# Signature Gathering and Verification Modifications

Heard in Government Operations 11/19/2025

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor:**

Sponsor:

**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill amends the electronic signature gathering and verification process.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- defines a term;
- requires the device used to electronically gather signatures for an initiative petition, a referendum petition, or a candidate nomination petition to be capable of scanning and extracting certain data from a driver license, state identification card, or another form of valid voter identification;
- beginning on January 1, 2028, requires the device described above to be capable of operating in an offline environment;
- beginning on January 1, 2030:
  - requires the sponsors of an initiative or referendum petition, or an individual who circulates a candidate nomination petition, to gather signatures using the electronic signature gathering process; and
  - prohibits a person described above from gathering signatures manually;
- adds a repeal date for sections related to manual signature gathering; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**20A-7-304.5**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 107

**20A-7-502.7**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

**20A-7-602.7**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

**20A-7-602.8**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 16
**20A-7-604.5**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 107
**20A-21-101**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 325
**20A-21-201**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 381, 448
**63I-1-220**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Third Special Session, Chapter 5
ENACTS:
**20A-21-202**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **20A-7-304.5** is amended to read:

**20A-7-304.5 . Posting referendum information.**

(1) On the day on which the lieutenant governor complies with Subsection 20A-7-304(3), or provides the sponsors with access to the [~~website~~] system defined in Section 20A-21-101, the lieutenant governor shall post the following information together in a conspicuous place on the lieutenant governor's website:
(a) the referendum petition;
(b) a copy of the law that is the subject of the referendum petition; and
(c) information describing how an individual may remove the individual's signature from the referendum petition.

(2) The lieutenant governor shall:
(a) promptly update the information described in Subsection (1) if the information changes; and
(b) maintain the information described in Subsection (1) on the lieutenant governor's website until the referendum fails to qualify for the ballot or is passed or defeated at an election.

Section 2. Section **20A-7-502.7** is amended to read:

**20A-7-502.7 . Referability to voters.**

(1) Within 20 calendar days after the day on which an eligible voter files an initiative application under Section 20A-7-502, counsel for the county, city, or town to which the initiative pertains shall:
(a) review the proposed law that is the subject of the initiative application to determine whether the law is legally referable to voters; and
(b) notify the first three sponsors, in writing, whether the proposed law is:
(i) legally referable to voters; or

(ii) rejected as not legally referable to voters.

(2) A proposed law that is the subject of an initiative application is legally referable to voters unless:

(a) the proposed law:

(i) is patently unconstitutional;

(ii) is nonsensical;

(iii) is administrative, rather than legislative, in nature;

(iv) could not become law if passed; [~~or~~]

(v) contains more than one subject as evaluated in accordance with Subsection 20A-7-502(3); or

[~~(b)~~] (vi) is identical or substantially similar to a legally referable proposed law sought by an initiative application submitted to the local clerk, under Section 20A-7-502, within two years before the day on which the initiative application for the current proposed law is filed;

[~~(c)~~] (b) the subject of the proposed law is not clearly expressed in the law's title; or

[~~(d)~~] (c) the initiative application was not timely filed or does not comply with the requirements of this part.

(3) After the end of the 20-calendar-day period described in Subsection (1), a county, city, or town may not:

(a) reject a proposed initiative as not legally referable to voters; or

(b) bring a legal action, other than to appeal a court decision, challenging a proposed initiative on the grounds that the proposed initiative is not legally referable to voters.

(4) If a county, city, or town rejects a proposed initiative, a sponsor of the proposed initiative may, within 10 days after the day on which a sponsor is notified under Subsection (1)(b), appeal the decision to:

(a) a district court; or

(b) the Supreme Court, if the Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over the appeal.

(5) If, on appeal, the court determines that the law proposed by the initiative application is legally referable to voters, the local clerk shall comply with Subsection 20A-7-504(3), or give the sponsors access to the [~~website~~] system defined in Section 20A-21-101, within five calendar days after the day on which the determination, and any appeal of the determination, is final.

Section 3. Section **20A-7-602.7** is amended to read:

**20A-7-602.7 . Referability to voters of local law other than land use law.**

(1) Within 20 calendar days after the day on which an eligible voter files a referendum application under Section 20A-7-602 for a local law other than a land use law, counsel for the county, city, or town to which the referendum pertains shall:

(a) review the referendum application to determine whether the proposed referendum is legally referable to voters; and

(b) notify the first three sponsors, in writing, whether the proposed referendum is:

(i) legally referable to voters; or

(ii) rejected as not legally referable to voters.

(2) For a local law other than a land use law, a proposed referendum is legally referable to voters unless:

(a) the proposed referendum challenges an action that is administrative, rather than legislative, in nature;

(b) the proposed referendum challenges more than one law passed by the local legislative body; or

(c) the referendum application was not timely filed or does not comply with the requirements of this part.

(3) After the end of the 20-calendar-day period described in Subsection (1), a county, city, or town may not, for a local law other than a land use law:

(a) reject a proposed referendum as not legally referable to voters; or

(b) except as provided in Subsection (4), challenge, in a legal action or otherwise, a proposed referendum on the grounds that the proposed referendum is not legally referable to voters.

(4)(a) If, under Subsection (1)(b)(ii), a county, city, or town rejects a proposed referendum concerning a local law other than a land use law, a sponsor of the proposed referendum may, within 10 days after the day on which a sponsor is notified under Subsection (1)(b), challenge or appeal the decision to:

(i) the Supreme Court, by means of an extraordinary writ, if possible; or

(ii) a district court, if the sponsor is prohibited from pursuing an extraordinary writ under Subsection (4)(a)(i).

(b) Failure of a sponsor to timely challenge or appeal a rejection under Subsection (4)(a) terminates the referendum.

(5) If, on a challenge or appeal, the court determines that the proposed referendum described in Subsection (4) is legally referable to voters, the local clerk shall comply with Subsection 20A-7-604(3), or give the sponsors access to the [~~website~~] system

defined in Section 20A-21-101, within five calendar days after the day on which the determination, and any challenge or appeal of the determination, is final.

Section 4. Section **20A-7-602.8** is amended to read:

**20A-7-602.8 . Referability to voters of local land use law.**

(1) Within 20 calendar days after the day on which a referendum eligible voter files an application under Section 20A-7-602 for a land use law, counsel for the county, city, or town to which the referendum pertains shall:

(a) review the referendum application to determine whether the proposed referendum is legally referable to voters; and

(b) notify the first three sponsors, in writing, whether the proposed referendum is:

(i) legally referable to voters; or

(ii) rejected as not legally referable to voters.

(2)(a) Subject to Subsection (2)(b), for a land use law, a proposed referendum is legally referable to voters unless:

(i) the proposed referendum challenges an action that is administrative, rather than legislative, in nature;

(ii) the proposed referendum challenges a land use decision, rather than a land use regulation, as those terms are defined in Section 10-20-102 or 17-79-102;

(iii) the proposed referendum challenges more than one law passed by the local legislative body; or

(iv) the referendum application was not timely filed or does not comply with the requirements of this part.

(b) In addition to the limitations of Subsection (2)(a), a proposed referendum is not legally referable to voters for a:

(i) municipal land use law, as defined in Section 20A-7-101, if the land use law was passed by a unanimous vote of the local legislative body; or

(ii) transit area land use law, as defined in Section 20A-7-601, if the transit area land use law was passed by a two-thirds vote of the local legislative body.

(3) After the end of the 20-calendar-day period described in Subsection (1), a county, city, or town may not, for a land use law:

(a) reject a proposed referendum as not legally referable to voters; or

(b) except as provided in Subsection (4), challenge, in a legal action or otherwise, a proposed referendum on the grounds that the proposed referendum is not legally referable to voters.

(4)(a) If a county, city, or town rejects a proposed referendum concerning a land use law, a sponsor of the proposed referendum may, within seven days after the day on which a sponsor is notified under Subsection (1)(b), challenge or appeal the decision to:

(i) the Supreme Court, by means of an extraordinary writ, if possible; or

(ii) a district court, if the sponsor is prohibited from pursuing an extraordinary writ under Subsection (4)(a)(i).

(b) Failure of a sponsor to timely challenge or appeal a rejection under Subsection (4)(a) terminates the referendum.

(5) If, on challenge or appeal, the court determines that the proposed referendum is legally referable to voters, the local clerk shall comply with Subsection 20A-7-604(3), or give the sponsors access to the [~~website~~] system defined in Section 20A-21-101, within five calendar days after the day on which the determination, and any challenge or appeal of the determination, is final.

Section 5. Section **20A-7-604.5** is amended to read:

**20A-7-604.5 . Posting referendum information.**

(1) On the day on which the local clerk complies with Subsection 20A-7-604(3), or gives the sponsors access to the [~~website~~] system defined in Section 20A-21-101, the local clerk shall post the following information together in a conspicuous place on the local clerk's website:

(a) the referendum petition;

(b) a copy of the law that is the subject of the referendum petition; and

(c) information describing how an individual may remove the individual's signature from the referendum petition.

(2) The local clerk shall:

(a) promptly update the information described in Subsection (1) if the information changes; and

(b) maintain the information described in Subsection (1) on the local clerk's website until the referendum fails to qualify for the ballot or is passed or defeated at an election.

Section 6. Section **20A-21-101** is amended to read:

**20A-21-101 . Definitions.**

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Approved device" means a device described in Subsection 20A-21-201(4).

(2) "Candidate qualification process" means the process, described in Section 20A-9-403 or 20A-9-408, of gathering signatures to seek the nomination of a registered political party.

(3) "Electronic candidate qualification process" means the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-9-101.

(4) "Electronic initiative process" means the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-7-101.

(5) "Electronic referendum process" means the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-7-101.

(6) "Manual candidate qualification process" means the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-9-101.

(7) "Petition" means:

(a) as it relates to the electronic initiative process or the electronic referendum process, the electronic record that an individual signs to indicate the individual is in favor of placing the initiative or referendum on the ballot; or

(b) as it relates to electronic candidate qualification process, the electronic record that an individual signs to indicate the individual is in favor of placing an individual's name on the ballot to run for a particular elective office.

(8) "Signature" means:

(a) as it relates to a signature gathered for an initiative or referendum, the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-7-101; or

(b) as it relates to a signature gathered for the candidate qualification process, the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-9-101.

(9) [~~"Website"~~] "System" means:

(a) as it relates to the electronic initiative process or the electronic referendum process, the [~~website~~] web-based or application-based interface designated by the lieutenant governor for collecting the signatures and other information relating to the electronic initiative process or the electronic referendum process; or

(b) as it relates to the electronic candidate qualification process, [~~a website~~] the web-based or application-based interface designated by the lieutenant governor for collecting the signatures and other information relating to the electronic candidate qualification process.

Section 7. Section **20A-21-201** is amended to read:

**20A-21-201 . Electronic signature gathering for an initiative, a referendum, or candidate qualification.**

(1) After filing a petition for a statewide initiative or a statewide referendum, and before gathering signatures, the sponsors shall, after consulting with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, sign a form provided by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor indicating whether the sponsors will gather signatures manually, electronically, or both.

(2) After filing a petition for a local initiative or a local referendum, and before gathering signatures, the sponsors shall, after consulting with the local clerk's office, sign a form provided by the local clerk's office indicating whether the sponsors will gather signatures manually, electronically, or both.

(3) After a candidate files a notice of intent to gather signatures to qualify for a ballot, and before gathering signatures, the candidate shall, after consulting with the election officer, sign a form provided by the election officer indicating whether the candidate will gather signatures manually, electronically, or both.

(4) To gather a signature electronically, a signature-gatherer shall:

(a) use a device provided by the signature-gatherer or a sponsor of the petition that:

(i) is approved by the lieutenant governor;

(ii) is capable of uploading to the system the personal identifying information relating to an individual who signs the petition;

[~~(ii)~~] (iii) except as provided in [~~Subsection (4)(a)(iii), does not store a signature or any other information relating to an individual signing the petition in any location other than the location used by the website to store the information~~] Subsections (4)(a)(iv) and (v), does not, on the device, store the information described in Subsection (4)(a)(ii);

[~~(iii)~~] (iv) beginning on January 1, 2028, is capable of operating offline by temporarily storing, on the device, the information described in Subsection (4)(a)(ii) that would otherwise be uploaded in real time to the system;

(v) [~~does not, on the device, store a signature or any other information relating to an individual signing the petition except for the minimum time necessary to upload information to the website~~] when connected to a wireless communication technology, does not, on the device, retain the information described in Subsection (4)(a)(ii) for longer than is necessary to upload the information to the system;

[~~(iv)~~] (vi) is capable of scanning, reading, and extracting to the device:

(A) the driver license number from a driver license;

(B) the state identification card number from a state identification card; or

(C) an image of another form of valid voter identification;

(vii) does not contain any applications, software, or data other than those approved by the lieutenant governor; and

[~~(v)~~] (viii) complies with cyber-security and other security protocols required by the lieutenant governor;

(b) use the approved device to securely access [~~a website~~] the system designated by the lieutenant governor, directly, or via an application designated by the lieutenant governor; and

(c) while connected to the [~~website~~] system, present the approved device to an individual considering signing the petition and, while the signature-gatherer is in the physical presence of the individual:

(i) wait for the individual to reach each screen presented to the individual on the approved device; and

(ii) wait for the individual to advance to each subsequent screen by clicking on the acknowledgement at the bottom of the screen.

(5) Each screen shown on an approved device as part of the signature-gathering process shall appear as a continuous electronic document that, if the entire document does not appear on the screen at once, requires the individual viewing the screen to, before advancing to the next screen, scroll through the document until the individual reaches the end of the document.

(6) After advancing through each screen required for the petition, the signature process shall proceed as follows:

(a) except as provided in Subsection (6)(b):

(i) the individual desiring to sign the petition shall present the individual's driver license or state identification card to the signature-gatherer;

(ii) the signature-gatherer shall verify that the individual pictured on the driver license or state identification card is the individual signing the petition;

(iii) the signature-gatherer shall scan [~~or enter~~ ]the driver license number or state identification card number through the approved device; and

(iv) immediately after the signature-gatherer complies with Subsection (6)(a)(iii), the [~~website~~] system shall determine whether the individual desiring to sign the petition is eligible to sign the petition;

(b) if the individual desiring to sign the petition is unable to provide a driver license or state identification card to the signature gatherer:

(i) the individual may present other valid voter identification;

(ii) if the valid voter identification contains a picture of the individual, the signature-gatherer shall verify that the individual pictured is the individual signing the petition;

(iii) if the valid voter identification does not contain a picture of the individual, the signature-gatherer shall, to the extent reasonably practicable, use the individual's address or other available means to determine whether the identification relates to the individual presenting the identification;

(iv) the signature-gatherer shall scan an image of the valid voter identification and immediately upload the image to the [~~website~~] system; and

(v) the individual:

(A) shall enter the individual's address; and

(B) may, at the discretion of the individual, enter the individual's date of birth or age after the individual clicks on the screen acknowledging that they have read and understand the following statement, "Birth date or age information is not required, but may be used to verify your identity with voter registration records. If you choose not to provide it, your signature may not be verified as a valid signature if you change your address before your signature is verified or if the information you provide does not match your voter registration records."; and

(c) after completing the process described in Subsection (6)(a) or (b), the screen shall:

(i) except for a petition to qualify a candidate for the ballot, give the individual signing the petition the opportunity to enter the individual's email address after the individual reads the following statement, "If you provide your email address, you may receive an email with additional information relating to the petition you are signing."; and

(ii)(A) if the [~~website~~] system determines, under Subsection (6)(a)(iv), that the individual is eligible to sign the petition, permit the individual to enter the individual's name as the individual's electronic signature and, immediately after the signature-gather timely complies with Subsection (10), certify the signature; or

(B) if the individual provides valid voter identification under Subsection (6)(b), permit the individual to enter the individual's name as the individual's electronic signature.

(7) If an individual provides valid voter identification under Subsection (6)(b), the county

clerk shall, within seven calendar days after the day on which the individual submits the valid voter identification, certify the signature if:

(a) the individual is eligible to sign the petition;

(b) the identification provided matches the information on file; and

(c) the signature-gatherer timely complies with Subsection (10).

(8) For each signature submitted under this section, the [~~website~~] system shall record:

(a) the information identifying the individual who signs;

(b) the date the signature was collected; and

(c) the name of the signature-gatherer.

(9) An individual who is a signature-gatherer may not sign a petition unless another individual acts as the signature-gatherer when the individual signs the petition.

(10) Except for a petition for a candidate to seek the nomination of a registered political party, each individual who gathers a signature under this section shall, within one business day after the day on which the individual gathers a signature, electronically sign and submit the following statement to the [~~website~~] system:

"VERIFICATION OF SIGNATURE-GATHERER

State of Utah, County of ____

I, _____, of _____, hereby state, under penalty of perjury, that:

I am at least 18 years old;

All the signatures that I collected on [Date signatures were gathered] were signed by individuals who professed to be the individuals whose signatures I gathered, and each of the individuals signed the petition in my presence;

I did not knowingly make a misrepresentation of fact concerning the law or proposed law to which the petition relates;

I believe that each individual has signed the individual's name and written the individual's residence correctly, that each signer has read and understands the law to which the petition relates, and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah;

Each signature correctly reflects the date on which the individual signed the petition; and

I have not paid or given anything of value to any individual who signed this petition to encourage that individual to sign it."

(11) Except for a petition for a candidate to seek the nomination of a registered political party:

(a) the county clerk may not certify a signature that is not timely verified in accordance with Subsection (10); and

(b) if a signature certified by a county clerk under Subsection (6)(c)(ii)(A) is not timely verified in accordance with Subsection (10), the county clerk shall:

(i) revoke the certification;

(ii) remove the signature from the posting described in Subsection 20A-7-217(4), 20A-7-315(4), 20A-7-516(4), or 20A-7-616(4); and

(iii) update the totals described in Subsections 20A-7-217(5)(a)(ii), 20A-7-315(5)(a)(ii), 20A-7-516(5)(a)(ii), and 20A-7-616(5)(a)(ii).

(12) For a petition for a candidate to seek the nomination of a registered political party, each individual who gathers a signature under this section shall, within one business day after the day on which the individual gathers a signature, electronically sign and submit the following statement to the lieutenant governor in the manner specified by the lieutenant governor:

"VERIFICATION OF SIGNATURE-GATHERER

State of Utah, County of ____

I, _____, of _____, hereby state that:

I am at least 18 years old;

All the signatures that I collected on [Date signatures were gathered] were signed by individuals who professed to be the individuals whose signatures I gathered, and each of the individuals signed the petition in my presence;

I believe that each individual has signed the individual's name and written the individual's residence correctly and that each signer is registered to vote in Utah; and

Each signature correctly reflects the date on which the individual signed the petition."

(13) For a petition for a candidate to seek the nomination of a registered political party, the election officer may not certify a signature that is not timely verified in accordance with Subsection (12).

Section 8. Section **20A-21-202** is enacted to read:

**20A-21-202 . Electronic signature gathering -- Exclusive method of collecting signatures.**

(1) Beginning on January 1, 2030, the sponsors of a statewide or local initiative petition:

(a) shall gather signatures using the electronic initiative process; and

(b) may not gather signatures manually.

(2) Beginning on January 1, 2030, the sponsors or a statewide or local referendum petition:

(a) shall gather signatures using the electronic referendum process; and

(b) may not gather signatures manually.

(3) Beginning on January 1, 2030, an individual who gathers signatures for a candidate

nomination petition:

(a) shall gather signatures using the electronic candidate qualification process; and

(b) may not gather using the manual candidate qualification process.

Section 9. Section **63I-1-220** is amended to read:

**63I-1-220 . Repeal dates: Title 20A.**

(1) [ ~~Reserved.~~] Section 20A-7-105, Manual petition processes -- Obtaining signatures -- Verification -- Submitting the petition -- Certification of signatures -- Transfer to lieutenant governor -- Removal of signature, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(2) Section 20A-7-203, Manual initiative process -- Form of initiative petition and signature sheets, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(3) Section 20A-7-204, Manual initiative process -- Circulation requirements -- Lieutenant governor to provide sponsors with materials, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(4) Section 20A-7-303, Manual referendum process -- Form of referendum petition and signature sheets, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(5) Section 20A-7-304, Manual referendum process -- Circulation requirements -- Lieutenant governor to provide sponsors with materials, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(6) Section 20A-7-503, Manual initiative process -- Form of initiative petition and signature sheet, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(7) Section 20A-7-504, Manual initiative process -- Circulation requirements -- Local clerk to provide sponsors with materials, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(8) Section 20A-7-603, Manual referendum process -- Form of referendum petition and signature sheet, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(9) Section 20A-7-604, Manual referendum process -- Circulation requirements -- Local clerk to provide sponsors with materials, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(10) Subsection 20A-9-405(3), regarding the manual candidate nomination process, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(11) Subsection 20A-9-405(5), regarding the manual candidate nomination process, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(12) Subsection 20A-9-408(9), regarding the manual candidate nomination process, is repealed January 1, 2030.

(13) Section 20A-9-408.3, Submission of candidate signature packet -- Requirements for submission -- Signature packet chain of custody and storage, is repealed January 1, 2030.

Section 10. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.