

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF THE STATE



Ballot Access

1) **Definitions**

- a) **Caucus** means any meeting, at a designated hour and place, or at designated hours and places, of the enrolled members of a political party within a municipality or political subdivision thereof for the purpose of selecting party-endorsed candidates for a primary to be held by such party or for the purpose of transacting other business of such party.
- b) **Convention** means a meeting of delegates of a political party held for the purpose of designating the candidate or candidates to be endorsed by such party in a primary of such party for state or district office or for the purpose of transacting other business of such party.
- c) **Party-endorsed candidate** means (A) in the case of a candidate for state or district office, a person endorsed by the convention of a political party as a candidate in a primary to be held by such party, and (B) in the case of a candidate for municipal office or for member of a town committee, a person endorsed by the town committee, caucus or convention, as the case may be, of a political party as a candidate in a primary to be held by such party.
- d) **Primary** means a meeting of the enrolled members of a political party and, when applicable under section 9-431, unaffiliated electors, held during consecutive hours at which such members or electors may, without assembling at the same hour, vote by secret ballot for candidates for nomination to office or for town committee members.
- e) **District** means any geographic portion of the state which crosses the boundary or boundaries between two or more towns.

- f) **District office** means an elective office for which only the electors in a district may vote.
- g) **Municipal office** means an elective office for which only the electors of a single town, city, borough, or political subdivision may vote.
- h) **Major party** means (A) a political party or organization whose candidate for Governor at the last-preceding election for Governor received, under the designation of that political party or organization, at least twenty per cent of the whole number of votes cast for all candidates for Governor, or (B) a political party having, at the last-preceding election for Governor, a number of enrolled members on the active registry list equal to at least twenty per cent of the total number of enrolled members of all political parties on the active registry list in the state.
- i) **Minor party** means a political party or organization which is not a major party and whose candidate for the office in question received at the last-preceding regular election for such office, under the designation of that political party or organization, at least one per cent of the whole number of votes cast for all candidates for such office at such election.
- j) **State office** means any office for which all the electors of the state may vote and includes the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, Comptroller, Attorney General and senator in Congress, but does not include the office of elector of President and Vice-President of the United States.

2) **Endorsement**

- a) Party endorsement achieved for a state or district office through the convention process. A candidate must receive at least 15% of any roll call vote taken at the convention.
- b) Party endorsement is achieved for a municipal office (including the office of single town state representative) or for member of a town committee through (1) town committee process, (2) caucus, or (3) local convention.
- c) Party rules of a State Central Committee or of a local town committee will dictate what endorsement mechanism will be used and how the mechanism will be run.

3) Challenge Endorsement – Primary (Two Methods)

- a) Party endorsements for a state or district office can be challenged in two different manners; each ultimately resulting in a primary:
 - i) Receive at least 15% of any roll call vote taken at a convention.
 - ii) File a primary petition consisting of a total signature amount equal to at least 5% of the enrolled party members in the district. (2% in Congressional district or statewide office).
 - (1) Petitions are available from the Secretary of the State after the close of the convention. (105 days before the primary for statewide or congressional offices)
- b) Party endorsements for municipal offices (including the office of single town state representative) can be challenged only by primary petition.
 - i) Any petition filed must consist of a total signature amount equal to at least 5% of the enrolled party members in the municipality.

(1) Petitions are available from the registrars of voters of the municipality the day after the close of the endorsement mechanism. (Town committee meeting, caucus, or local convention).

4) Endorsement vs. Nomination

- a) A party endorsed candidate is a candidate who has been endorsed by a convention, town committee or caucus (dependent on the particular office in question) as a candidate in a primary to be held by such party. This applies to major parties only.
- b) If no other person other than a party endorsed candidate received sufficient delegate support at a convention or has filed a primary petition within the prescribed timeframe, the endorsed candidate shall be deemed to have been lawfully chosen as the nominee of such party and no primary will be held for such office. This applies to major parties only.
- c) Pursuant to Connecticut law minor parties are not subject to a primary. As such, minor parties make candidate selections after any scheduled primary for major parties. The selected candidates of the minor parties automatically become the nominees of the party.

5) Access to General Election Ballot – Nominating Petition

- a) Use of a nominating petition will allow the petitioner to be placed on the general election ballot in November.
- b) Nominating petitions can be used in two ways:
 - i) Nominating petition *without* party designation. A successful candidate will appear on the general election ballot on a line entitled “petitioning candidate”.

- ii) Nominating petition *with* party designation. A successful candidate will appear on the general election ballot on a line with their party name.
- c) Nominating petitions are available from the Secretary of the State beginning on the first business day of January in the relevant election year and are due to the town clerk in the town in which they were circulated 90 days before the election.
- d) Ballot order:
 - i) Democrat
 - ii) Republican
 - iii) Any Minor Parties
 - iv) Petitioning Candidates *with* party designation
 - v) Petitioning Candidates *without* party designation

6) Creation of a Minor Party.

- i) All minor parties must start by using a nominating petition as described above. They are not allowed to simply file a form or statement with the Secretary of the State like in other States.
- ii) In order to be recognized as a minor party three things must happen:
 - (1) The party must first circulate a nominating petition with a party designation as described above.
 - (2) The party must successfully file nominating petitions with sufficient signatures equal to 1% of the total votes cast for the office at the last election (or 1% of the total votes cast for the entire election when a multi-opening office is in question).

- (3) If the party successfully petitions, the candidate on the petition will be placed on the ballot on a separate line identified by the party name. The candidate in question must receive 1% of the total votes cast for the office in question at the current election (or 1% of the total votes cast for the entire election when a multi-opening office is in question).
- (4) If the candidate is successful in receiving the required number of votes, the party is statutorily recognized as a minor party. The minor party would then have to file party rules with the Secretary of the State describing their method of endorsement.
- (5) If these requirements are met, the minor party would then be allowed to simply nominate a candidate for the office that they have attained minor party status for the next time the office is on the ballot.

7) **Write-in candidate.**

- a) Any registered voter may apply through the office of the Secretary of the State to be a write-in candidate. The individual's name will not appear on the ballot and must be written in by each voter on both the voting machine and any absentee ballot.
- b) The deadline to register as a write-in candidate is 14 days before the election.