

DIRECTIVE 2026-45

August 25, 2026

To: All County Boards of Elections

Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Form of the Official Ballot for the November 3, 2026, General Election

SUMMARY

This Directive provides the certified forms of the official ballots to be used in the November 3, 2026, General Election. Each board of elections must thoroughly and promptly check every detail of its ballots from the creation of the ballot to submitting the ballot files to the printer to be produced and fully comply with [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM. Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring the ballot is correct rests with the board members, as indicated by their signatures. A board member's signature has legal significance and indicates the board member is accepting full responsibility and ownership of ensuring the accuracy of the ballot. The board must develop, maintain, and practice policies and procedures to ensure this responsibility is met at all levels. This is a basic and essential function of the board.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please note that, in lieu of issuing a separate Directive with specific details covering ballot layout, proofing, and quantities, the Secretary of State's office is issuing only this Directive, which must be used in conjunction with [Chapter 5 \(Ballots\)](#) of the Election Official Manual (EOM) when preparing ballots for this election. [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM provides specific instructions on the following subjects:

- ballot format
- voter instructions
- ballot stubs
- candidate ballots (names, restrictions, political party, rotation, etc.)
- questions and issues ballots
- ballot proofs
- overlaps
- bid requirements

- ballot quantities
- logic and accuracy testing
- public testing

I. VERIFYING DISTRICT RELATIONSHIPS

Before programming any aspect of the central tabulating system for the November 3, 2026, General Election, boards of elections must verify the accuracy of district relationships in the central tabulating system against the county's voter registration system. This is to ensure that each voter receives the correct ballot style (that is, the correct combination of candidate contests and ballot questions and issues) based upon that voter's residential address.

As a part of the review for accuracy of district relationships between the county's voter registration system and its tabulating system, the board must ensure the following by Wednesday, September 16, 2026:

- A.** The Secretary of State's precinct codes (three alphabet letters) are accurate in the tabulating system and, if appropriate, the county's voter registration system; and
- B.** The precinct names correspond between the two systems.

Note: It is imperative that a board of elections upload to the statewide voter registration database (SWVRD) any changes to district relationships (including wards and precincts) that have been made locally in the county's voter registration system (VRS). Using the report, which will be provided by Allison Scott on Friday, September 11, 2026, each board must review the report to ensure that all Secretary of State Precinct ID Codes provided on the report match the board's voter registration system. Boards will have until Wednesday, September 16, 2026, to return the reviewed report, noting any changes.

In addition, the board must verify at least one voter record for each precinct in the SWVRD against the county's VRS to ensure accuracy.

II. OFFICIAL BALLOT FORMS

The certified ballot form accompanying this directive is for offices to be elected at the November 3, 2026, General Election. The ballot form contains the correct title for each office, how that title should appear on your county's ballot, and the order in

which offices must appear on the ballot for all voting systems. The ballot form also contains the name of each statewide candidate exactly as the candidate's name must appear on all ballots for all voting systems.

The names of all candidates who have not withdrawn pursuant to R.C. 3513.30 must be arranged, rotated, and printed upon the ballot in accordance with the provisions of Ohio Revised Code Chapters 3505, 3506, and 3513, and [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM.

III. ORDER OF OFFICES FOR ALL BALLOTS¹

A. The order of offices for ballots shall be as follows:

- Governor and Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General
- Auditor of State
- Secretary of State
- Treasurer of State
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1/1/2027)
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1/2/2027)
- U.S. Senator (Unexpired term ending 1/3/2029)
- Representative to Congress
- State Senator
- State Representative
- Judge of the Court of Appeals
- Judge of the Court of Common Pleas
- County Court Judge
- County Commissioner
- County Auditor

B. Write-In Vote Blank Spaces

A write-in space must be provided on the ballot for every office for which the board of elections or Secretary of State received a valid declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate.² If there is both a full and an unexpired term for the same office, place the full term first, followed by the unexpired term.

¹ [R.C. 3505.03\(C\)](#); [R.C. 3505.04](#).

² [R.C. 3513.041](#).

Below is the list of valid write-in candidates for the November 3, 2026, General Election.

i. Governor and Lieutenant Governor

- Timothy Grady and Andrea Neutzling
- Heather Hill and Patrick Manley
- Renea Turner and Jalen Turner
- Ron Ula and Michael C. Lehnerd

ii. U.S. Senator

- Stephen Faris
- Anthony Holliman
- Timothy Telymonde

IV. OFFICIAL QUESTIONS AND ISSUES BALLOT

Offices for which candidates may be nominated or elected are presented on the ballot first, followed by the questions and issues. The Official Questions and Issues Ballot must be used for all voting systems. The attached ballot form contains examples of some of the local questions and issues that may appear on the ballot in your county. Not every category or type of question/issue will appear on every ballot in every county, so please apply as much of the form as is appropriate to the ballots in your county.

Additional instructions on headings, ballot language, and percentage of votes can be found in [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM.

Please note that Statewide Issue 3 will appear on the November 3, 2026, ballot.

Questions and issues must be grouped together in the following political subdivision order for elections held in 2026:³

- A.** State
- B.** School and Other Districts
- C.** County
- D.** Municipal
- E.** Township

³ [R.C. 3505.06\(B\)](#); [Ohio Ballot Question and Issues Handbook, pg. 9](#).

Each board of elections may determine the specific order in which the questions/issues within each group are placed on the ballot in that county⁴; however, a board should adopt a method for doing so (for example, ordered alphabetically or by date filed, etc.). Absentee ballots must contain identical ordering of issues within groups to regular ballots.

Please review the appropriate sections of the Ohio Revised Code, local charter (if applicable), and the [Ohio Ballot Questions and Issues Handbook](#) for ballot language and formats that are not on the attached Official Questions and Issues Ballot.

V. ABSENTEE BALLOTS⁵

Each board of elections must have absentee ballots printed and ready for use by Friday, September 18, 2026 (46 days before the November 3, 2026 General Election), for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters, and by October 6, 2026, for regular (non-UOCAVA) absentee voters.

A copy of each absentee ballot (candidates and questions and issues) must be sent to the Secretary of State's office at least 47 days before the election, by Thursday, September 17, 2026. Absentee ballots must be uploaded to the SharePoint site.

VI. CANDIDATES CERTIFIED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

A. Governor and Lieutenant Governor

Democratic Party

- Amy Acton and David Pepper

Libertarian Party

- Don Kissick and James L. Mills

Republican Party

- Vivek Ramaswamy and Robert A. McColley

B. Attorney General

Republican Party

- Keith Faber

Democratic Party

- John J. Kulewicz

⁴ [R.C. 3505.06\(C\)](#).

⁵ [R.C. 3509.01\(B\)\(1\), \(2\)](#); [R.C. 3511.04\(B\)](#).

C. Auditor of State

Democratic Party

- Annette Blackwell

Republican Party

- Frank LaRose

D. Secretary of State

Libertarian Party

- Tom Pruss

Democratic Party

- Allison Russo

Republican Party

- Robert Sprague

E. Treasurer of State

Republican Party

- Jay Edwards

Democratic Party

- Seth Walsh

F. Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1/1/2027)

Republican Party

- Daniel R. Hawkins

Democratic Party

- Marilyn Zayas

G. Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1/2/2027)

Democratic Party

- Jennifer Brunner

Republican Party

- Colleen O'Donnell

H. U.S. Senator (Unexpired term ending 1/3/2029)

Democratic Party

- Sherrod Brown

Republican Party

- Jon Husted

Other-party candidate

- Greg Levy

Libertarian Party

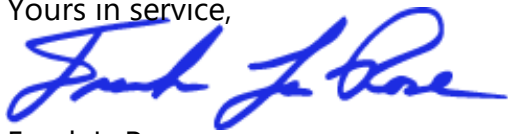
- William B. Redpath

VII. CANDIDATES FOR OTHER DISTRICT OFFICE (for example, Congress, Court of Appeals Judge, State Senate, and State Representative)

Candidates for other district offices must be certified to the appropriate board(s) of elections by the most populous county board of elections of the district.⁶ If a less-populous county of a district has not received a list of candidates, it must contact the most populous county before programming ballots.

If you have any questions regarding this Directive or [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at 614-728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose

Ohio Secretary of State

⁶ [R.C. 3505.01\(A\)\(2\)](#).