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The 2020 Florida Statutes

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CANDIDATES

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CHAPTER 99 CANDIDATES

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- 99.012 Restrictions on individuals qualifying for public office.—**
- (1) As used in this section:
- (a) “Officer” means a person, whether elected or appointed, who has the authority to exercise the sovereign power of the state pertaining to an office recognized under the State Constitution or laws of the state. With respect to a municipality, the term “officer” means a person, whether elected or appointed, who has the authority to exercise municipal power as provided by the State Constitution, state laws, or municipal charter.
- (b) “Subordinate officer” means a person who has been delegated the authority to exercise the sovereign power of the state by an officer. With respect to a municipality, subordinate officer means a person who has been delegated the authority to exercise municipal power by an officer.
- (2) No person may qualify as a candidate for more than one public office, whether federal, state, district, county, or municipal, if the terms or any part thereof run concurrently with each other.
- (3)(a) No officer may qualify as a candidate for another state, district, county, or municipal public office if the terms or any part thereof run concurrently with each other without resigning from the office he or she presently holds.
- (b) The resignation is irrevocable.
- (c) The written resignation must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the first day of qualifying for the office he or she intends to seek.
- (d) The resignation must be effective no later than the earlier of the following dates:
1. The date the officer would take office, if elected; or

2. The date the officer's successor is required to take office.

(e)1. An elected district, county, or municipal officer must submit his or her resignation to the officer before whom he or she qualified for the office he or she holds, with a copy to the Governor and the Department of State.

2. An appointed district, county, or municipal officer must submit his or her resignation to the officer or authority which appointed him or her to the office he or she holds, with a copy to the Governor and the Department of State.

3. All other officers must submit their resignations to the Governor with a copy to the Department of State.

(f)1. With regard to an elective office, the resignation creates a vacancy in office to be filled by election. Persons may qualify as candidates for nomination and election as if the public officer's term were otherwise scheduled to expire.

2. With regard to an elective charter county office or elective municipal office, the vacancy created by the officer's resignation may be filled for that portion of the officer's unexpired term in a manner provided by the respective charter. The office is deemed vacant upon the effective date of the resignation submitted by the official in his or her letter of resignation.

(g) Any officer who submits his or her resignation, effective immediately or effective on a date prior to the date of his or her qualifying for office, may then qualify for office as a nonofficeholder, and the provisions of this subsection do not apply.

(4)(a) Any officer who qualifies for federal public office must resign from the office he or she presently holds if the terms, or any part thereof, run concurrently with each other.

(b) The resignation is irrevocable.

(c) The resignation must be submitted at least 10 days before the first day of qualifying for the office he or she intends to seek.

(d) The written resignation must be effective no later than the earlier of the following dates:

1. The date the officer would take office, if elected; or
2. The date the officer's successor is required to take office.

(e)1. An elected district, county, or municipal officer shall submit his or her resignation to the officer before whom he or she qualified for the office he or she holds, with a copy to the Governor and the Department of State.

2. An appointed district, county, or municipal officer shall submit his or her resignation to the officer or authority which appointed him or her to the office he or she holds, with a copy to the Governor and the Department of State.

3. All other officers shall submit their resignations to the Governor with a copy to the Department of State.

(f)1. The failure of an officer who qualifies for federal public office to submit a resignation pursuant to this subsection constitutes an automatic irrevocable resignation, effective immediately, from the office he or she presently holds.

2. The Department of State shall send a notice of the automatic resignation to the Governor, and in the case of a district, county, or municipal officer, a copy to:

- a. The officer before whom he or she qualified if the officer held an elective office; or
- b. The officer or authority who appointed him or her if the officer held an appointive office.

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of any special act to the contrary, with regard to an elective office, the resignation creates a vacancy in office to be filled by election, thereby authorizing persons to qualify as candidates for nomination and election as if the officer's term were otherwise scheduled to expire. With regard to an elective charter county office or elective municipal office, the vacancy created by the officer's resignation may be filled for that portion of the officer's unexpired term in a manner provided by the respective charter. The office is deemed vacant upon the effective date of the resignation submitted by the official in his or her letter of resignation.

(5) A person who is a subordinate officer, deputy sheriff, or police officer must resign effective upon qualifying pursuant to this chapter if the person is seeking to qualify for a public office that is currently held by an officer who has authority to appoint, employ, promote, or otherwise supervise that person and who has qualified as a candidate for reelection to that office.

(6) If an order of a court that has become final determines that a person did not comply with this section, the person shall not be qualified as a candidate for election and his or her name may not appear on the ballot.

(7) This section does not apply to:

(a) Political party offices.

(b) Persons serving without salary as members of an appointive board or authority.

(8) Subsections (3) and (4) do not apply to persons holding any federal office. Subsection (4) does not apply to an elected officer if the term of the office that he or she presently holds is scheduled to expire and be filled by election in the same primary and general election period as the federal office he or she is seeking.

History.—s. 1, ch. 63-269; s. 2, ch. 65-378; s. 1, ch. 70-80; s. 10, ch. 71-373; s. 1, ch. 74-76; s. 3, ch. 75-196; s. 1, ch. 79-391; s. 47, ch. 81-259; s. 1, ch. 83-15; s. 28, ch. 84-302; s. 31, ch. 91-107; s. 534, ch. 95-147; s. 1, ch. 99-146; s. 1, ch. 2000-274; s. 14, ch. 2007-30; s. 14, ch. 2008-4; s. 9, ch. 2008-95; s. 12, ch. 2011-40; s. 1, ch. 2018-126.

99.021 Form of candidate oath.—

(1)(a)1. Each candidate, whether a party candidate, a candidate with no party affiliation, or a write-in candidate, in order to qualify for nomination or election to any office other than a judicial office as defined in chapter 105 or a federal office, shall take and subscribe to an oath or affirmation in writing. A copy of the oath or affirmation shall be made available to the candidate by the officer before whom such candidate seeks to qualify and shall be substantially in the following form:

State of Florida

County of

Before me, an officer authorized to administer oaths, personally appeared (please print name as you wish it to appear on the ballot) , to me well known, who, being sworn, says that he or she is a candidate for the office of ; that he or she is a qualified elector of County, Florida; that he or she is qualified under the Constitution and the laws of Florida to hold the office to which he or she desires to be nominated or elected; that he or she has qualified for no other public office in the state, the term of which office or any part thereof runs concurrent with that of the office he or she seeks; that he or she has resigned from any office from which he or she is required to resign pursuant to s. 99.012, Florida Statutes; and that he or she will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Florida.

(Signature of candidate)

(Address)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this day of , (year) , at County, Florida.

(Signature and title of officer administering oath)

2. Each candidate for federal office, whether a party candidate, a candidate with no party affiliation, or a write-in candidate, in order to qualify for nomination or election to office shall take and subscribe to an oath or affirmation in writing. A copy of the oath or affirmation shall be made available to the candidate by the officer before whom such candidate seeks to qualify and shall be substantially in the following form:

State of Florida

County of

Before me, an officer authorized to administer oaths, personally appeared (please print name as you wish it to appear on the ballot) , to me well known, who, being sworn, says that he or she is a candidate for the office of ; that he or she is qualified under the Constitution and laws of the United States to hold the office to which he or she desires to be nominated or elected; that he or she has qualified for no other public office in the state, the term of which office or any part thereof runs concurrent with that of the office he or she seeks; and that he or she will support the Constitution of the United States.

(Signature of candidate)

(Address)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this day of , (year) , at County, Florida.

(Signature and title of officer administering oath)

(b) In addition, any person seeking to qualify for nomination as a candidate of any political party shall, at the time of subscribing to the oath or affirmation, state in writing:

1. The party of which the person is a member.
2. That the person has not been a registered member of any other political party for 365 days before the beginning of qualifying preceding the general election for which the person seeks to qualify.
3. That the person has paid the assessment levied against him or her, if any, as a candidate for said office by the executive committee of the party of which he or she is a member.

(c) The officer before whom such person qualifies shall certify the name of such person to the supervisor of elections in each county affected by such candidacy so that the name of such person may be printed on the ballot. Each person seeking election as a write-in candidate shall subscribe to the oath prescribed in this section in order to be entitled to have write-in ballots cast for him or her counted.

(2) The provisions of subsection (1) relating to the oath required of candidates, and the form of oath prescribed, shall apply with equal force and effect to, and shall be the oath required of, a candidate for election to a political party executive committee office, as provided by law. The requirements set forth in this section shall also apply to any person filling a vacancy on a political party executive committee.

(3) This section does not apply to a person who seeks to qualify for election pursuant to ss. 103.021 and 103.101.

History.—ss. 22, 23, ch. 6469, 1913; RGS 326, 327; CGL 383, 384; s. 3, ch. 19663, 1939; s. 3, ch. 26870, 1951; s. 10, ch. 28156, 1953; s. 1, ch. 57-742; s. 1, ch. 61-128; s. 2, ch. 63-269; s. 1, ch. 63-66; s. 1, ch. 65-376; s. 1, ch. 67-149; s. 2, ch. 70-269; s. 19, ch. 71-355; s. 6, ch. 77-175; s. 3, ch. 79-365; s. 27, ch. 79-400; s. 2, ch. 81-105; s. 3, ch. 86-134; s. 535, ch. 95-147; s. 7, ch. 99-6; s. 8, ch. 99-318; s. 15, ch. 2007-30; s. 10, ch. 2008-95; s. 13, ch. 2011-40.

Note.—Former ss. 102.29, 102.30.

99.061 Method of qualifying for nomination or election to federal, state, county, or district office.—

(1) The provisions of any special act to the contrary notwithstanding, each person seeking to qualify for nomination or election to a federal, state, or multicounty district office, other than election to a judicial office as defined in chapter 105 or the office of school board member, shall file his or her qualification papers with, and pay the qualifying fee, which shall consist of the filing fee and election assessment, and party assessment, if any has been levied, to, the Department of State, or qualify by the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095 with the Department of State, at any time after noon of the 1st day for qualifying, which shall be as follows: the 120th day prior to the primary election, but not later than noon of the 116th day prior to the date of the primary election, for persons seeking to qualify for nomination or election to federal office or to the office of the state attorney or the public defender; and noon of the 71st day prior to the primary election, but not later than noon of the 67th day prior to the date of the primary election, for persons seeking to qualify for nomination or election to a state or multicounty district office, other than the office of the state attorney or the public defender.

(2) The provisions of any special act to the contrary notwithstanding, each person seeking to qualify for nomination or election to a county office, or district office not covered by subsection (1), shall file his or her qualification papers with, and pay the qualifying fee, which shall consist of the filing fee and election assessment, and party assessment, if any has been levied, to, the supervisor of elections of the county, or shall qualify by the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095 with the supervisor of elections, at any time after noon of the 1st day for qualifying, which shall be the 71st day prior to the primary election, but not later than noon of the 67th day prior to the date of the primary election. Within 30 days after the closing of qualifying time, the supervisor of elections shall remit to the secretary of the state executive committee of the political party to which the candidate belongs the amount of the filing fee, two-thirds of which shall be used to promote the candidacy of candidates for county offices and the candidacy of members of the Legislature.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of any special act to the contrary, each person seeking to qualify for election to a special district office shall qualify between noon of the 71st day prior to the primary election and noon of the 67th day prior to the date of the primary election. Candidates for single-county special districts shall qualify with the supervisor of elections in the county in which the district is located. If the district is a multicounty district, candidates shall qualify with the Department of State. All special district candidates shall qualify by

paying a filing fee of \$25 or qualify by the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095. Notwithstanding s. 106.021, a candidate who does not collect contributions and whose only expense is the filing fee or signature verification fee is not required to appoint a campaign treasurer or designate a primary campaign depository.

(4)(a) Each person seeking to qualify for election to office as a write-in candidate shall file his or her qualification papers with the respective qualifying officer at any time after noon of the 1st day for qualifying, but not later than noon of the last day of the qualifying period for the office sought.

(b) Any person who is seeking election as a write-in candidate shall not be required to pay a filing fee, election assessment, or party assessment. A write-in candidate is not entitled to have his or her name printed on any ballot; however, space for the write-in candidate's name to be written in must be provided on the general election ballot. A person may not qualify as a write-in candidate if the person has also otherwise qualified for nomination or election to such office.

(5) At the time of qualifying for office, each candidate for a constitutional office shall file a full and public disclosure of financial interests pursuant to s. 8, Art. II of the State Constitution, which must be verified under oath or affirmation pursuant to s. 92.525(1)(a), and a candidate for any other office, including local elective office, shall file a statement of financial interests pursuant to s. 112.3145.

(6) The Department of State shall certify to the supervisor of elections, within 7 days after the closing date for qualifying, the names of all duly qualified candidates for nomination or election who have qualified with the Department of State.

(7)(a) In order for a candidate to be qualified, the following items must be received by the filing officer by the end of the qualifying period:

1. A properly executed check drawn upon the candidate's campaign account payable to the person or entity as prescribed by the filing officer in an amount not less than the fee required by s. 99.092, unless the candidate obtained the required number of signatures on petitions pursuant to s. 99.095. The filing fee for a special district candidate is not required to be drawn upon the candidate's campaign account. If a candidate's check is returned by the bank for any reason, the filing officer shall immediately notify the candidate and the candidate shall have until the end of qualifying to pay the fee with a cashier's check purchased from funds of the campaign account. Failure to pay the fee as provided in this subparagraph shall disqualify the candidate.

2. The candidate's oath required by s. 99.021, which must contain the name of the candidate as it is to appear on the ballot; the office sought, including the district or group number if applicable; and the signature of the candidate, which must be verified under oath or affirmation pursuant to s. 92.525(1)(a).

3. If the office sought is partisan, the written statement of political party affiliation required by s. 99.021(1)(b).

4. The completed form for the appointment of campaign treasurer and designation of campaign depository, as required by s. 106.021.

5. The full and public disclosure or statement of financial interests required by subsection (5). A public officer who has filed the full and public disclosure or statement of financial interests with the Commission on Ethics or the supervisor of elections prior to qualifying for office may file a copy of that disclosure at the time of qualifying.

(b) If the filing officer receives qualifying papers during the qualifying period prescribed in this section which do not include all items as required by paragraph (a) prior to the last day of qualifying, the filing officer shall make a reasonable effort to notify the candidate of the missing or incomplete items and shall inform the candidate that all required items must be received by the close of qualifying. A candidate's name as it is to appear on the ballot may not be changed after the end of qualifying.

(c) The filing officer performs a ministerial function in reviewing qualifying papers. In determining whether a candidate is qualified, the filing officer shall review the qualifying papers to determine whether all items required by paragraph (a) have been properly filed and whether each item is complete on its face, including whether items that must be verified have been properly verified pursuant to s. 92.525(1)(a). The filing officer may not determine whether the contents of the qualifying papers are accurate.

(8) Notwithstanding the qualifying period prescribed in this section, a qualifying office may accept and hold qualifying papers submitted not earlier than 14 days prior to the beginning of the qualifying period, to be

processed and filed during the qualifying period.

(9) Notwithstanding the qualifying period prescribed by this section, in each year in which the Legislature apportions the state, the qualifying period for persons seeking to qualify for nomination or election to federal office shall be between noon of the 71st day prior to the primary election, but not later than noon of the 67th day prior to the primary election.

(10) The Department of State may prescribe by rule requirements for filing papers to qualify as a candidate under this section.

(11) The decision of the filing officer concerning whether a candidate is qualified is exempt from the provisions of chapter 120.

History.—ss. 25, 26, ch. 6469, 1913; RGS 329, 330; CGL 386, 387; ss. 4, 5, ch. 13761, 1929; s. 1, ch. 16990, 1935; CGL 1936 Supp. 386; ss. 1, chs. 19007, 19008, 19009, 1939; CGL 1940 Supp. 4769(3); s. 1, ch. 20619, 1941; s. 1, ch. 21851, 1943; s. 1, ch. 23006, 1945; s. 1, ch. 24163, 1947; s. 3, ch. 26870, 1951; s. 11, ch. 28156, 1953; s. 4, ch. 29936, 1955; s. 10, ch. 57-1; s. 1, ch. 59-84; s. 1, ch. 61-373 and s. 4, ch. 61-530; s. 1, ch. 63-502; s. 7, ch. 65-378; s. 2, ch. 67-531; ss. 10, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 5, ch. 69-281; s. 1, ch. 69-300; s. 1, ch. 70-42; s. 1, ch. 70-93; s. 1, ch. 70-439; s. 6, ch. 77-175; s. 1, ch. 78-188; s. 3, ch. 81-105; s. 2, ch. 83-15; s. 2, ch. 83-25; s. 1, ch. 83-251; s. 29, ch. 84-302; s. 1, ch. 86-7; s. 6, ch. 89-338; s. 8, ch. 90-315; s. 32, ch. 91-107; s. 536, ch. 95-147; s. 1, ch. 95-156; s. 9, ch. 99-318; s. 9, ch. 99-326; s. 3, ch. 2001-75; s. 11, ch. 2005-277; s. 51, ch. 2005-278; s. 7, ch. 2005-286; s. 16, ch. 2007-30; s. 14, ch. 2011-40.

Note.—Former ss. 102.32, 102.33, 102.351, 102.36, 102.66, 102.69.

99.063 Candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor.—

(1) No later than 5 p.m. of the 9th day following the primary election, each candidate for Governor shall designate a Lieutenant Governor as a running mate. Such designation must be made in writing to the Department of State.

(2) No later than 5 p.m. of the 9th day following the primary election, each designated candidate for Lieutenant Governor shall file with the Department of State:

(a) The candidate's oath required by s. 99.021, which must contain the name of the candidate as it is to appear on the ballot; the office sought; and the signature of the candidate, which must be verified under oath or affirmation pursuant to s. 92.525(1)(a).

(b) If the office sought is partisan, the written statement of political party affiliation required by s. 99.021(1)(b).

(c) The full and public disclosure of financial interests pursuant to s. 8, Art. II of the State Constitution. A public officer who has filed the full and public disclosure with the Commission on Ethics prior to qualifying for office may file a copy of that disclosure at the time of qualifying.

(3) A designated candidate for Lieutenant Governor is not required to pay a separate qualifying fee or obtain signatures on petitions. Ballot position obtained by the candidate for Governor entitles the designated candidate for Lieutenant Governor, upon receipt by the Department of State of the qualifying papers required by subsection (2), to have his or her name placed on the ballot for the joint candidacy.

(4) In order to have the name of the candidate for Lieutenant Governor printed on the primary election ballot, a candidate for Governor participating in the primary must designate the candidate for Lieutenant Governor, and the designated candidate must qualify no later than the end of the qualifying period specified in s. 99.061.

(5) Failure of the Lieutenant Governor candidate to be designated and qualified by the time specified in subsection (2) shall result in forfeiture of ballot position for the candidate for Governor for the general election.

History.—s. 1, ch. 99-140; s. 45, ch. 2001-40; s. 12, ch. 2005-277; s. 8, ch. 2005-286; s. 15, ch. 2011-40; s. 5, ch. 2019-162.

99.081 United States Senators elected in general election.—United States Senators from Florida shall be elected at the general election held preceding the expiration of the present term of office, and such election shall conform as nearly as practicable to the methods provided for the election of state officers.

History.—s. 3, ch. 26870, 1951; s. 6, ch. 77-175; s. 7, ch. 89-338.

Note.—Former s. 106.01.

99.091 Representatives to Congress.—

(1) A Representative to Congress shall be elected in and for each congressional district at each general election.

(2) When Florida is entitled to additional representatives according to the last census, representatives shall be elected from the state at large and at large thereafter until the state is redistricted by the Legislature.

History.—ss. 2, 3, ch. 3879, 1889; RS 157; s. 4, ch. 4328, 1895; s. 3, ch. 4537, 1897; GS 174; RGS 218; CGL 253; s. 2, ch. 25383, 1949; s. 3, ch. 26870, 1951; s. 6, ch. 77-175.

Note.—Former s. 98.07.

99.092 Qualifying fee of candidate; notification of Department of State.—

(1) Each person seeking to qualify for nomination or election to any office, except a person seeking to qualify by the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095 and except a person seeking to qualify as a write-in candidate, shall pay a qualifying fee, which shall consist of a filing fee and election assessment, to the officer with whom the person qualifies, and any party assessment levied, and shall attach the original or signed duplicate of the receipt for his or her party assessment or pay the same, in accordance with the provisions of s. 103.121, at the time of filing his or her other qualifying papers. The amount of the filing fee is 3 percent of the annual salary of the office. The amount of the election assessment is 1 percent of the annual salary of the office sought. The election assessment shall be transferred to the Elections Commission Trust Fund. The amount of the party assessment is 2 percent of the annual salary. The annual salary of the office for purposes of computing the filing fee, election assessment, and party assessment shall be computed by multiplying 12 times the monthly salary, excluding any special qualification pay, authorized for such office as of July 1 immediately preceding the first day of qualifying. No qualifying fee shall be returned to the candidate unless the candidate withdraws his or her candidacy before the last date to qualify. If a candidate dies prior to an election and has not withdrawn his or her candidacy before the last date to qualify, the candidate's qualifying fee shall be returned to his or her designated beneficiary, and, if the filing fee or any portion thereof has been transferred to the political party of the candidate, the Secretary of State shall direct the party to return that portion to the designated beneficiary of the candidate.

(2) The supervisor of elections shall, immediately after the last day for qualifying, submit to the Department of State a list containing the names, party affiliations, and addresses of all candidates and the offices for which they qualified.

History.—s. 24, ch. 6469, 1913; RGS 328; CGL 385; s. 3, ch. 26870, 1951; s. 12, ch. 29934, 1955; s. 4, ch. 65-378; s. 1, ch. 67-531; ss. 10, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 6, ch. 69-281; s. 1, ch. 74-119; s. 1, ch. 75-123; s. 1, ch. 75-247; s. 6, ch. 77-175; s. 28, ch. 79-400; s. 4, ch. 81-105; s. 1, ch. 83-242; s. 8, ch. 89-338; s. 1, ch. 91-107; s. 537, ch. 95-147; s. 11, ch. 97-13; s. 2, ch. 99-140; s. 10, ch. 99-318; s. 13, ch. 2005-277; s. 2, ch. 2010-16; s. 16, ch. 2011-40.

Note.—Former ss. 102.31, 99.031.

99.093 Municipal candidates; election assessment.—

(1) Each person seeking to qualify for nomination or election to a municipal office shall pay, at the time of qualifying for office, an election assessment. The election assessment shall be an amount equal to 1 percent of the annual salary of the office sought. Within 30 days after the close of qualifying, the qualifying officer shall forward all assessments collected pursuant to this section to the Florida Elections Commission for deposit in the Elections Commission Trust Fund.

(2) Any person seeking to qualify for nomination or election to a municipal office who is unable to pay the election assessment without imposing an undue burden on personal resources or on resources otherwise available to him or her shall, upon written certification of such inability given under oath to the qualifying officer, be exempt from paying the election assessment.

History.—s. 9, ch. 89-338; s. 2, ch. 91-107; s. 538, ch. 95-147; s. 12, ch. 97-13; s. 3, ch. 2010-16; s. 17, ch. 2011-40.

99.095 Petition process in lieu of a qualifying fee and party assessment.—

(1) A person who seeks to qualify as a candidate for any office and who meets the petition requirements of this section is not required to pay the qualifying fee or party assessment required by this chapter.

(2)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), a candidate must obtain the number of signatures of voters in the geographical area represented by the office sought equal to at least 1 percent of the total number of registered voters of that geographical area, as shown by the compilation by the department for the immediately preceding general election. Signatures may not be obtained until the candidate has filed the appointment of campaign

treasurer and designation of campaign depository pursuant to s. 106.021 and are valid only for the qualifying period immediately following such filings.

(b) A candidate for a special district office shall obtain 25 signatures of voters in the geographical area represented by the office sought.

(c) The format of the petition shall be prescribed by the division and shall be used by candidates to reproduce petitions for circulation. If the candidate is running for an office that requires a group or district designation, the petition must indicate that designation and, if it does not, the signatures are not valid. A separate petition is required for each candidate.

(d) In a year of apportionment, any candidate for county or district office seeking ballot position by the petition process may obtain the required number of signatures from any registered voter in the respective county, regardless of district boundaries. The candidate shall obtain at least the number of signatures equal to 1 percent of the total number of registered voters, as shown by a compilation by the department for the immediately preceding general election, divided by the total number of districts of the office involved.

(3) Each petition must be submitted before noon of the 28th day preceding the first day of the qualifying period for the office sought to the supervisor of elections of the county in which such petition was circulated. Each supervisor shall check the signatures on the petitions to verify their status as voters in the county, district, or other geographical area represented by the office sought. No later than the 7th day before the first day of the qualifying period, the supervisor shall certify the number of valid signatures.

(4)(a) Certifications for candidates for federal, state, multicounty district, or multicounty special district office shall be submitted to the division no later than the 7th day before the first day of the qualifying period for the office sought. The division shall determine whether the required number of signatures has been obtained and shall notify the candidate.

(b) For candidates for county, district, or special district office not covered by paragraph (a), the supervisor shall determine whether the required number of signatures has been obtained and shall notify the candidate.

(5) If the required number of signatures has been obtained, the candidate is eligible to qualify pursuant to s. 99.061.

History.—s. 2, ch. 74-119; s. 6, ch. 77-175; s. 29, ch. 79-400; s. 10, ch. 89-338; s. 9, ch. 90-315; s. 539, ch. 95-147; s. 3, ch. 99-140; s. 1, ch. 99-318; s. 14, ch. 2005-277; s. 9, ch. 2005-286; s. 17, ch. 2007-30; s. 11, ch. 2008-95; s. 18, ch. 2011-40.

99.0955 Candidates with no party affiliation; name on general election ballot.—

(1) Each person seeking to qualify for election as a candidate with no party affiliation shall file his or her qualifying papers and pay the qualifying fee or qualify by the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095 with the officer and during the times and under the circumstances prescribed in s. 99.061. Upon qualifying, the candidate is entitled to have his or her name placed on the general election ballot.

(2) The qualifying fee for candidates with no party affiliation shall consist of a filing fee and an election assessment as prescribed in s. 99.092. Filing fees paid to the Department of State shall be deposited into the General Revenue Fund of the state. Filing fees paid to the supervisor of elections shall be deposited into the general revenue fund of the county.

History.—s. 6, ch. 70-269; s. 1, ch. 70-439; s. 3, ch. 74-119; s. 7, ch. 77-175; s. 2, ch. 78-188; s. 11, ch. 89-338; s. 10, ch. 90-315; s. 540, ch. 95-147; s. 13, ch. 95-280; s. 4, ch. 99-140; s. 2, ch. 99-318; s. 15, ch. 2005-277.

Note.—Former s. 99.152.

99.096 Minor political party candidates; names on ballot.—Each person seeking to qualify for election as a candidate of a minor political party shall file his or her qualifying papers with, and pay the qualifying fee and, if one has been levied, the party assessment, or qualify by the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095, with the officer and at the times and under the circumstances provided in s. 99.061.

History.—s. 5, ch. 70-269; s. 1, ch. 70-439; s. 4, ch. 74-119; s. 8, ch. 77-175; s. 3, ch. 78-188; s. 12, ch. 89-338; s. 1, ch. 90-229; s. 11, ch. 90-315; s. 541, ch. 95-147; s. 3, ch. 99-318; s. 16, ch. 2005-277; s. 18, ch. 2007-30.

Note.—Former s. 101.261.

99.09651 Signature requirements for ballot position in year of apportionment.—

(1) In a year of apportionment, any candidate for representative to Congress, state Senate, or state House of Representatives seeking ballot position by the petition process prescribed in s. 99.095 shall obtain at least the number of signatures equal to one-third of 1 percent of the ideal population for the district of the office being sought.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "ideal population" means the total population of the state based upon the most recent decennial census divided by the number of districts for representative to Congress, state Senate, or state House of Representatives. For the purposes of this section, ideal population shall be calculated as of July 1 of the year prior to apportionment. The ideal population for a state Senate district and a state representative district shall be calculated by dividing the total population of the state by 40 for a state Senate district and by dividing by 120 for a state representative district.

(3) Signatures may be obtained from any registered voter in Florida regardless of party affiliation or district boundaries.

(4) Petitions shall state the name of the office the candidate is seeking, but shall not include a district number.

(5) Except as otherwise provided in this section, all requirements and procedures relating to the petition process shall conform to the requirements and procedures in nonapportionment years.

History.—s. 3, ch. 91-107; s. 4, ch. 99-318; s. 17, ch. 2005-277.

99.097 Verification of signatures on petitions.—

(1)(a) As determined by each supervisor, based upon local conditions, the checking of names on petitions may be based on the most inexpensive and administratively feasible of either of the following methods of verification:

1. A check of each petition; or
2. A check of a random sample, as provided by the Department of State, of the petitions. The sample must be such that a determination can be made as to whether or not the required number of signatures has been obtained with a reliability of at least 99.5 percent.

(b) Rules and guidelines for petition verification shall be adopted by the Department of State. Rules and guidelines for a random sample method of verification may include a requirement that petitions bear an additional number of names and signatures, not to exceed 15 percent of the names and signatures otherwise required. If the petitions do not meet such criteria or if the petitions are prescribed by s. 100.371, the use of the random sample method of verification is not available to supervisors.

(2) When a petitioner submits petitions which contain at least 15 percent more than the required number of signatures, the petitioner may require that the supervisor of elections use the random sampling verification method in certifying the petition.

(3)(a) If all other requirements for the petition are met, a signature on a petition shall be verified and counted as valid for a registered voter if, after comparing the signature on the petition and the signature of the registered voter in the voter registration system, the supervisor is able to determine that the petition signer is the same as the registered voter, even if the name on the petition is not in substantially the same form as in the voter registration system.

(b) In any situation in which this code requires the form of the petition to be prescribed by the division, no signature shall be counted toward the number of signatures required unless it is on a petition form prescribed by the division.

(c) If a voter signs a petition and lists an address other than the legal residence where the voter is registered, the supervisor shall treat the signature as if the voter had listed the address where the voter is registered.

(4) The supervisor shall be paid in advance the sum of 10 cents for each signature checked or the actual cost of checking such signature, whichever is less, by the candidate or, in the case of a petition to have an issue placed on the ballot, by the person or organization submitting the petition. However, if a candidate, person, or organization seeking to have an issue placed upon the ballot cannot pay such charges without imposing an undue burden on personal resources or upon the resources otherwise available to such candidate, person, or organization, such candidate, person, or organization shall, upon written certification of such inability given under oath to the supervisor, be entitled to have the signatures verified at no charge. In the event a candidate, person, or

organization submitting a petition to have an issue placed upon the ballot is entitled to have the signatures verified at no charge, the supervisor of elections of each county in which the signatures are verified at no charge shall submit the total number of such signatures checked in the county to the Chief Financial Officer no later than December 1 of the general election year, and the Chief Financial Officer shall cause such supervisor of elections to be reimbursed from the General Revenue Fund in an amount equal to 10 cents for each name checked or the actual cost of checking such signatures, whichever is less. In no event shall such reimbursement of costs be deemed or applied as extra compensation for the supervisor. Petitions shall be retained by the supervisors for a period of 1 year following the election for which the petitions were circulated.

(5) The results of a verification pursuant to subparagraph (1)(a)2. may be contested in the circuit court by the candidate; an announced opponent; a representative of a designated political committee; or a person, party, or other organization submitting the petition. The contestant shall file a complaint, together with the fees prescribed in chapter 28, with the clerk of the circuit court in the county in which the petition is certified or in Leon County if the petition covers more than one county within 10 days after midnight of the date the petition is certified; and the complaint shall set forth the grounds on which the contestant intends to establish his or her right to require a complete check of the petition pursuant to subparagraph (1)(a)1. In the event the court orders a complete check of the petition and the result is not changed as to the success or lack of success of the petitioner in obtaining the requisite number of valid signatures, then such candidate, unless the candidate has filed the oath stating that he or she is unable to pay such charges; announced opponent; representative of a designated political committee; or party, person, or organization submitting the petition, unless such person or organization has filed the oath stating inability to pay such charges, shall pay to the supervisor of elections of each affected county for the complete check an amount calculated at the rate of 10 cents for each additional signature checked or the actual cost of checking such additional signatures, whichever is less.

(6)(a) If any person is paid to solicit signatures on a petition, an undue burden oath may not subsequently be filed in lieu of paying the fee to have signatures verified for that petition.

(b) If an undue burden oath has been filed and payment is subsequently made to any person to solicit signatures on a petition, the undue burden oath is no longer valid and a fee for all signatures previously submitted to the supervisor of elections and any that are submitted thereafter shall be paid by the candidate, person, or organization that submitted the undue burden oath. If contributions as defined in s. 106.011 are received, any monetary contributions must first be used to reimburse the supervisor of elections for any signature verification fees that were not paid because of the filing of an undue burden oath.

*History.—*s. 2, ch. 76-233; s. 10, ch. 77-175; s. 2, ch. 80-20; s. 1, ch. 82-141; s. 13, ch. 89-338; s. 2, ch. 90-229; s. 12, ch. 90-315; s. 542, ch. 95-147; s. 21, ch. 97-13; s. 7, ch. 99-318; s. 109, ch. 2003-261; s. 19, ch. 2011-40.

99.103 Department of State to remit part of filing fees and party assessments of candidates to state executive committee.—

(1) If more than three-fourths of the full authorized membership of the state executive committee of any party was elected at the last previous election for such members and if such party is declared by the Department of State to have recorded on the registration books of the counties, as of the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January prior to the primary election in general election years, 5 percent of the total registration of such counties when added together, such committee shall receive, for the purpose of meeting its expenses, all filing fees collected by the Department of State from its candidates less an amount equal to 15 percent of the filing fees, which amount the Department of State shall deposit in the General Revenue Fund of the state.

(2) Not later than 20 days after the close of qualifying in even-numbered years, the Department of State shall remit 95 percent of all filing fees, less the amount deposited in general revenue pursuant to subsection (1), or party assessments that may have been collected by the department to the respective state executive committees of the parties complying with subsection (1). Party assessments collected by the Department of State shall be remitted to the appropriate state executive committee, irrespective of other requirements of this section, provided such committee is duly organized under the provisions of chapter 103. The remainder of filing fees or

party assessments collected by the Department of State shall be remitted to the appropriate state executive committees not later than the date of the primary election.

History.—s. 1, ch. 29935, 1955; s. 24, ch. 57-1; s. 1, ch. 57-62; s. 4, ch. 57-166; s. 1, ch. 69-295; ss. 10, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 11, ch. 77-175; s. 2, ch. 83-251; s. 4, ch. 91-107; s. 14, ch. 97-13; s. 10, ch. 2005-286.

99.121 Department of State to certify nominations to supervisors of elections.—The Department of State shall certify to the supervisor of elections of each county affected by a candidacy for office the names of persons nominated to such office. The names of such persons shall be printed by the supervisor of elections upon the ballot in their proper place as provided by law.

History.—s. 30, ch. 4328, 1895; s. 10, ch. 4537, 1897; GS 215, 3824; s. 54, ch. 6469, 1913; RGS 259, 358, 5885; CGL 315, 415, 8148; s. 11, ch. 26329, 1949; s. 3, ch. 26870, 1951; s. 5, ch. 57-166; ss. 10, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 11, ch. 77-175.

Note.—Former ss. 99.13, 102.51.

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