

DIRECTIVE 2026-24

June 15, 2026

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

Re: Examination and Verification of Petitions from Independent Candidate for U.S. Senate Filed with the Secretary of State's Office

SUMMARY

This directive provides instructions for examining and verifying signatures on the petitions filed on May 1, 2026, by the independent candidate for U.S. Senate, Greg Levy, with the Ohio Secretary of State's office for the November 3, 2026, General Election.

The examination and verification of signatures must be complete and the certification forms returned to the Secretary of State's office by **12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15, 2026.**¹ 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 **Friday, July 17, 2026.** The part-petitions must be received by the Secretary of State's office by **Friday, July 24, 2026.**

VERIFYING THE VALIDITY OF PART-PETITIONS AND SIGNATURES

Please carefully read this directive and [Chapter 13 \("Petitions," Directive 2025-45\)](#) of the Election Official Manual before the board of elections examines the petitions sent to your county. Remember that a signature on a nominating petition "is not valid if it is dated more than one year before the nominating petition was filed."²

Before verifying the signatures on the part-petitions, each board of elections must process all new, valid voter registrations as well as 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.³

¹ [R.C. 3513.262](#); See [State ex rel. Maras v. LaRose, 2022-Ohio-3295, 168 Ohio St. 3d 430, 199 N.E.3d 532.](#)

² [R.C. 3513.262.](#)

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

The board must verify all petition signatures, electronically record decisions on the validity or invalidity of each signature on the voter registration record, track for duplicate signatures, and ensure that the voter registration record is updated accordingly.

Prior to verifying the validity of individual signatures contained on a part-petition, the board of elections must verify the validity of that part-petition. To verify the part-petitions, the board must check each part-petition to determine whether the circulator's statement on the part-petition has been properly completed. The entire part-petition is invalid if the circulator's statement is not completed as required by law.⁴

PART-PETITION BELONGING TO ANOTHER COUNTY

If a board of elections 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:

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 of the other county board.
4. Return the original part-petition(s) with the "Part-Petitions Sent" spreadsheet in an envelope and mark it 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 of elections receives a copy of a part-petition from another county, complete the following steps:

1. Log the part-petition(s) that the board received on the "Part-Petitions Received" spreadsheet.
2. Process the part-petition(s).
3. Return a printed copy of the emailed part-petition(s) with the "Part-Petitions Received" spreadsheet in an envelope and mark it as such. When the board returns its checked part-petitions to the Secretary of State's office, place this

⁴ [R.C. 3501.38](#).

envelope on top of the checked part-petitions so it can be easily located and retrieved from the box.

SCANNING THE PART-PETITIONS

After the board of elections finishes verifying the signatures on the part-petitions, the board must electronically scan each part-petition. A copy of the scanned images 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. S.B. 63 clarifies that partisan and independent candidates' petition papers in the possession of a board of elections are subject to disclosure under the Ohio Public Records Act, R.C. 149.43. Upon receiving a public records request for petition papers accompanying a declaration of candidacy or nominating petition, a board must make the petition papers available for inspection or copying as soon as practicable, whether or not the board has made any markings on the petition or has finished verifying the petition's signatures.

CERTIFICATION AND RETURN OF PETITIONS

As soon as the board of elections finishes verifying the signatures on the part-petitions, the board must return a completed certification form for the candidate's petition. The certification form for the candidate's petition must be completed and submitted electronically via Elect Collect by selecting the "Submit" button. The certification form must also be saved and printed. The director and deputy director must upload the signed certification form to the SharePoint site.⁵ **The certification form and scanned images of part-petitions must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15, 2026.**

After the certification form has been submitted, county boards of elections must promptly return the original part-petitions to the Secretary of State's office, Elections Division, 180 Civic Center Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4138 via trackable delivery

⁵ 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.

method. **All original part-petitions must be received by the Secretary of State's office no later than Friday, July 24, 2026.**

If you have any questions concerning this directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at 614-728-8789.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank LaRose", written in a cursive style.

Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State