

Minor Party/Third Party Ballot Access

Political parties that did not receive 20 percent of the votes cast in the last General Election (§17-13-40, Code of Alabama, 1975), often called “third parties,” must take the following steps in order to obtain statewide ballot access:

- At least 60 days before each election, file with the Secretary of State an original copy of the party’s emblem and a copy in a digital or other electronic format acceptable by the Secretary of State. [§17-6-29]
- File a certificate of nomination of candidates. A certificate of nomination for state or federal candidates must be filed with the Secretary of State. A certificate of nomination for county candidates must be filed with the local Judge of Probate. *Each certificate of nomination must have attached a separate sworn statement from the nominee, signed by the nominee, stating that he or she accepts the nomination.* The certificate of nomination is due on or before **5:00 p.m., June 5th, 2018**, the date of the primary election. [§§17-9-3(2) and 17-13-52] For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Probate Judge for the deadline to file nominations.
- File a petition containing signatures of at least **three percent** of the qualified electors who cast ballots for the office of governor in the last General Election in the jurisdiction or political subdivision for which ballot access is sought (e.g., statewide, county, district). A petition for statewide ballot access must have **35,412** valid signatures. *The voters signing the petition must be registered to vote in the jurisdiction or political subdivision for which ballot access is sought.*
- For ballot access in the 2018 General Election, the petition must be filed no later than **the date of the primary, June 5th, 2018 by 5:00p.m.**, with the Secretary of State to nominate candidates for state or federal offices or with the Judge of Probate for county offices. [§17-6-22] For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Judge of Probate for the petition deadline.
- Minor party candidates not seeking a federal office are subject to the reporting requirements of the *Alabama Fair Campaign Practices Act*. Minor party candidates must file an *Appointment of Principal Campaign Committee Form* within five days of qualifying with the minor party or within five days of raising or spending more than \$1,000, whichever comes first. Additionally, when a minor party candidate raises or spends more than \$1,000, he or she must also begin filing campaign finance disclosure reports beginning with the next regularly-scheduled report.
- Minor party candidates not seeking a federal office must also file a *Statement of Economic Interests*, (§36-25-15). The *Statement of Economic Interests* must be filed with the Alabama Ethics Commission simultaneously with the date he or she qualifies with the minor party as a

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candidate. For information on filing the *Statement of Economic Interests*, call the Alabama Ethics Commission (334) 242-2997.

A sample petition form, which may be photo copied, is available from the Office of the Secretary of State and on the Secretary of State's web site: www.alabamavotes.gov.

PETITION REQUIREMENTS

- A statement that includes the name of the political party, the date of the general election, and the name of the political subdivision for which ballot access is sought, including district name and number if applicable, if the petition is not for statewide ballot access. Petitions for the establishment of ballot access for a political party in a special election shall not be required to include the date of the special election at the top of each page. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(2)]
- Numbered pages. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(2)]
- Requested information for each person signing includes name, residential address, county of residence, city of residence (if applicable), voting place, date of birth and signature. A signature shall not be deemed invalid for lacking any portion of the requested information if the disclosed information is sufficient for determining the validity of a signature. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(3)]

PETITION SUGGESTIONS

- Have the voter sign in ink and write legibly.
- Obtain signatures in excess of the required number, as some signatures may not be valid and/or identifiable.
- Keep a copy of the petition.

PETITION FILING LOCATIONS

Petitions for **statewide ballot access and for state and federal offices** must be filed in the **Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State**, located in the State Capitol, Room E-204, 600 Dexter Avenue in Montgomery, Alabama.

Petitions for **countywide and county district offices** must be filed in the office of the **county Judge of Probate**.

QUESTIONS?

For questions about minor party ballot access, please call the Elections Division at (334) 242-7210 or (800) 274-VOTE.

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