



## **DIRECTIVE 2022-22**

February 7, 2022

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Examination and Verification of Candidate Petitions Filed with the Secretary of State's Office

### **SUMMARY**

This Directive provides instructions on the examination and verification of signatures for candidate petitions filed with the Ohio Secretary of State for the 2022 Primary Election. In lieu of issuing a separate directive with each candidate's petition, this Directive applies to each petition filed with the Ohio Secretary of State's Office and transmitted to county boards of elections for review.

The examination and verification of signatures must be complete, and the certification forms returned to the Secretary of State's Office by **4:00 p.m. on Monday, February 14, 2022.**<sup>1</sup> County boards of elections are encouraged to return certification forms as soon as possible.

The original part-petitions must be shipped via trackable delivery method no later than **Monday, February 14, 2022.** The part-petitions must be received by the Secretary of State's Office by **Friday, February 18, 2022.**

### **VERIFYING THE VALIDITY OF PART-PETITIONS AND SIGNATURES**

Please carefully read this Directive and Chapter 13 ("[Petitions,](#)" [Directive 2022-17](#)) of the Election Official Manual before the board examines the petitions sent to your county.

Each board of elections must process all new, valid voter registrations, and changes of names and addresses to existing registrations received by the board or the Secretary of State's Office as of the date the petition was filed with the Secretary of State before verifying the signatures on the part-petitions. These registrations are effective as of the date the petition was filed with the Secretary of State.<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of updating *voter-initiated activity*, the board must:

1. Verify all petition signatures;
2. Electronically record the board's decisions on the validity or invalidity of each signature on the voter registration record and track for duplicate signatures; and
3. Ensure that the voter registration record is updated with voter-initiated activity credit if the signature is valid.

The board must review each candidate's petitions independently of other candidates' petitions.

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<sup>1</sup> 78 days before the primary election, as required by [R.C. 3513.05](#).

<sup>2</sup> [R.C. 3501.38\(A\)](#), *State ex rel. Oster vs. Lorain Cty. Bd. of Elections*, 93 Ohio St. 3d 480 (2001).

## **PART-PETITION BELONGING TO ANOTHER COUNTY**

If a board receives a part-petition with a majority of signatures from another county, that board of elections may not determine the validity of that part-petition or review the signatures contained on it. Instead, it must promptly follow the steps below, complete the following two spreadsheets, and return them in the envelopes provided when all part-petitions are returned to the Secretary of State's Office:

1. Part-Petitions Sent Spreadsheet (Original Part-Petition(s)), and
2. Part-Petitions Received Spreadsheet (Emailed Part-Petition(s)).

If a board of elections receives a part-petition(s) that belongs to another county:

1. Contact the Director or Deputy Director at the other county board by phone to notify them that your board will be forwarding a scanned copy of a part-petition(s).
2. Log the transfer of the part-petition(s) being sent on the "Part-Petitions Sent" spreadsheet.
3. Send the copy of the part-petition(s) via email to the Director and Deputy Director.
4. Return the original part-petition(s) with the "Part-Petitions Sent" spreadsheet in the envelope provided and marked as such. When the board returns its checked part-petitions to the Secretary of State's Office, place this envelope on top of the checked part-petitions so it can be easily located and retrieved from the box.

If a board receives a copy of a part-petition from another county:

1. Log the part-petition(s) that the board received on the "Part-Petitions Received" spreadsheet.
2. Process the part-petition(s).
3. Return the emailed part-petition(s) with the "Part-Petitions Received" spreadsheet in the envelope provided and marked as such. When the board returns its checked part-petitions to the Secretary of State's Office, place this envelope on top of the checked part-petitions so it can be easily located and retrieved from the box.

**Note:** Even if a board does not email a copy of a part-petition(s) to another county and/or does not receive a copy of a part-petition from another county, the board must enter the county name and mark the box (X) in the top right hand corner of the spreadsheet and place it in the correct envelope. When the board returns its checked part-petitions to the Secretary of State's Office, place both envelopes on top of the checked part-petitions so they can be easily located and retrieved from the box.

## **SCANNING THE PART-PETITIONS**

After the board of elections finishes checking the signatures on the part-petitions, the board must electronically scan each part-petition. A copy of the scanned images – one for each candidate, e.g. each delegate – must be uploaded to the Secretary of State's SharePoint site (using the instructions accompanying this Directive). Each board must retain an electronic copy of the images for the board's records.

## **FULFILLING PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS**

Boards of elections may receive public records requests for copies of the part-petitions. Boards should consult with their statutory legal counsel, the county prosecuting attorney, before rejecting, fulfilling, or responding to any public records request.

## **CERTIFICATION & RETURN OF PETITIONS**

As soon as the board of elections finishes verifying the signatures on the part-petitions, the board must:

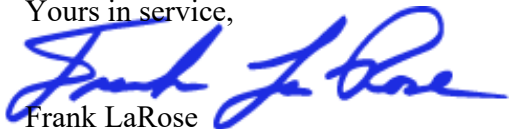
1. Complete and submit the certification form electronically by clicking the “submit” button on the bottom of the form;
2. Verify that the form received a timestamp;
3. Print and save a copy of the complete certification form containing the timestamp;
4. Have the Director and Deputy Director sign the timestamped certification form; and
5. Upload the signed certification form to the SharePoint site.<sup>3</sup>

**Immediately contact this Office at 1-614-466-2585, if upon submitting the form via Elect Collect the board does not receive a timestamp. All certification forms and scanned images of petitions must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, February 14, 2022.**

After submitting the certification forms, county boards of elections must promptly return the original part-petitions to the Secretary of State’s Office, Elections Division, 22 North Fourth Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3668 via trackable delivery method. **All original part-petitions must be received by the Secretary of State’s Office no later than Friday, February 18, 2022.**

If you have any questions concerning this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State’s elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State

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<sup>3</sup> If a board has not appointed a Deputy Director or Director, then the Board Chairperson or a board member of the opposite party, respectively, must sign the certification forms.