

RUN FOR OFFICE



- Campaign Checklist
- Candidate Requirements
- Nomination Papers
- Signature Procedures
- Contributions and Expenses
- Other Resources

Campaign Checklist

General Considerations

1. Be a registered voter for the district in which you plan to run.
2. Check the deadline for filing nomination papers for the office that you seek.
3. Review the days and dates of election carefully (i.e., consider holidays, etc.)

Candidate Requirements

U.S. Representative

Candidates for a national House seat representing Massachusetts must be an inhabitant of Massachusetts when elected and registered to vote in the state, at least 25 years old, and must collect 2,000 signatures. Candidates must also have been a U.S. citizen

U.S. Senator

Candidates for a national Senate seat representing Massachusetts must be an inhabitant of Massachusetts when elected as well as registered to vote in the state, at least 30 years old, and must collect 10,000 signatures. Candidates also must have been U.S. citizen for at least 9 years.

State Senator

Candidates for a state Senate seat must be a resident of the district which they wish to serve and a resident of Massachusetts for at least 5 years. Candidates must collect 300 signatures.

State Representative

Candidates for a state-level House seat must have been a resident of the district which they wish to serve for at least one year. Candidates must collect 150 signatures.

Nomination Papers

Availability

Nomination papers are available from the Secretary of State and may be requested in person, by telephone or mail. Some local clerks and election commissioners in the district may also have nomination papers available. Call the Elections Division to request papers or find out whether they are available in the district. Please be aware that nomination papers for unenrolled candidates are available only at the Elections Division at the Boston office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The law allows a candidate to make exact copies of blank nomination papers in order to gather additional signatures. However, do not alter the nomination papers in any way. Additional markings on the papers may disqualify any signatures contained thereon.

File Early

Nomination papers must be submitted to the local board of registrars or election commission for the certification of names. It is advisable to deliver the papers by hand to ensure their timely delivery. The local board of registrars or election commissioners must complete their certification of names 24 hours prior to the filing deadline with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The signatures of at least three members of the board of registrars or election commission must appear next to the number of certified signatures.

Nomination papers must be picked up from the board of registrars or election commission after certification and filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth prior to the deadline in the special election calendar. Papers sent by mail and received in the Elections Division after the deadline will not be accepted even if they were postmarked before the deadline time and date.

Signature Procedures

The procedures described below are essentially the same for both party and unenrolled candidates' nomination papers.

To be certified, all signatures on nomination papers must be:

1. Legible
 2. Signed with the name of the voter as registered and
 3. Include the complete address at which the voter is registered.
- The law allows a voter to insert or omit a middle name or initial.
 - According to the law, a name should be considered signed substantially as registered if the registrars can reasonably determine the identity of the voter from the form of the signature.
 - A married woman should sign "Helen Smith," not "Mrs. John Smith."
 - To avoid legal objections, it is wise to consult a voting list if available to ensure that the voter signs substantially as registered. Avoid the use of a nickname and/or initials whenever possible.
 - Each candidate may receive one voters' list from each city or town in the district at no cost.
 - Voters who are uncertain of the way they are registered may sign in different ways on consecutive lines (with address each time) and the registrar will certify only the valid name.
 - No person may sign for another person unless authorized to do so by a voter who is physically disabled and unable to sign personally. A signature not made by the actual voter is subject to challenge.
 - A husband may not sign for a wife and a wife may not sign for a husband unless one spouse is physically disabled.
 - A voter may sign once for each candidate for office. If a voter signs more than once for the same candidate, that voter's name will be certified only once.

Signature Checklists

Only one city or town on each nomination paper

Each page of the nomination papers should contain signatures of registered voters from only one city or town. District boundaries may be checked on the list of districts available from the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Make sure signatures are legitimate

Since the local registrars of voters or election commissioners must certify each name as that of a registered voter in their jurisdiction, names from other communities will be disallowed. If a candidate is running for office in a district that crosses city or town lines, separate nomination papers should be circulated and submitted in each municipality. Refer to Signature Procedures for further signature regulations.

Contributions and Expenses

The law requires that campaign expenses and contributions be reported by candidates seeking election at every level of government.

State and Local Offices

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance is responsible for receiving and maintaining records for candidates for state representative and state senator.

For more information please contact:

Director of Campaign and Political Finance

One Ashburton Place, Room 411

Boston, Massachusetts 02108-1512

617-727-8353 or 800-462-OCDF

www.state.ma.us/ocpf

Candidates for U.S. representative seats must file original copies of their financial statements with the Federal Election Commission

Federal Election Commission

999 East Street N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20463

800-424-9530

<http://www.fec.gov/>

Copies

Public Records Division

Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth

One Ashburton Place, Room 1719

Boston, Massachusetts 02108-1512

617-727-2832

U.S. Rep Challenges

Nomination papers may be challenged by any voter registered in the district within three days following the final date for filing nomination papers by filing any objection with the:

State Ballot Law Commission
c/o Elections Division
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705
Boston, Massachusetts 02108-1512
617-727-2828 or 800-462-VOTE

For details see "Objections Before the State Ballot Law Commission," a publication available from the Elections Division.

When an objection is filed, the candidate receives written notice that a hearing will be held before the State Ballot Law Commission. A candidate may wish to have a lawyer present at the hearing, since hearings often involve complex legal issues.

Objections may be brought for various reasons. Examples of objections follow:

Nomination papers contain forged or fraudulent signatures.

Nomination papers failed to contain the required information.

The candidate has not been a resident of the district for the required length of time.

Stray marks were made on a signature sheet.

Other Resources

Elections Division

One Ashburton Place, Room 1705

Boston, MA 02108-1512

elections@sec.state.ma.us

617-727-2828 or 800-462-VOTE

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm>

Regulations for Certifying Signatures:

950 C.M.R. 55.00

State Bookstore

State House, Room 116

Boston, MA 02133

617-727-2834

State Ethics Commission

One Ashburton Place, Room 619

Boston, MA 02108

617-371-9500

<http://www.mass.gov/ethics/>

Massachusetts General Laws

Chapters 50-56

Available at your local library or available online at:

www.state.ma.us/legis/laws/mgl/gl-50-toc.htm

Office of Campaign and Political Finance

One Ashburton Place, Room 411

Boston, MA 02108

ocpf@cpf.state.ma.us

617-979-8300 or 800-462-OCPF

www.state.ma.us/ocpf

The following publications are available at no cost from the Elections Division:

Election Day Legal Summary

Residence for Voting Purposes

Objections Before the State Ballot Law Commission

Call 617-727-2828 or 800-462-VOTE to request any booklets.