. Senate seat would need the number of signatures for statewide candidacy.

## **State or County Candidates**

### *Signatures ...*

The number of signatures on the petition must equal or exceed at least **three percent** of the qualified electors who cast ballots for the office of governor in the last General Election in the county, district, or other political subdivision for which he/she is seeking ballot access. If seeking ballot access for a statewide office, the petition must equal or exceed **three percent** of the total vote cast for governor in the last General Election, 2014. A petition for statewide ballot access in the 2016 election year must have at least **35,412** verified signatures of registered voters. Call the Elections Division for a list with the number of signatures needed for county offices.

### **FCPA...**

Independent candidates should be aware of their obligation to file an Appointment of Principal Campaign Committee Form at the time they submit their petition or within five days of exceeding the monetary threshold amount set forth by the FCPA. The monetary threshold amount is \$1,000 for all elective offices.

### **ETHICS...**

Independent candidates must file a Statement of Economic Interests with the appropriate election official simultaneously upon becoming a candidate. For information on filing the Statement of Economic Interests, call the Alabama Ethics Commission (334) 242-2997.

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## Petition requirements

- ◇ A statement that includes the name of the independent candidate, the date of the general election, and the office sought, including district number, if applicable. Petitions for the establishment of independent candidacy in a special election shall not be required to include the date of the special election at the top of each page. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(1)]
- ◇ Numbered pages. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(1)]
- ◇ Requested information for each person signing which includes name, residential address, county of residence, city of residence (if applicable), voting place, date of birth and signature. A signature shall not be deemed invalid for lacking any portion of the requested information if the disclosed information is sufficient for determining the validity of a signature. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(3)]
- ◇ A *sample petition form*, which may be photo copied, is available from the Office of the Secretary of State and on the Secretary of State's election web site: [www.alabamavotes.gov](http://www.alabamavotes.gov).

## Petition suggestions

- ◇ Have the voter sign in ink and write legibly.
- ◇ Obtain signatures in excess of required number, as some signatures may not be valid and/or identifiable.
- ◇ Keep a copy of the petition.

## Petition Filing Locations

Petitions for **state and federal offices** must be filed in the Elections Division of the Office of Secretary of State, located in the State Capitol, Room E-210, Dexter Avenue, in Montgomery, Alabama.

Petitions for **county offices** must be filed in the office of the **county probate judge**.

**Mailing address:**                     **Elections Division**                     **Telephone: (334) 242-7210 or**  
  **Office of the Secretary of State**                     **(800) 274-VOTE**  
  **P.O. Box 5616**  
  **Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5616**

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