

12/30/11

Candidacy Requirements

For

Town Council Town of Leesburg

County of Loudoun April 17, 2012 Special Election



General Disclaimer

The information contained in this candidacy requirements bulletin is provided with the aim of providing an overview of Virginia electoral requirements. This document, and its contents, however, is not meant as legal advice or as a binding statement of official policy. Such laws are subject to change in content and interpretation. Candidates are responsible for verifying the status of current law and compliance with same.





INTRODUCTION

This bulletin and all required forms are available on our website:

http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Index.html

Each document is explained in Item IV on Pages 3 through 7 herein.

The filing deadline and the officer with whom the qualifying forms are filed also is addressed.

Your particular attention is called to Item I on Page 1. This section addresses advertising and campaign material identification.

Should you have questions relating to your candidacy, please do not hesitate to call our toll-free line (800)-552-9745. Within the Call Menu, press 2 for Campaign Finance and Ballot Access assistance. Select 1, 2 or 4 if your question relates to campaign contributions and expenditures, campaign advertising, or disclaimers. Select 3 if your question relates to candidate ballot access. You also can reach us at 804-864-8901.





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I. ADVERTISING AND CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

The Campaign Finance Disclosure Act imposes certain requirements relating to advertising and identification of campaign ads and materials, including sample ballots.

Refer to Chapter 14 in the *Candidate Campaign Committee Summary* published by the State Board of Elections for specific requirements.

The following is provided for your additional information:

A. Sample Ballots

Any **sample** of a paper or voting equipment **ballot** must contain the words **SAMPLE BALLOT**, the appropriate disclaimer required by the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act, and, in addition, must:

- (a) contain the words **SAMPLE BALLOT** in not less than 24 point type; and
- (b) be printed on paper of a color **other than white or yellow (canary)**.

B. Posting

Contact your County Administrator to determine whether local ordinances prohibit or restrict the posting of campaign materials.

No locality shall have the authority to prohibit the display of political campaign signs on **private property** if the signs are in compliance with zoning and right of way restrictions applicable to temporary nonpolitical signs and if the signs have been posted with the permission of the owner of the property. [§15.2-109 of the Code of Virginia]

C. Violations

If you believe the law has been violated and you have facts concerning the violation, you should report them in writing to the Commonwealth's Attorney for Loudoun County.

Violations of state-owned right of way restrictions should be reported to your regional Virginia Department of Transportation office.

II. VDOT INFORMATION

A “clean” campaign is a sign of the times



Don’t “trash” your print budget or throw away volunteer time.

HIGHWAY WORKERS ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REMOVE POSTERS AND FLYERS ON SIGNS, GUARDRAILS - OR ANYWHERE ELSE ON STATE-OWNED RIGHT OF WAY. CAMPAIGN PRINT MATERIALS ARE TOO EXPENSIVE TO WIND UP IN THE BACK OF A VDOT TRUCK. AND VOLUNTEER TIME IS TOO VALUABLE TO BE WASTED ON PUTTING UP MATERIALS THAT ARE DESTINED TO COME DOWN.



Don’t make highway workers “play politics” on the job.

PICKING UP POLITICAL MATERIALS IS A COSTLY ACTIVITY FOR VDOT. BUT THE COST TO THE CANDIDATE COULD BE EVEN HIGHER. VOTERS DON’T LIKE TO SEE THEIR TAX DOLLARS SUPPORTING SUCH ACTIVITIES. THEY EXPECT TO SEE HIGHWAY WORKERS PATCHING POTHOLES, FILLING LOW SHOULDERS, OR MOWING GRASS.



Don’t let campaign materials turn into litter.

MANY VOTERS VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO CLEAN UP ROADSIDES IN VDOT’S “ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY” PROGRAM. AFTER SPENDING SEVERAL BACK-BREAKING HOURS BENDING OVER TO PICK UP POLITICAL POSTERS, THEY WON’T FEEL TOO KINDLY TOWARDS THE NAMES AND FACES THAT THEY SEE OVER AND OVER AGAIN.



Don’t get “stuck” by bumper stickers.

ONE LITTLE BUMPER STICKER CAN CAUSE A LOT OF EXPENSE. IF APPLIED TO A ROADSIDE SIGN, THE STICKY RESIDUE IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE. THE SIGN MAY HAVE TO BE REPLACED ENTIRELY. THE LARGE GREEN HIGHWAY SIGNS, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN COST UP TO \$800. EVEN A HUMBLE STOP SIGN COSTS MORE THAN \$50. DON’T RISK ALIENATING VOTERS BY DESTROYING THE VERY SIGNS THAT THEIR TAX DOLLARS HAVE PAID FOR.



Don’t risk someone’s life.

ONE MISPLACED SIGN AT AN INTERSECTION COULD BLOCK A MOTORIST’S VISION - AND COST SOMEONE HIS LIFE. THAT’S WHY VDOT TRAFFIC ENGINEERS REVIEW THE PLACEMENT AND POSITION OF EACH HIGHWAY SIGN TO ENSURE SAFETY - AND TO MINIMIZE “VISUAL CLUTTER”. UNDERSTANDABLY, CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEERS ARE THINKING ABOUT VICTORY - NOT SAFETY. AND THAT COULD POSE A DEADLY PROBLEM.

DO put signs, posters, and other campaign materials anywhere you want on private property with the owner’s permission, of course. And because political signs and posters located off the right of way aren’t considered “outdoor advertising”, you won’t even need a permit.

VDOT - call your local Virginia Department of Transportation office for details.

III. QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A CANDIDATE

A candidate must be:

- ◆ Qualified to vote for and hold the office sought;
- ◆ A resident of the Commonwealth for one year immediately preceding the election;
and
- ◆ A resident, by the time of filing, of the Town of Leesburg.

IV. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE FILED

A candidate must file certain documents in order to qualify to appear on the ballot. Each form is described below. An explanation of who is required to file each item also is provided. Each document can be downloaded from our website:

http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Cidate_Forms.html

A. **Statement of Organization for a CANDIDATE**

This document is prepared and distributed by the State Board of Elections. It must be filed by all candidates for town office in the Town of Leesburg. Any individual serving as campaign treasurer must be a qualified voter of the Commonwealth of Virginia. A candidate may serve as his own treasurer.

Virginia law requires the candidate to provide his/her full name, home mailing address, email address and daytime phone number. The Treasurer, if applicable, must also provide his/her name, home mailing address, email address and daytime phone number.

A candidate must file a Statement of Organization and register as a candidate for campaign finance purposes within 10 days of meeting any of the requirements listed below.

- Acceptance of a contribution;
- Expenditure of any funds;
- The payment of a filing fee for any party nomination method;
- The filing of a candidate statement of qualification pursuant to § 24.2-501;
or
- The appointment of a campaign treasurer, designation of a campaign committee, or designation of a campaign depository.

B. **Certificate of Candidate Qualification – City or Town Officer**

This document is prepared and distributed by the State Board of Elections. **All** candidates are required to file this form.

IV. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE FILED (continued)

C. Declaration of Candidacy

This document is prepared and distributed by the State Board of Elections. It must be filed by all Independent (non-party) candidates.

Leesburg's Town Charter does not prohibit partisan participation in Town Elections. Therefore, candidates for political party nomination by a method **other than a primary** may be required to file the declaration and/or petitions if so required by the rules of the political party. Contact your county chair to determine if they are required. Generally, partisan participation in Town Elections is uncommon.

D. Petition of Qualified Voters

This document is prepared and distributed by the State Board of Elections. If required, petitions containing at least the number of signatures required for the office sought must be filed **together with** the *Declaration of Candidacy*. Petitions must be filed by Independent (non-party) candidates.

General Election candidates **cannot** circulate petitions until **after** January 1, 2012.

1. Petition Circulator

Petitions can be circulated either by the candidate or by another person who is, or who is eligible to be, registered and qualified to vote in the Town of Leesburg.

The person circulating the petition must affirm before a notary or other person authorized to administer oaths, that he **personally witnessed** the affixing of the signatures. Falsely taking this affidavit is a felony under Virginia law. The circulator **NEVER** can leave the petition unattended, e.g., left on the counter at a grocery store, restaurant, etc.

Special Note: The State Board of Elections is aware of the recent Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in *Lux v. Judd*, 10-1997 which strikes down the petition circulator residency requirement. However, until Virginia Code Sections 24.2-506 and 24.2-521 are amended to mirror the Court's ruling, the Petition of Qualified Voter form SBE-506\521 will remain unchanged.

2. Number of Signatures Required

Petitions must contain the signatures of at least **125** qualified voters of the Town of Leesburg.

The State Board recommends that a candidate get at least half again the number of signatures required to assure that enough signers are qualified voters. (For example: SBE recommends candidates for town council gather at least 200 signatures.)

IV. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE FILED (continued)

D. Petition of Qualified Voters (continued)

3. Regulation on Material Omissions on Candidate Petitions

The State Board of Elections' Material Omissions Regulation identifies what does and does not constitute material omissions on a candidate's petition for the purpose of disallowing the petition. The regulation has been included below for your convenience.

1VAC20-50-20. Material omissions from candidate petitions.

A. Pursuant to the requirements of § 24.2-506 of the Code of Virginia, a petition page should not be rendered invalid if it contains an error or omission not material to its proper processing.

B. The following omissions are always material and any petition containing such omissions should be rendered invalid if:

1. The petition submitted is not the double-sided, two-page document, or a copy thereof, provided by the State Board of Elections;
2. The petition does not have the name, or some variation of the name, and address of the candidate on the front of the form;
3. The circulator has not signed the petition affidavit and provided his current address;
4. The circulator is not a registered voter or qualified to register and vote for the candidate;
5. The circulator has not signed each petition page he circulated in the presence of a notary;
6. The circulator has not had a notary sign the affidavit for each petition submitted; or
7. Any combination of the scenarios of this subsection exists.

C. If the circulator signs the petition in the "Signature of Registered [Voters, " Voter, "] his signature shall be invalidated but the petition page shall be valid notwithstanding any other error or omission.

D. The petition should not be rendered invalid if:

1. An older version of the petition is used (provided that the information presented complies with current laws, regulations, and guidelines);
2. The "office sought" is omitted;
3. The "congressional district" is omitted;
4. The "election information" including (i) county, city, or town in which the election will be held; (ii) election type; and (iii) date of election are omitted;
5. The name of the candidate and office sought are omitted from the back page of the petition;
6. The circulator has not indicated the county, city, or town of his voter registration or voter eligibility in the affidavit;
7. The circulator has not provided the last four digits of his social security number in the affidavit;
8. The notary has not affixed a photographically reproducible seal; or
9. The notary has not included his registration number and commission expiration date.

IV. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE FILED (continued)

D. Petition of Qualified Voters (continued)

4. Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Petitions

The following are frequently asked questions received regarding the petition process:

1. Do I have to print the petition double-sided or may I staple two separate pages together and circulate?

Answer: A petition page is a double-sided document with both a front and back. You need to print out the petition double-sided. The front and back of the petition pages cannot be stapled together and circulated as one petition page.

2. What happens if I need additional time to gather the required number of signatures?

Answer: Neither the general registrars nor SBE have authority to accept additional petitions after 5 PM, February 17, 2012.

3. Who is responsible for ensuring my petition signers and circulators are eligible to sign and/or circulate my petition?

Answer: **The candidate.** As a courtesy, general registrars have the option of verifying the number of qualified voters that have signed a candidate's petitions prior to the filing deadline for the purpose of alerting the candidate of deficiencies. However, it is the candidate's ultimate responsibility to ensure that he or she gathers the requisite number of signatures of qualified voters, utilize eligible circulators, and otherwise follow the procedures laid out in the law. A candidate that files the Certificate of Candidate Qualification with his\her general registrar may purchase from the State Board of Elections a list of registered voters for their election district. Purchasing the list may aide in petition signature proficiency.

4. Is it required for the petitions to be notarized?

Answer: Yes. Sections 24.2-506 and 24.2-521 require that each petition circulator's affidavit be notarized. Candidates should verify that the notary provides their photographically reproducible notary seal\stamp, notary registration number, date notary commission expires and notary signature to each petition page.

IV. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE FILED (continued)

D. **Petition of Qualified Voters** (continued)

4. **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Petitions** (continued)

5. I see two versions of the Petition of Qualified Voters form available on SBE's website, which one should I use?

Answer: Either the letter size (8 ½" x 11") or legal size (8 ½" x 14") petition may be used. The legal size version contains more signature lines than the letter size version. The letter size version fits more neatly on a clip board. Personal preference will prevail.

E. **Statement of Economic Interests**

This document is prepared by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and should be available from the clerk of the governing body. It is required to be filed by all candidates for Town Council in towns **having a population in excess of 3,500.**

Exception - Individuals who are officers or employees of the town need not re-file this form as candidates if they met the requirement for filing in January 2012.

If questions arise about how to complete the Statement, please contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Conflict of Interest Director, at (804) 786-2441.

V. FILING DEADLINE AND WHERE TO FILE

For A Convention/Mass Meeting Candidate

Postmarks are acceptable **only** if this document is mailed by registered or certified mail and a receipt showing date of mailing can be produced if demanded by the office with which the form is filed.

REQUIRED FORMS	WHERE TO FILE	FILING DEADLINE
*1. Certificate of Candidate Qualification	General Registrar of Loudoun County	5:00 p.m. 2/17/2012
*2. Statement of Economic Interests		
*3. Statement of Organization for a Candidate**	Refer to Chapter 2 in the <i>Candidate Campaign Committee Summary</i> published by the State Board of Elections	

Any person who fails to file all the required forms by the above deadline MAY NOT have his name printed on the Special Election ballot.

* Refer to Pages 3 through 7 herein for details.

** The failure to file the Statement of Organization for a Candidate is not cause for disqualification. However, you are subject to penalties required by the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act.

VI. FILING DEADLINE AND WHERE TO FILE

For An Independent (Non-Party) Candidate

Item 1 listed below **must be received** by the *General Registrar* by the filing deadline. Postmarks are acceptable **only** for *Item 2* and **only** if it is mailed by registered or certified mail and a receipt showing date of mailing can be produced if demanded by the office with which the form is filed.

REQUIRED FORMS	WHERE TO FILE	FILING DEADLINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *1. Declaration of Candidacy *2. Petitions of Qualified Voters *3. Certificate of Candidate Qualification *4. Statement of Economic Interests 	General Registrar of Loudoun County	5:00 p.m. 2/17/2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *5. Statement of Organization for a Candidate** 	Refer to Chapter 2 in the <i>Candidate Campaign Committee Summary</i> published by the State Board of Elections	

Any person who fails to file all the required forms by the above deadline MAY NOT have his name printed on the Special Election ballot.

* Refer to Pages 3 through 7 herein for details.
 ** The failure to file the Statement of Organization for a Candidate is not cause for disqualification. However, you are subject to penalties required by the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act.

VII. NOTICE OF DEFICIENCIES IN DECLARATION OR PETITIONS

An independent (non-party) candidate may request notification of any problems with his filing that can be corrected before the filing deadline. This request **must be in writing** as required by § 24.2-505 of the *Code of Virginia*.

This letter must be addressed to the Secretary of the Electoral Board of the candidate's city or county of residence. It must accompany the declaration of candidacy and petitions filed with the General Registrar.

The written request **does not guarantee** timely response. Certain factors, such as the number of filings, may affect the electoral board's ability to comply with the request. It is suggested that documents be filed **at least ten [10] working days before the filing deadline** if this notice is requested.

VIII. OTHER REQUIRED REPORTS

All candidates for town offices in the Town of Leesburg must file *pre-election* and *post-election* Reports of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures. These reports are filed **only** with the Electoral Board of the candidate's county of residence **unless** the candidate opts to file reports electronically. Electronic filings are made only to the State Board of Elections. For more information, visit our website:

http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Campaign_Finance_Disclosure/Index.html

No certificate of election can be issued to any successful candidate who fails to file the required reports.

Exception - A candidate for local office who files an exemption form certifying that he has not and will not solicit or accept any contribution from any other person during the course of his campaign and has not and will not contribute or expend more than \$1,000 during the course of his campaign, is required to file reports of large pre-election contributions and a final report. A form for this purpose is prepared and distributed by the State Board of Elections.

IX. ORDER OF NAMES ON BALLOTS

In **Special Elections**

The candidates of political parties appear first on the ballot in the order determined by a drawing conducted by the State Board of Elections. Independent (non-party) candidates appear in alphabetical order following the candidates of political parties.

X. THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

Any successful candidate must file, as a condition to assuming office, with the **Clerk of the Town Council** a **second** Statement of Economic Interests as required by §§ 2.2-3115 and 2.2-3116 of the *Code of Virginia* **prior to taking office**, and annually thereafter by January 15 of each year. Forms are prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and should be available from the appropriate Clerk. If the Clerk is unable to provide a copy, the form can be obtained from our website in our candidate forms section.

http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Cidate_Forms.html

The successful candidate in a *general election* is required by law to qualify and take the oath of office no later than the day of the initial meeting of the new council or school board; in a *special election*, within thirty days of the election. Failure to so qualify creates a vacancy in the office.

XI. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Listed below are the most commonly asked questions. If you need further details, please call us on our toll-free number.

A. Who may circulate a candidate's petitions?

A candidate may circulate his own petitions but is not required to do so. A candidate's petitions may be circulated by any person who is, or who is eligible to be, a registered and qualified voter of the election district. See Item IV D1 for details.

The circulator must affirm before a notary or other person authorized to administer oaths, that he **personally witnessed** the affixing of each signature. Falsely taking this affidavit is a felony under Virginia law. The circulator can **NEVER** leave the petition unattended, e.g., left on the counter at a grocery store, restaurant, etc.

B. I am circulating a petition for a candidate. May I also sign as a qualified voter the petition that I am circulating?

I am a Notary circulating petitions for a candidate. May I notarize the petition pages I circulate?

NO TO BOTH. The person circulating the petition must swear, under oath, that he **personally witnessed** the affixing of each signature on the petition and no person can witness his own signature.

XIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (continued)

- C. I am a candidate and a Notary. May I notarize the petition pages circulated by other persons?

NO. § 47.1-30 of the *Code of Virginia* prohibits a notary from performing a notarial act on any document in which the notary or his spouse is a party, **or** in which either of them has a direct beneficial interest.

Any Notary who violates these provisions is considered guilty of official misconduct, may be removed from office and may be subject to other penalties.

- D. I work for the federal government; can I be a candidate?

Pursuant to the federal law commonly known as the Hatch Act, you may be a candidate in a **non-partisan election** or, if you live in the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park or Portsmouth or in the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania or Stafford, you may be an **independent candidate for local office in a partisan election**. An election is considered partisan if any of the candidates for the office you would seek are nominated by a political party.

To determine whether you might also be affected by the rules and regulations of the agency for which you work, **contact your personnel officer**.

It should also be noted that most employees of the legislative branch of the federal government are not covered by the Hatch Act but may be affected by other rules and regulations.

- E. I work for the state or a local government; can I be a candidate?

Some state and local government employees **are prohibited** from being candidates. You may be so prohibited if your Agency receives federal funds. **Contact the personnel officer where you work**. If necessary, present the facts of your case in writing, including the office you wish to seek, to the Hatch Act Unit, **U.S. Office of Special Counsel**, 1730 M Street NW, Suite 218, Washington, D. C. 20036-4505 or call them at 800-854-2824 or 202-254-3650. That office will determine if you are affected by the Hatch Act. Their web address is <http://www.osc.gov>

Most state and local government employees are not prohibited by law from being a candidate. However, you may be affected by the rules and regulations of the agency or ordinances of the government for which you work. **Contact your personnel officer**.

- F. I do business with my local government; am I prohibited from holding office on its governing body due to a conflict of interest?

Contact an attorney to determine whether or not the provisions of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act [§§ 2.2-3100 through 2.2-3127 of the *Code of Virginia*] may affect your ability to hold the office you intend to seek.

XIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (continued)

G. What activities are permitted at the polls on election day?

Please refer to the Do's and Don'ts with Guidelines for Campaigners and Authorized Representatives published by the State Board of Elections. We suggest that you provide this information to any person who will either serve as your representative inside the polls or work for you outside the polls on election day.

http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Cidate_Bulletins_Forms.html

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