

Ballot Signature Amendments

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Raymond P. Ward

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill amends the signature-gathering process for an individual seeking the nomination of a political party.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

▸ for an individual running for elective office who is:

• seeking the nomination of a qualified political party under the signature-gathering process, reduces the number of signatures that the individual must collect to obtain the nomination; or

• seeking the nomination of a registered political party that is not a qualified political party, enables the individual to obtain the nomination by gathering the same number of signatures as an individual seeking the nomination of a qualified political party for the same office; and

▸ makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

20A-9-403, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 503

20A-9-408, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 116

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **20A-9-403** is amended to read:

20A-9-403 . Regular primary elections.

(1)(a) Candidates for elective office that are to be filled at the next regular general

election shall be nominated in a regular primary election by direct vote of the people

32 in the manner prescribed in this section. The regular primary election is held on the
33 date specified in Section 20A-1-201.5. Nothing in this section shall affect a
34 candidate's ability to qualify for a regular general election's ballot as an unaffiliated
35 candidate under Section 20A-9-501 or to participate in a regular general election as a
36 write-in candidate under Section 20A-9-601.

37 (b) Each registered political party that chooses to have the names of the registered
38 political party's candidates for elective office featured with party affiliation on the
39 ballot at a regular general election shall comply with the requirements of this section
40 and shall nominate the registered political party's candidates for elective office in the
41 manner described in this section.

42 (c) A filing officer may not permit an official ballot at a regular general election to be
43 produced or used if the ballot denotes affiliation between a registered political party
44 or any other political group and a candidate for elective office who is not nominated
45 in the manner prescribed in this section or in Subsection 20A-9-202(4).

46 (d) Unless noted otherwise, the dates in this section refer to those that occur in each
47 even-numbered year in which a regular general election will be held.

48 (2)(a) Each registered political party, in a statement filed with the lieutenant governor,
49 shall:

50 (i) either declare the registered political party's intent to participate in the next regular
51 primary election or declare that the registered political party chooses not to have
52 the names of the registered political party's candidates for elective office featured
53 on the ballot at the next regular general election; and

54 (ii) if the registered political party participates in the upcoming regular primary
55 election, identify one or more registered political parties whose members may
56 vote for the registered political party's candidates and whether individuals
57 identified as unaffiliated with a political party may vote for the registered political
58 party's candidates.

59 (b)(i) A registered political party that is a continuing political party shall file the
60 statement described in Subsection (2)(a) with the lieutenant governor no later than
61 5 p.m. on November 30 of each odd-numbered year.

62 (ii) An organization that is seeking to become a registered political party under
63 Section 20A-8-103 shall file the statement described in Subsection (2)(a) at the
64 time that the registered political party files the petition described in Section
65 20A-8-103.

- 66 (3)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (3)(e), an individual who submits a declaration
67 of candidacy under Section 20A-9-202 shall appear as a candidate for elective office
68 on the regular primary ballot of the registered political party listed on the declaration
69 of candidacy only if the individual is certified by the appropriate filing officer as
70 having submitted a nomination petition that was:
- 71 (i) circulated and completed in accordance with Section 20A-9-405; and
 - 72 (ii) ~~[signed by at least 2% of the registered political party's members who reside in~~
73 ~~the political division of the office that the individual seeks.]~~ of the registered
74 political party's members who reside in the political division of the office that the
75 individual seeks, signed by the lesser of:
 - 76 (A) 2% of those members; or
 - 77 (B) the number of signatures that a member of a qualified political party must
78 collect to obtain the nomination of the qualified political party for the same
79 office under Subsection 20A-9-408(8).
- 80 (b)(i) A candidate for elective office shall submit signatures for a nomination
81 petition to the appropriate filing officer for verification and certification no later
82 than 5 p.m. on the final day in March.
- 83 (ii) A candidate may supplement the candidate's submissions at any time on or before
84 the filing deadline.
- 85 (c)(i) The lieutenant governor shall determine for each elective office the total
86 number of signatures that must be submitted under Subsection (3)(a)(ii) or
87 20A-9-408(8) by counting the aggregate number of individuals residing in each
88 elective office's political division who have designated a particular registered
89 political party on the individuals' voter registration forms on or before November
90 15 of each odd-numbered year.
- 91 (ii) The lieutenant governor shall publish the determination for each elective office
92 no later than November 30 of each odd-numbered year.
- 93 (d) The filing officer shall:
- 94 (i) except as otherwise provided in Section 20A-21-201, verify signatures on
95 nomination petitions in a transparent and orderly manner, no later than 14 days
96 after the day on which a candidate submits the signatures to the filing officer;
 - 97 (ii) for all qualifying candidates for elective office who submit nomination petitions
98 to the filing officer, issue certifications referenced in Subsection (3)(a) no later
99 than the deadline described in Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(b);

- 100 (iii) consider active and inactive voters eligible to sign nomination petitions;
- 101 (iv) consider an individual who signs a nomination petition a member of a registered
102 political party for purposes of Subsection (3)(a)(ii) if the individual has designated
103 that registered political party as the individual's party membership on the
104 individual's voter registration form; and
- 105 (v) except as otherwise provided in Section 20A-21-201 and with the assistance of
106 the county clerk as applicable, use the procedures described in Section 20A-1-1002
107 to verify submitted nomination petition signatures, or use statistical sampling
108 procedures to verify submitted nomination petition signatures in accordance with
109 rules made under Subsection (3)(f).
- 110 (e) Notwithstanding any other provision in this Subsection (3), a candidate for lieutenant
111 governor may appear on the regular primary ballot of a registered political party
112 without submitting nomination petitions if the candidate files a declaration of
113 candidacy and complies with Subsection 20A-9-202(3).
- 114 (f) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the
115 director of elections, within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, may make rules
116 that:
- 117 (i) provide for the use of statistical sampling procedures that:
- 118 (A) filing officers are required to use to verify signatures under Subsection (3)(d);
119 and
- 120 (B) reflect a bona fide effort to determine the validity of a candidate's entire
121 submission, using widely recognized statistical sampling techniques; and
- 122 (ii) provide for the transparent, orderly, and timely submission, verification, and
123 certification of nomination petition signatures.
- 124 (g) The county clerk shall:
- 125 (i) review the declarations of candidacy filed by candidates for local boards of
126 education to determine if more than two candidates have filed for the same seat;
- 127 (ii) place the names of all candidates who have filed a declaration of candidacy for a
128 local board of education seat on the nonpartisan section of the ballot if more than
129 two candidates have filed for the same seat; and
- 130 (iii) determine the order of the local board of education candidates' names on the
131 ballot in accordance with Section 20A-6-305.
- 132 (4)(a) Before the deadline described in Subsection 20A-9-409(4)(c), the lieutenant
133 governor shall provide to the county clerks:

134 (i) a list of the names of all candidates for federal, constitutional, multi-county, single
 135 county, and county offices who have received certifications under Subsection (3),
 136 along with instructions on how those names shall appear on the primary election
 137 ballot in accordance with Section 20A-6-305; and

138 (ii) a list of unopposed candidates for elective office who have been nominated by a
 139 registered political party under Subsection (5)(c) and instruct the county clerks to
 140 exclude the unopposed candidates from the primary election ballot.

141 (b) A candidate for lieutenant governor and a candidate for governor campaigning as
 142 joint-ticket running mates shall appear jointly on the primary election ballot.

143 (c) After the county clerk receives the certified list from the lieutenant governor under
 144 Subsection (4)(a), the county clerk shall post or publish a primary election notice in
 145 substantially the following form:

146 "Notice is given that a primary election will be held Tuesday, June ____,
 147 ____ (year), to nominate party candidates for the parties and candidates for nonpartisan
 148 local school board positions listed on the primary ballot. The polling place for voting precinct
 149 ____ is _____. The polls will open at 7 a.m. and continue open until 8 p.m. of the same day.
 150 Attest: county clerk."

151 (5)(a) A candidate who, at the regular primary election, receives the highest number of
 152 votes cast for the office sought by the candidate is:

153 (i) nominated for that office by the candidate's registered political party; or

154 (ii) for a nonpartisan local school board position, nominated for that office.

155 (b) If two or more candidates are to be elected to the office at the regular general
 156 election, those party candidates equal in number to positions to be filled who receive
 157 the highest number of votes at the regular primary election are the nominees of the
 158 candidates' party for those positions.

159 (c)(i) As used in this Subsection (5)(c), a candidate is "unopposed" if:

160 (A) no individual other than the candidate receives a certification under
 161 Subsection (3) for the regular primary election ballot of the candidate's
 162 registered political party for a particular elective office; or

163 (B) for an office where more than one individual is to be elected or nominated, the
 164 number of candidates who receive certification under Subsection (3) for the
 165 regular primary election of the candidate's registered political party does not
 166 exceed the total number of candidates to be elected or nominated for that office.

167 (ii) A candidate who is unopposed for an elective office in the regular primary

168 election of a registered political party is nominated by the party for that office
 169 without appearing on the primary election ballot.

170 (6) The expense of providing all ballots, blanks, or other supplies to be used at any primary
 171 election provided for by this section, and all expenses necessarily incurred in the
 172 preparation for or the conduct of that primary election shall be paid out of the treasury of
 173 the county or state, in the same manner as for the regular general elections.

174 (7) An individual may not file a declaration of candidacy for a registered political party of
 175 which the individual is not a member, except to the extent that the registered political
 176 party permits otherwise under the registered political party's bylaws.

177 Section 2. Section **20A-9-408** is amended to read:

178 **20A-9-408 . Signature-gathering process to seek the nomination of a qualified**
 179 **political party -- Removal of signature.**

180 (1) This section describes the requirements for a member of a qualified political party who
 181 is seeking the nomination of the qualified political party for an elective office through
 182 the signature-gathering process described in this section.

183 (2) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-201(7)(a), the form of the declaration of candidacy
 184 for a member of a qualified political party who is nominated by, or who is seeking the
 185 nomination of, the qualified political party under this section shall be substantially as
 186 described in Section 20A-9-408.5.

187 (3) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(a), and except as provided in Subsection
 188 20A-9-202(4), a member of a qualified political party who, under this section, is seeking
 189 the nomination of the qualified political party for an elective office that is to be filled at
 190 the next general election shall:

191 (a) during the declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5,
 192 and before gathering signatures under this section, file with the filing officer on a
 193 form approved by the lieutenant governor a notice of intent to gather signatures for
 194 candidacy that includes:

195 (i) the name of the member who will attempt to become a candidate for a registered
 196 political party under this section;

197 (ii) the name of the registered political party for which the member is seeking
 198 nomination;

199 (iii) the office for which the member is seeking to become a candidate;

200 (iv) the address and telephone number of the member; and

201 (v) other information required by the lieutenant governor;

- 202 (b) except as provided in Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(c), file a declaration of candidacy, in
203 person, with the filing officer during the declaration of candidacy filing period
204 described in Section 20A-9-201.5; and
- 205 (c) pay the filing fee.
- 206 (4) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-202(2)(a), a member of a qualified political party
207 who, under this section, is seeking the nomination of the qualified political party for the
208 office of district attorney within a multicounty prosecution district that is to be filled at
209 the next general election shall:
- 210 (a) during the declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5,
211 and before gathering signatures under this section, file with the filing officer on a
212 form approved by the lieutenant governor a notice of intent to gather signatures for
213 candidacy that includes:
- 214 (i) the name of the member who will attempt to become a candidate for a registered
215 political party under this section;
- 216 (ii) the name of the registered political party for which the member is seeking
217 nomination;
- 218 (iii) the office for which the member is seeking to become a candidate;
- 219 (iv) the address and telephone number of the member; and
- 220 (v) other information required by the lieutenant governor;
- 221 (b) except as provided in Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(c), file a declaration of candidacy, in
222 person, with the filing officer during the declaration of candidacy filing period
223 described in Section 20A-9-201.5; and
- 224 (c) pay the filing fee.
- 225 (5) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-202(3)(a)(iii), a lieutenant governor candidate who
226 files as the joint-ticket running mate of an individual who is nominated by a qualified
227 political party, under this section, for the office of governor shall, during the declaration
228 of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5, file a declaration of
229 candidacy and submit a letter from the candidate for governor that names the lieutenant
230 governor candidate as a joint-ticket running mate.
- 231 (6) The lieutenant governor shall ensure that the certification described in Subsection
232 20A-9-701(1) also includes the name of each candidate nominated by a qualified
233 political party under this section.
- 234 (7) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-701(2), the ballot shall, for each candidate who is
235 nominated by a qualified political party under this section, designate the qualified

- 236 political party that nominated the candidate.
- 237 (8) A member of a qualified political party may seek the nomination of the qualified
238 political party for an elective office by:
- 239 (a) complying with the requirements described in this section; and
- 240 ~~[(b) collecting signatures, on a form approved by the lieutenant governor that complies~~
241 ~~with Subsection 20A-9-405(3), during the period beginning on the day on which the~~
242 ~~member files a notice of intent to gather signatures and ending at 5 p.m. 14 days~~
243 ~~before the day on which the qualified political party's convention for the office is~~
244 ~~held, in the following amounts:]~~
- 245 ~~[(i) for a statewide race, 28,000 signatures of registered voters in the state who are~~
246 ~~permitted by the qualified political party to vote for the qualified political party's~~
247 ~~candidates in a primary election;]~~
- 248 ~~[(ii) for a congressional district race, 7,000 signatures of registered voters who are~~
249 ~~residents of the congressional district and are permitted by the qualified political~~
250 ~~party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election;]~~
- 251 ~~[(iii) for a state Senate district race, 2,000 signatures of registered voters who are~~
252 ~~residents of the state Senate district and are permitted by the qualified political party~~
253 ~~to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election;]~~
- 254 ~~[(iv) for a state House district race, 1,000 signatures of registered voters who are~~
255 ~~residents of the state House district and are permitted by the qualified political party~~
256 ~~to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election;]~~
- 257 ~~[(v) for a State Board of Education race, the lesser of:]~~
- 258 ~~[(A) 2,000 signatures of registered voters who are residents of the State Board of~~
259 ~~Education district and are permitted by the qualified political party to vote for the~~
260 ~~qualified political party's candidates in a primary election; or]~~
- 261 ~~[(B) 3% of the registered voters of the qualified political party who are residents of the~~
262 ~~applicable State Board of Education district; and]~~
- 263 ~~[(vi) for a county office race, signatures of 3% of the registered voters who are residents~~
264 ~~of the area permitted to vote for the county office and are permitted by the qualified~~
265 ~~political party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary~~
266 ~~election.]~~
- 267 (b) collecting signatures, on a form approved by the lieutenant governor that complies
268 with Subsection 20A-9-405(3), during the period beginning on the day on which the
269 member files a notice of intent to gather signatures and ending at 5 p.m. 14 days

- 270 before the day on which the qualified political party's convention for the office is
271 held, in the following amounts:
- 272 (i) in a race for governor, United States senator, or attorney general, 1,000 signatures
273 of registered voters in the state who are permitted by the qualified political party
274 to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election;
- 275 (ii) in a race for United States representative, 500 signatures of registered voters who
276 are residents of the congressional district and who are permitted by the qualified
277 political party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary
278 election;
- 279 (iii) in a race for state auditor or state treasurer, 200 signatures of registered voters in
280 the state who are permitted by the qualified political party to vote for the qualified
281 political party's candidates in a primary election;
- 282 (iv) in a state Senate district race, 200 signatures of registered voters who are
283 residents of the state Senate district and who are permitted by the qualified
284 political party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary
285 election;
- 286 (v) for a state House district race, 100 signatures of registered voters who are
287 residents of the state House district and who are permitted by the qualified
288 political party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary
289 election;
- 290 (vi) for a State Board of Education race, 100 signatures of registered voters who are
291 residents of the State Board of Education district and who are permitted by the
292 qualified political party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a
293 primary election; or
- 294 (vii) for a county office race, of the registered voters of the qualified political party
295 who are residents of the area permitted to vote for the county office, the lesser of:
296 (A) 50 signatures of those voters; or
297 (B) signatures of 3% of those voters.
- 298 (9)(a) This Subsection (9) applies only to the manual candidate qualification process.
- 299 (b) In order for a member of the qualified political party to qualify as a candidate for the
300 qualified political party's nomination for an elective office under this section, using
301 the manual candidate qualification process, the member shall:
- 302 (i) collect the signatures on a form approved by the lieutenant governor, using the
303 same circulation and verification requirements described in ~~[Sections 20A-7-105~~

- 304 and ~~20A-7-204~~] Section 20A-9-405; and
- 305 (ii) submit the signatures to the election officer before 5 p.m. no later than 14 days
- 306 before the day on which the qualified political party holds the party's convention
- 307 to select candidates, for the elective office, for the qualified political party's
- 308 nomination.
- 309 (c) Upon timely receipt of the signatures described in Subsections (8) and (9)(b), the
- 310 election officer shall, no later than the earlier of 14 days after the day on which the
- 311 election officer receives the signatures, or one day before the day on which the
- 312 qualified political party holds the convention to select a nominee for the elective
- 313 office to which the signature packets relate:
- 314 (i) check the name of each individual who completes the verification for a signature
- 315 packet to determine whether each individual is a resident of Utah and is at least 18
- 316 years old;
- 317 (ii) submit the name of each individual described in Subsection (9)(c)(i) who is not a
- 318 Utah resident or who is not at least 18 years old to the attorney general and the
- 319 county attorney;
- 320 (iii) with the assistance of the county clerk as applicable, determine whether each
- 321 signer is a registered voter who is qualified to sign the petition, using the same
- 322 method, described in Section 20A-1-1002, used to verify a signature on a petition;
- 323 and
- 324 (iv) certify whether each name is that of a registered voter who is qualified to sign the
- 325 signature packet.
- 326 (d)(i) A registered voter who physically signs a form under Subsections (8) and (9)(b)
- 327 may have the voter's signature removed from the form by, no later than three
- 328 business days after the day on which the member submits the signature form to the
- 329 election officer, submitting to the election officer a statement requesting that the
- 330 voter's signature be removed.
- 331 (ii) A statement described in Subsection (9)(d)(i) shall comply with the requirements
- 332 described in Subsection 20A-1-1003(2).
- 333 (iii) With the assistance of the county clerk as applicable, the election officer shall
- 334 use the procedures described in Subsection 20A-1-1003(3) to determine whether
- 335 to remove an individual's signature after receiving a timely, valid statement
- 336 requesting removal of the signature.
- 337 (10)(a) This Subsection (10) applies only to the electronic candidate qualification

- 338 process.
- 339 (b) In order for a member of the qualified political party to qualify as a candidate for the
340 qualified political party's nomination for an elective office under this section, the
341 member shall, before 5 p.m. no later than 14 days before the day on which the
342 qualified political party holds the party's convention to select candidates, for the
343 elective office, for the qualified political party's nomination, collect signatures
344 electronically:
- 345 (i) in accordance with Section 20A-21-201; and
346 (ii) using progressive screens, in a format approved by the lieutenant governor, that
347 complies with Subsection 20A-9-405(4).
- 348 (c) Upon timely receipt of the signatures described in Subsections (8) and ~~[(9)(b)]~~ (10)(b),
349 the election officer shall, no later than the earlier of 14 days after the day on which
350 the election officer receives the signatures, or one day before the day on which the
351 qualified political party holds the convention to select a nominee for the elective
352 office to which the signature packets relate:
- 353 (i) check the name of each individual who completes the verification for a signature
354 to determine whether each individual is a resident of Utah and is at least 18 years
355 old; and
356 (ii) submit the name of each individual described in Subsection (10)(c)(i) who is not
357 a Utah resident or who is not at least 18 years old to the attorney general and the
358 county attorney.
- 359 (11)(a) An individual may not gather signatures under this section until after the
360 individual files a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy described in this
361 section.
- 362 (b) An individual who files a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy,
363 described in Subsection (3)(a) or (4)(a), is, beginning on the day on which the
364 individual files the notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy:
- 365 (i) required to comply with the reporting requirements that a candidate for office is
366 required to comply with; and
367 (ii) subject to the same enforcement provisions, and civil and criminal penalties, that
368 apply to a candidate for office in relation to the reporting requirements described
369 in Subsection (11)(b)(i).
- 370 (c) Upon timely receipt of the signatures described in Subsections (8) and (9)(b), or
371 Subsections (8) and (10)(b), the election officer shall, no later than one day before the

372 day on which the qualified political party holds the convention to select a nominee
373 for the elective office to which the signature packets relate, notify the qualified
374 political party and the lieutenant governor of the name of each member of the
375 qualified political party who qualifies as a nominee of the qualified political party,
376 under this section, for the elective office to which the convention relates.

377 (d) Upon receipt of a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy described in this
378 section, the lieutenant governor shall post the notice of intent to gather signatures for
379 candidacy on the lieutenant governor's website in the same location that the
380 lieutenant governor posts a declaration of candidacy.

381 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

382 This bill takes effect on January 1, 2026.