

Election Adjustments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Scott D. Sandall

House Sponsor: Candice B. Pierucci

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill amends provisions relating to a candidate for public office.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- modifies the deadline for the lieutenant governor to create a master ballot position list; and
- to reflect the intent of S.B. 2001, Election Amendments, passed in the 2025 Second

Special Session, provides that the 2026 deadline for a candidate for the office of United States representative to submit signatures to qualify for placement on the primary election ballot is the same as for similarly situated candidates.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

20A-6-110, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 39

20A-9-408, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Second Special Session, Chapter 2

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

Section 1. Section **20A-6-110** is amended to read:

20A-6-110 . Master ballot position list -- Random selection -- Procedures -- Publication -- Surname -- Exemptions -- Ballot order.

(1) As used in this section, "master ballot position list" means an official list of the 26 characters in the alphabet listed in random order and numbered from one to 26 as provided under Subsection (2).

(2) The lieutenant governor shall:

(a) [~~within 30 calendar days after the day of the candidate filing deadline~~] no earlier than

- 31 30 days before, but no later than 14 days before, the fourth Wednesday in April in
32 each even-numbered year, conduct a random selection to create a master ballot
33 position list for all elections in accordance with procedures established under
34 Subsection (2)(c);
- 35 (b) publish the master ballot position list on the lieutenant governor's election website no
36 later than 15 calendar days after the day on which the lieutenant governor creates the
37 list; and
- 38 (c) establish written procedures for:
- 39 (i) the election official to use the master ballot position list; and
- 40 (ii) the lieutenant governor in:
- 41 (A) conducting the random selection in a fair manner; and
- 42 (B) providing a record of the random selection process used.
- 43 (3) In accordance with the written procedures established under Subsection (2)(c)(i), an
44 election officer shall use the master ballot position list for the current year to determine
45 the order in which to list candidates on the ballot for an election held during the year.
- 46 (4) To determine the order in which to list candidates on the ballot required under
47 Subsection (3), the election officer shall apply the randomized alphabet using:
- 48 (a) the candidate's surname;
- 49 (b) for candidates with a surname that has the same spelling:
- 50 (i) the candidate's legal first name; or
- 51 (ii) if the candidates also have a legal first name that has the same spelling, the
52 candidate's legal middle name; and
- 53 (c) the surname of the president and the surname of the governor for an election for the
54 offices of president and vice president and governor and lieutenant governor.
- 55 (5) Subsections (1) through (4) do not apply to:
- 56 (a) an election for an office for which only one candidate is listed on the ballot; or
- 57 (b) a judicial retention election under Section 20A-12-201.
- 58 (6) Subject to Subsection (7), each ticket that appears on a ballot for an election shall
59 appear separately, in the following order:
- 60 (a) for federal office:
- 61 (i) president and vice president of the United States;
- 62 (ii) United States Senate office; and
- 63 (iii) United States House of Representatives office;
- 64 (b) for state office:

- 65 (i) governor and lieutenant governor;
66 (ii) attorney general;
67 (iii) state auditor;
68 (iv) state treasurer;
69 (v) state Senate office;
70 (vi) state House of Representatives office; and
71 (vii) State Board of Education member;
72 (c) for county office:
73 (i) county executive office;
74 (ii) county legislative body member;
75 (iii) county assessor;
76 (iv) county or district attorney;
77 (v) county auditor;
78 (vi) county clerk;
79 (vii) county recorder;
80 (viii) county sheriff;
81 (ix) county surveyor;
82 (x) county treasurer; and
83 (xi) local school board member;
84 (d) for municipal office:
85 (i) mayor; and
86 (ii) city or town council member;
87 (e) elected planning and service district council member;
88 (f) judicial retention questions; and
89 (g) ballot propositions not described in Subsection (6)(f).
90 (7)(a) A ticket for a race for a combined office shall appear on the ballot in the place of
91 the earliest ballot ticket position that is reserved for an office that is subsumed in the
92 combined office.
93 (b) Each ticket, other than a ticket described in Subsection (6)(f), shall list:
94 (i) each candidate in accordance with Subsections (1) through (4); and
95 (ii) except as otherwise provided in this title, the party name, initials, or title
96 following each candidate's name.
97 Section 2. Section **20A-9-408** is amended to read:
98 **20A-9-408 . Signature-gathering process to seek the nomination of a qualified**

political party -- Removal of signature.

- (1) This section describes the requirements for a member of a qualified political party who is seeking the nomination of the qualified political party for an elective office through the signature-gathering process described in this section.
- (2) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-201(7)(a), the form of the declaration of candidacy for a member of a qualified political party who is nominated by, or who is seeking the nomination of, the qualified political party under this section shall be substantially as described in Section 20A-9-408.5.
- (3) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(a), and except as provided in Subsection 20A-9-202(4), a member of a qualified political party who, under this section, is seeking the nomination of the qualified political party for an elective office that is to be filled at the next general election shall:
- (a) except to the extent otherwise provided in Subsection (13)(a), during the applicable declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5, and before gathering signatures under this section, file with the filing officer on a form approved by the lieutenant governor a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy that includes:
 - (i) the name of the member who will attempt to become a candidate for a registered political party under this section;
 - (ii) the name of the registered political party for which the member is seeking nomination;
 - (iii) the office for which the member is seeking to become a candidate;
 - (iv) the address and telephone number of the member; and
 - (v) other information required by the lieutenant governor;
 - (b) except as provided in Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(c), file a declaration of candidacy, in person, with the filing officer during the applicable declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5; and
 - (c) pay the filing fee.
- (4) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-202(2)(a), a member of a qualified political party who, under this section, is seeking the nomination of the qualified political party for the office of district attorney within a multicounty prosecution district that is to be filled at the next general election shall:
- (a) during the applicable declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5, and before gathering signatures under this section, file with the filing

officer on a form approved by the lieutenant governor a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy that includes:

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

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

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

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

(v) other information required by the lieutenant governor;

(b) except as provided in Subsection 20A-9-202(1)(c), file a declaration of candidacy, in person, with the filing officer during the applicable declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5; and

(c) pay the filing fee.

(5) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-202(3)(a)(iii), a lieutenant governor candidate who files as the joint-ticket running mate of an individual who is nominated by a qualified political party, under this section, for the office of governor shall, during the applicable declaration of candidacy filing period described in Section 20A-9-201.5, file a declaration of candidacy and submit a letter from the candidate for governor that names the lieutenant governor candidate as a joint-ticket running mate.

(6) The lieutenant governor shall ensure that the certification described in Subsection 20A-9-701(1) also includes the name of each candidate nominated by a qualified political party under this section.

(7) Notwithstanding Subsection 20A-9-701(2), the ballot shall, for each candidate who is nominated by a qualified political party under this section, designate the qualified political party that nominated the candidate.

(8) A member of a qualified political party may seek the nomination of the qualified political party for an elective office by:

(a) complying with the requirements described in this section; and

(b) collecting signatures, on a form approved by the lieutenant governor that complies with Subsection 20A-9-405(3), during the period beginning on the day on which the member files a notice of intent to gather signatures and ending at the applicable deadline described in Subsection (12), in the following amounts:

(i) for a statewide race, 28,000 signatures of registered voters in the state who are permitted by the qualified political party to vote for the qualified political party's

- 167 candidates in a primary election;
- 168 (ii) except as provided in Subsection (13)(b), for a congressional district race, 7,000
- 169 signatures of registered voters who are residents of the congressional district and
- 170 are permitted by the qualified political party to vote for the qualified political
- 171 party's candidates in a primary election;
- 172 (iii) for a state Senate district race, 2,000 signatures of registered voters who are
- 173 residents of the state Senate district and are permitted by the qualified political
- 174 party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election;
- 175 (iv) for a state House district race, 1,000 signatures of registered voters who are
- 176 residents of the state House district and are permitted by the qualified political
- 177 party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election;
- 178 (v) for a State Board of Education race, the lesser of:
- 179 (A) 2,000 signatures of registered voters who are residents of the State Board of
- 180 Education district and are permitted by the qualified political party to vote for
- 181 the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election; or
- 182 (B) 3% of the registered voters of the qualified political party who are residents of
- 183 the applicable State Board of Education district; and
- 184 (vi) for a county office race, signatures of 3% of the registered voters who are
- 185 residents of the area permitted to vote for the county office and are permitted by
- 186 the qualified political party to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in
- 187 a primary election.
- 188 (9)(a) This Subsection (9) applies only to the manual candidate qualification process.
- 189 (b) In order for a member of the qualified political party to qualify as a candidate for the
- 190 qualified political party's nomination for an elective office under this section, using
- 191 the manual candidate qualification process, the member shall:
- 192 (i) collect the signatures on a form approved by the lieutenant governor, using the
- 193 same circulation and verification requirements described in Sections 20A-7-105
- 194 and 20A-7-204; and
- 195 (ii) in accordance with Section 20A-9-408.3, submit the signatures to the election
- 196 officer before the applicable deadline described in Subsection (12).
- 197 (c) Upon timely receipt of the signatures described in Subsections (8) and (9)(b), and in
- 198 accordance with Section 20A-9-408.3, the election officer shall, no later than the
- 199 earlier of 14 calendar days after the day on which the election officer receives the
- 200 signatures, or one day before the day on which the qualified political party holds the

convention to select a nominee for the elective office to which the signature packets relate:

- (i) check the name of each individual who completes the verification for a signature packet to determine whether each individual is at least 18 years old;
- (ii) submit the name of each individual described in Subsection (9)(c)(i) who is not at least 18 years old to the attorney general and the county attorney;
- (iii) with the assistance of the county clerk as applicable, determine whether each signer is a registered voter who is qualified to sign the petition, using the same method, described in Section 20A-1-1002, used to verify a signature on a petition; and
- (iv) certify whether each name is that of a registered voter who is qualified to sign the signature packet.

(d)(i) A registered voter who physically signs a form under Subsections (8) and (9)(b) may have the voter's signature removed from the form by, no later than 5 p.m. three business days after the day on which the member submits the signature form to the election officer, submitting to the election officer a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed.

(ii) A statement described in Subsection (9)(d)(i) shall comply with the requirements described in Subsection 20A-1-1003(2).

(iii) With the assistance of the county clerk as applicable, the election officer shall use the procedures described in Subsection 20A-1-1003(3) to determine whether to remove an individual's signature after receiving a timely, valid statement requesting removal of the signature.

(e)(i) An election officer shall, in accordance with this Subsection (9)(e) and rules made under Section 20A-3a-106, conduct regular audits of signature comparisons made between signatures gathered under this section and voter signatures maintained by the election officer.

(ii) An individual who conducts an audit of signature comparisons under this section may not audit the individual's own work.

(iii) The election officer shall:

- (A) audit 1% of all signature comparisons described in Subsection (9)(e)(i) to determine the accuracy of the comparisons made;
- (B) record the individuals who conducted the audit;
- (C) record the audit results;

- 235 (D) provide additional training or staff reassignments, as needed, based on the
236 results of an audit described in Subsection (9)(e)(i); and
- 237 (E) record any remedial action taken.
- 238 (iv) The audit results described in Subsection (9)(e)(iii)(C) are a public record.
- 239 (f) An election officer who certifies signatures under Subsection (9)(c) or
240 20A-9-403(3)(d) shall, after certifying enough signatures to establish that a candidate
241 has reached the applicable signature threshold described in Subsection (8) or
242 20A-9-403(3)(a), as applicable, continue to certify signatures submitted for the
243 candidate in excess of the number of signatures required, until the election officer
244 either:
- 245 (i) certifies signatures equal to 110% of the applicable signature threshold; or
246 (ii) has reviewed all signatures submitted for the candidate before reaching an
247 amount equal to 110% of the applicable signature threshold.
- 248 (10)(a) This Subsection (10) applies only to the electronic candidate qualification
249 process.
- 250 (b) In order for a member of the qualified political party to qualify as a candidate for the
251 qualified political party's nomination for an elective office under this section, the
252 member shall, before the deadline described in Subsection (12), collect signatures
253 electronically:
- 254 (i) in accordance with Section 20A-21-201; and
255 (ii) using progressive screens, in a format approved by the lieutenant governor, that
256 complies with Subsection 20A-9-405(4).
- 257 (c) Upon timely receipt of the signatures described in Subsections (8) and (9)(b), the
258 election officer shall, no later than the earlier of 14 calendar days after the day on
259 which the election officer receives the signatures, or one day before the day on which
260 the qualified political party holds the convention to select a nominee for the elective
261 office to which the signature packets relate:
- 262 (i) check the name of each individual who completes the verification for a signature
263 to determine whether each individual is at least 18 years old; and
264 (ii) submit the name of each individual described in Subsection (10)(c)(i) who is not
265 at least 18 years old to the attorney general and the county attorney.
- 266 (11)(a) An individual may not gather signatures under this section until after the
267 individual files a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy described in this
268 section.

- (b) An individual who files a notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy, described in Subsection (3)(a) or (4)(a), is, beginning on the day on which the individual files the notice of intent to gather signatures for candidacy:
- (i) required to comply with the reporting requirements that a candidate for office is required to comply with; and
 - (ii) subject to the same enforcement provisions, and civil and criminal penalties, that apply to a candidate for office in relation to the reporting requirements described in Subsection (11)(b)(i).

- (c) Upon timely receipt of the signatures described in Subsections (8) and (9)(b), or Subsections (8) and (10)(b), the election officer shall, no later than the day before the day on which the qualified political party holds the convention to select a nominee for the elective office to which the signature packets relate, notify the qualified political party and the lieutenant governor of the name of each member of the qualified political party who qualifies as a nominee of the qualified political party, under this section, for the elective office to which the convention relates.

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

- (12) The deadline before which a member of a qualified political party must collect and submit signatures to the election officer under this section is 5 p.m. on the last business day that is at least 14 calendar days before the day on which the qualified political party's convention for the office begins.

- (13) For the 2026 election year only, an individual who desires to gather signatures to seek the nomination of a qualified political party for the office of United States representative shall:

- (a) in accordance with Subsection (3)(a), file a notice of intent to gather signatures during the period beginning at 8 a.m. on the first business day of January and ending at 5 p.m. on March 13, 2026; and
- (b) during the period beginning on the day on which the individual files the notice of intent to gather signatures and ending [at 5 p.m. on March 13, 2026] at the applicable deadline described in Subsection (12), on a form approved by the lieutenant governor that complies with Subsection 20A-9-405(3), collect 7,000 signatures of registered voters who are residents of the state and are permitted by the qualified political party

303 to vote for the qualified political party's candidates in a primary election.

304 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

305 This bill takes effect:

306 (1) except as provided in Subsection (2), May 6, 2026; or

307 (2) if approved by two-thirds of all members elected to each house:

308 (a) upon approval by the governor;

309 (b) without the governor's signature, the day following the constitutional time limit of

310 Utah Constitution, Article VII, Section 8; or

311 (c) in the case of a veto, the date of veto override.