

BALLOT ACCESS

INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY

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 the office is local. The petition must be filed no later than the date of the primary, June 1, 2004. There is no qualifying fee.

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 **(17-7-1) (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, 2002. The total number of votes cast for governor in that election was 1,367,053. A petition for statewide ballot access in the 2004 election year must have at least **41,012** 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. Threshold amounts are \$25,000 for statewide candidates, \$10,000 for Alabama State Senate, \$5,000 for State House, judicial district and circuit races, and \$1,000 for county or municipal races.

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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A *sample petition form*, which may be photo copied, is available from the Office of the Secretary of State.

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.
- ◇ Numbered pages.
- ◇ 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.

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

State and federal petitions should be filed in the Elections Division of the Office of Secretary of State, located in the State Capitol, Room E-204, Dexter Avenue, in Montgomery, Alabama.

Petitions for **county ballot access** should 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