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Ohio Secretary of State

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**DIRECTIVE 2015-18**

September 29, 2015

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Directors, Deputy Directors, and Board Members

Re: Instructions Regarding the Review, Examination, and Verification of the Initiative  
Petition Proposing an Addition to the Ohio Revised Code (Fresh Start Act)

**SUMMARY**

This Directive provides instructions to county board of elections on the review, examination, and verification of signatures on a statewide petition proposing an addition to the Ohio Revised Code. Each board of elections must complete its review, examination, and verification consistent with the instructions outlined in this Directive and [Directive 2015-10](#) and return its certification and part-petitions to the Secretary of State's Office.

Because each board of elections has numerous tasks and deadlines related to its preparation for the upcoming general election – e.g., processing voter registrations, mailing absentee ballots, conducting in-person absentee voting, training precinct election officials, and performing logic and accuracy testing, etc., the deadline for boards to complete review and return certifications and part-petitions is noon on Friday, October 30, 2015.

**PETITION SUBMITTED**

On September 22, 2015, the Secretary of State's Office received a petition, pursuant to Article II, Section 1b of the Ohio Constitution, from a group of persons seeking to propose an addition to the Ohio Revised Code. Boards of elections must examine each part-petition in order to determine the number of qualified electors who signed.

**CHECKING SIGNATURES ON THE PETITIONS**

Please carefully read this Directive and the "Instructions for the Examination and Verification of the Petition" provided in [Directive 2015-10](#) before you examine the part-petitions sent to your county.<sup>1</sup>

As the Instructions state, each county board of elections must process all new, valid voter registrations and changes of names and/or address to existing registrations received by the board or the Secretary of State's Office as of the date the petition was filed with the Secretary of State

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 3501.11(K).

(i.e., Tuesday, September 22, 2015) before verifying the signatures on the part-petitions.<sup>2</sup> These registrations are effective as of the date filed with the Secretary of State.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to verifying the validity of individual signatures contained on a part-petition, the board of elections must verify the validity of that part-petition. Check each part-petition to determine whether the circulator's statement on the last page of the part-petition has been properly completed. The entire part-petition is invalid if the circulator's statement is not completed as required by law.

### **PART-PETITION BELONGS TO ANOTHER COUNTY**

If you receive a part-petition that belongs to another county, please follow the process outlined in the "Instructions for the Examination and Verification of the Petition" beginning on page 7 of [Directive 2015-10](#). **It is imperative that a copy of a part-petition belonging to another county is transmitted to the other county as quickly as possible for signature verification.**

### **FULFILLING PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS**

Your board of elections may receive one or more public records requests for copies of the part-petitions. Boards should consult with their statutory legal counsel, the prosecuting attorney, before rejecting, fulfilling, or responding to any public records request.

### **SCANNING THE PETITIONS**

After you have completed checking the signatures on the part-petitions, you should electronically scan the relevant pages of each part-petition (including at least the cover page, the pages containing signatures, and the page containing the circulator statement). A copy of the scanned images should be saved onto one or as many CDs, DVDs, thumb-drives, or other similar electronic media as may be necessary and a copy sent to the Secretary of State's Office along with the part petitions and certification form. You must keep an electronic copy of the images for your records.

### **CERTIFICATION AND RETURN OF THE PETITIONS**

As soon as you finish verifying the signatures on your county's part-petitions, you must return your completed certification form. The certification form must be completed and submitted electronically via Elect Collect by clicking the "Submit" button. The certification form must also be saved and printed. The Director must sign the certification form and return the signed certification form to Laura Pietenpol via email to [lpietenp@ohiosecretaryofstate.gov](mailto:lpietenp@ohiosecretaryofstate.gov).

**All certification forms must be received no later than noon on Friday, October 30, 2015.**

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<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3501.38(A); 3519.15.

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 3501.38; 3503.19.

You also must return all part-petitions to the Secretary of State's Office, Elections Division, 180 East Broad Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215, by the same date.

**All part-petitions must be received by the Secretary of State's office no later than Friday, October 30, 2015.**

If you have any questions regarding this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel assigned to your county at (614) 466-2585.

Sincerely,

  
Jon Husted