

THE PETITION PROCESS

In order to run for public office each candidate must begin at this first step, running a petition. The process is quite simple but there are a few mistakes often made by candidates unfamiliar with the process. These mistakes can result in a candidate's petition being disqualified, so attention to detail is critical.

First, begin by obtaining a properly formatted petition. This can be accomplished either by contacting National Liberty Alliance at www.NationalLibertyAlliance.org Be certain to make all necessary adjustments to the sample petition.

1. You must alter the title to represent the party in whose primary you wish to run.
2. You must put all information for the candidate in the appropriate space provided
3. You must accurately identify the office for which the candidate is running.
4. A committee to fill vacancies should be identified. Each person must be of the same party as the candidate and will appoint a substitute for the candidate in the event the candidate is unable to complete the campaign by reason of death or incapacity.

The witness section of the petition is very important and candidates must pay close attention to this section.

1. All dates on a single page must be in chronological order. In the sample provided by the NYS Board of Election, ten signature lines are available. It is important that the first line be signed and dated earlier than line ten. Should this not be the case, all signatures on that page are eliminated from the candidate's signature total.
2. Signatures and addresses should be legible in order to prevent challenge to the signature.
3. The town or city MUST be correct. Postal codes are not necessarily towns. Example. The address 123 Main St., Akron, New York 14001 is a proper mailing address. However, the village of Akron is not a town. The person signing the petition must use the address 123 Main St. Town of Newstead since the village of Akron resides within the Town of Newstead. Employees of the Board of Election are fully aware of this and are eager to disqualify any signature which improperly states the town. For accuracy sake, obtain the full list of towns within the area you wish to run and pre print the town name on the petition in order to prevent individuals from improperly using postal information.

The witness statement appears more complicated than it really is. The person circulating the petition must meet one of two qualifications in order for the petition to be valid.

Option one, the person circulating is of the same party as the candidate, living within the state of New York.

Option two, the person circulating the petition is a notary or commissioner of deeds. In this event it is not necessary that the person circulating the petition be of the same party as the candidate.

The appropriate witness section should be completed by the witness prior to submitting the signatures to the candidate for inclusion in the final petition. For accuracy sake a new page should be used each

day of the petition drive and witnesses should complete the page even if all lines on the page are not filled. There are no penalties for unused lines.

The candidate must determine how many signatures are required for the office for which he or she wishes to run. The number of signatures required for a particular office can be obtained from the Board of Election. However, it is not uncommon for the persons at the Board of Election to mislead you into believing you will need fewer signatures than required by law.

As a non-party endorsed candidate a man once told me of the Board of Elections “you have no friends there”. Each person at the Board of Elections is appointed by the major parties and cannot be held accountable for misdeeds. All information must be verified. For those of you that will eventually challenge an endorsed candidate let me give you this same piece of advice concerning the Board of Election. “You have no friends there”.

The petition process is very specific. A political calendar is available from the Board of Election website, or from Primary Challenge which will instruct you on when to circulate your petition and when to have it complete and submitted to the Board. No signatures may appear in a petition prior to the first day of the petition drive as prescribed by the Board of Election. Any signatures dated prior to the first day will be disqualified.

The person circulating the petition must ask the individual signing the petition if he or she has signed another petition for the same office. No individual may sign multiple petitions for the same office therefore it is imperative that signatures be obtained early. A duplicate signature for the same office will be discarded according to date obtained.

The petition must be assembled per the election law. This process is easier today than in days past but must be adhered to.

All petitions must be bound, all pages must be numbered in ascending order, and a cover sheet must accompany the petition in order to identify the contents of the petition. Ensure all information provided complies with the law in content and form.

By encouraging participation in the election process it is hoped that all elected officials will be more conscious of their responsibility to the people. We can and must remind those in public office who they work for. Candidates running in competitive primary elections will send that message..