Rules of
Elected Officials

Division 30—Secretary of State
Chapter 15—Initiative, Referendum, New Party, and Independent Candidate Petition Rules

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New Party, and Independent
Candidate Petition Rules

15 CSR 30-15.010 Signature Verification Procedures for Initiative, Referendum, New Party and Independent Petitions

*PURPOSE: The secretary of state may make rules to ensure uniform, complete, and accurate checking of initiative and referendum petition signatures. This rule provides for uniform determination of whether signatures are those of legal voters as required in Article III, Section 50 of the **Missouri Constitution**.*

(1) Voter signatures will be rejected if—
    (A) They list an address outside of the county as indicated on the petition except as provided in subsection (2)(B) and (3)(F) of this section; or
    (B) They have been struck through or crossed out.

(2) Voter names will only be accepted if—
    (A) The name is exactly as it appears on the voting rolls except that there is—
        1. The presence or absence of a middle initial when a first name is given or the presence or absence of a first initial when a middle name is given;
        2. The substitution of a common nickname for the name on the voting roll, that is, Dick for Richard, Liz or Beth for Elizabeth, Bill for William, Becky for Rebecca, etc.;
        3. The presence or absence of terms such as Jr. or Sr. following a name; and
        4. The use of only a first and middle initial; provided, that on either the petition or the voting rolls, both initials can be determined from the name(s) given; and
    (B) They were registered to vote within the county named at the top of the petition page on the date the petition was signed.

(3) Voter addresses will be accepted if they meet one (1) or a combination of the following categories:
    (A) The address is exactly as it appears on the voting rolls;
    (B) The address is exactly as it appears on the voting rolls except that there is—
        1. The presence or absence of a letter or number identifying an apartment; and
        2. The presence or absence of a letter or grouping of letters indicating the directional location of a street, for example, "E" for east, "NW" for northwest, "S" for south;
    (C) The voter resides in the same residence as indicated on the voting rolls and the local

election authority can determine that only the address designation has been changed by municipal or postal authorities;
    (D) The address as listed on the petition was the voter's registered address on the date the petition was signed;
    (E) The address listed on the petition is different from the address on the voting rolls but within the county named at the top of the page, provided that the local election authority who maintains the registration record of such person shall compare and determine that the individual's signatures on the petition and on the voter's registration record are sufficiently alike to identify the petition signer as the same person who is registered to vote within the jurisdiction. If otherwise valid, the signature of an individual whose address is acceptable under this subsection (3)(E) shall be counted in the totals of the local election authority who has jurisdiction over the address listed on the petition; or
    (F) The address listed on the petition is different from the address on the voting rolls but the voter was registered to vote within the county named at the top of the page on the date the petition was signed, provided that the local election authority who maintains the registration record of such person shall compare and determine that the individual's signatures on the petition and on the voter's registration record are sufficiently alike to identify the petition signer as the same person who was registered to vote within the jurisdiction on the date the petition was signed. If otherwise valid, the signature of an individual whose address is acceptable under this subsection (3)(F) shall be counted in the totals of the local election authority who has jurisdiction over the address named at the top of the petition page.

(4) A voter's signature will be accepted as valid if it generally appears to be in a form similar to that found on the voter rolls.

(5) In order for a name to be qualified to appear on the petition, there must be a valid voter name, address and signature. NOTE: Failure of any other information is not a reason to fail to certify a name as being qualified.

(6) A voter's signature shall not be deemed invalid on the basis of source of registration. If otherwise valid, the signature of a person who registered to vote pursuant to the provisions of sections 115.159, 115.160, or 115.162, RSMo shall be accepted as valid without respect to whether such person has previously voted in the jurisdiction or received a voter identification card, provided that each of the following must apply at the

time of verification of the petition by the local election authority:
    (A) The voter registration application had been received and accepted by the election authority on or before the date the petition was signed;
    (B) The verification notice sent by the election authority pursuant to section 115.155.3, RSMo 1994, was not returned by the postal service to the election authority within the time established by the election authority; and
    (C) The local election authority's voter registration file reflects the applicant was eligible to vote in the county named at the top of the petition page on the date the petition was signed.

AUTHORITY: section 115.335.7, RSMo 2000, and section 116.130.5, RSMo Supp. 2013.* Original rule filed Nov. 22, 1985, effective March 24, 1986. Amended: Filed April 22, 1992, effective Sept. 6, 1992. Emergency amendment filed June 10, 1992, effective June 20, 1992, expired Oct. 17, 1992. Emergency amendment filed July 9, 1996, effective July 19, 1996, expired Jan. 14, 1997. Amended: Filed July 9, 1996, effective Feb. 28, 1997. Amended: Filed Aug. 27, 1999, effective Feb. 29, 2000. Amended: Filed Aug. 30, 2013, effective Feb. 28, 2014.

*Original authority: 115.335.7, 1977, amended 1993, 1995 and 116.130, RSMo 1980, amended 1988, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003.

15 CSR 30-15.020 Processing Procedures for Initiative, Referendum, New Party and Independent Candidate Petitions

PURPOSE: The secretary of state may make rules to ensure uniform, complete, and accurate checking of initiative and referendum petition signatures. This rule provides for uniform processing of petitions once a determination has been made as to the validity of a name on a petition.

(1) Each local election authority shall check each signature designated by the secretary of state against voter registration records and annotate each signature, according to their findings in red ink in the left margin, on the copies of petition pages sent to him/her in the following manner:
    (A) If the name, address, and signature are acceptable pursuant to 15 CSR 30-15.010 "R" to denote "Registered";
    (B) Where possible, if the voter's address on an "R" designated signature is acceptable pursuant to 15 CSR 30-15.010 (3)(F), where the address listed on the petition is different

from the address on the voting rolls but the voter was registered to vote within the county named at the top of the petition page on the date the petition was signed, and the local election authority determined that the individual's signatures on the petition and on the voter's registration record are sufficiently alike to identify the petition signer as the same person who was registered to vote within the jurisdiction on the date the petition was signed, the local election authority listed on the top of the petition page shall designate the signature as "R";

(C) Where possible, if the voter's address on an "R" designated signature is acceptable pursuant to 15 CSR 30-15.010(3)(E), where the address listed on the petition is different from the address on the voting rolls but within the county named at the top of the page, and the local election authority determined that the individual's signatures on the petition and on the voter's registration record are sufficiently alike to identify the petition signer as the same person who is registered to vote within the jurisdiction, the local election authority shall add to the "R" designation "DA" (i.e., "RDA" to denote "Registered, Different Address");

(D) If the name on the petition does not appear in the election authority's registration file as an eligible voter in that jurisdiction "NR" to denote "Not Registered";

(E) If the address on the petition is not an address within the county named at the top of the petition page except as provided in 15 CSR 30-15.010 and subsection (1)(B) of this section "WA" to denote "Wrong Address";

(F) If the name and address are acceptable pursuant to 15 CSR 30-15.010, but the signature appears different than that on file with the election authority "WS" to denote "Wrong Signature";

(G) If a name selected in a random sample for a particular congressional district is actually in another district in the county and otherwise properly registered "OD" to denote "Other District"; and

(H) If a person is registered, but the correct congressional district is not indicated on the petition, the incorrect number should be crossed out and the correct number entered in the right margin.

(2) In the event a duplicate signature is found on the petition, the local election authority shall call this to the attention of the secretary of state in a separate memo, noting the page number(s) and the line number(s) of the signatures.

(3) In the event a situation is identified where one (1) person has signed for him/herself and his/her spouse on one (1) line, that is, Mr. and Mrs. John Jones, the signature may be counted which appears to be that of the petition signer provided that all of the requirements of sections (1) and (2) are met. The local election authority shall call these occurrences to the attention of the secretary of state in a separate memo, noting the page number(s) and the line number(s).

(4) Each local election authority shall review all pages and signatures s/he had been asked to check by the secretary of state for apparent irregularities and call these irregularities to the attention of the secretary of state in a separate memo, noting the page number(s) and the line number(s).

(5) Each local election authority shall certify to the secretary of state, on forms provided, or by means of petition processing summary reports generated by the software provided by the secretary of state as part of the Centralized Voter Registration System authorized by section 115.158, RSMo, the total of each category enumerated in section (1) less the number of duplicate, but otherwise qualified, signatures in section (2). First class counties participating in the Centralized Voter Registration System through the electronic interface allowed by the statute may certify their totals on reports from their automated systems if the report format is approved by the secretary of state.

AUTHORITY: section 115.335.7, RSMo 2000, and section 116.130.5, RSMo Supp. 2013.* Original rule filed Nov. 22, 1985, effective March 24, 1986. Amended: Filed April 22, 1992, effective Sept. 6, 1992. Emergency amendment filed June 10, 1992, effective June 20, 1992, expired Oct. 17, 1992. Emergency amendment filed July 12, 1996, effective July 22, 1996, expired Jan. 14, 1997. Amended: Filed July 12, 1996, effective Feb. 28, 1997. Amended: Filed Aug. 27, 1999, effective Feb. 29, 2000. Amended: Filed Aug. 30, 2013, effective Feb. 28, 2014.

*Original authority: 115.335.7, RSMo 1977, amended 1993, 1995 and 116.130, RSMo 1980, amended 1988, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003.

15 CSR 30-15.030 Initiative, Referendum, New Party, and Independent Candidate Petitions Missouri Voter Registration System and Other Computerized Processing Options

PURPOSE: The purpose of this rule is to clarify that local election authorities have the option to use the centralized Missouri Voter Registration System (MCVR) or a petition processing software program provided and maintained by the Office of the Secretary of State for initiative, referendum, new party, and independent candidate petition signature verification as allowed under Chapters 115 and 116, RSMo. MCVR is the official statewide voter registration list which was created and implemented as part of the Help America Vote Act of 2002. This system is maintained and administered by the Office of the Secretary of State and contains the name and registration information of every legally registered Missouri voter. It serves as the official voter registration list for the conduct of all elections in Missouri and allows local election authorities immediate real-time electronic access to the information contained in the system. Currently, local election authorities may use this system for petition signature verification as authorized by Chapter 115, RSMo. The secretary of state may make rules to ensure uniform, complete, and accurate checking of initiative and referendum petition signatures.

(1) Each local election authority has the option to comply with the requirements of 15 CSR 30-15.010 and 15 CSR 30-15.020 through the centralized Missouri Voter Registration System (MCVR). Each local election authority shall certify to the secretary of state by means of petition processing summary reports generated by the software provided by the secretary of state as part of the Missouri Voter Registration System authorized by section 115.158, RSMo, the total of each category enumerated in 15 CSR 30-15.020(1) less the number of duplicate, but otherwise qualified, signatures in 15 CSR 30-15.020(2).

(2) Each local election authority has the option to comply with the requirements of 15 CSR 30-15.010 and 15 CSR 30-15.020 through a petition processing software program maintained and administered by the secretary of state. Petition pages will be processed and annotated electronically. Each local election authority shall certify to the secretary of state by means of petition processing summary reports generated by the software program provided by the secretary of state the total of each category enumerated in 15 CSR 30-15.020(1) less the number of duplicate, but otherwise qualified, signatures in 15 CSR 30-15.020(2).

AUTHORITY: section 115.335.7, RSMo Supp. 2019, and section 116.130.5, RSMo 2016.* Original rule filed Aug. 14, 2013, effective Feb. 28, 2014. Amended: Filed Jan. 31, 2020, effective July 30, 2020.

*Original authority: 115.335.7, RSMo 1977, amended 1993, 1995, 2018 and 116.130, RSMo 1980, amended 1988, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003.