

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE  
OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE

CHARLES E. SUMMERS, JR.  
SECRETARY OF STATE

February 1, 2012

Honorable Nichi S. Farnham  
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Honorable Michael G. Beaulieu  
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Dear Senator Farnham, Representative Beaulieu and Members of the Committee:

The 125<sup>th</sup> Legislature, in the First Regular Session, adopted Chapter 75 of the Resolves of 2011, entitled, "*Resolve, Directing the Secretary of State To Examine Centralization of the Petition Signature Verification Process*". This Resolve directed the Secretary of State to examine the potential for centralizing the process for verifying signatures on candidate petitions, citizens' initiative and people's veto referendum petitions within the office of the Secretary of State using the Central Voter Registration system (CVR), and to submit a report on the findings of this examination no later than February 1, 2012, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. The following is the required report.

**Reasons for Centralization of Petition Verification Process**

Although our office did not survey or interview petition proponents or circulators for this report, the reasons for centralization of the process have been articulated publicly by petition groups in the past. The main reasons cited for centralization include the cost and logistics of transmitting petitions to 500 separate jurisdictions for certification, and getting the verified petitions returned by the municipalities in a timely manner. When petitioners are submitting hundreds or thousands of signatures to municipalities on the constitutional or statutory deadline date, many municipal offices may not be open that day or may not be open for the full business day that the State is open (i.e. 8 am to 5 pm). Additionally, since the implementation of the CVR, personnel in the Secretary of State Division of Elections are able to query and view voter registration records for all municipalities, which now makes it technologically possible for our office to verify the signatures.

Although our office did survey municipal election officials about their time, staff and processes involved with verification of recent citizen initiative and people's veto efforts, we did

not ask them whether they would prefer to continue performing the verification of registered voter status on petitions or if they would prefer that the process be centralized. We suspect that most municipalities would welcome the elimination of these petition-related duties.

However, since there are major cost and process considerations in shifting the verification of signatures from the municipal level to the State level, we will address these issues later in this report. This will allow the Legislature to fully understand what is involved in making such a policy decision, independent of the desires of any one group involved in the process.

## **Background on Current Petition Verification/Certification Process**

### **Municipal Verification Process**

Municipal officials (clerks and registrars) in over 500 municipalities currently have the statutory authority to maintain the list of eligible voters for their municipality, and to determine whether the signatures of voters on various petitions are for registered voters of the municipality. The central voter registration system (CVR) is a software application and database used by all municipalities, since May of 2007, to maintain the data for each registered voter.

A municipal clerk or registrar has three methods for determining voter eligibility to sign the petition: performing a search in CVR; reviewing a current voter list printed from CVR; or checking the voter registration application, which is the source document from which the CVR record was created. (The latter method should be used primarily when a voter's name is not found in CVR or if there is no scanned application or signature in CVR). After determining the eligibility of the signers, the municipal official manually annotates the petition form to indicate which signatures are valid and invalid. There currently is no functionality for the municipal official to enter this petition verification information in the CVR.

Petition proponents or candidates submit petitions to municipal officials on a rolling basis during the circulation period. Municipal officials do not have a statutorily prescribed period for verification of the signatures except when citizen initiative, people's veto or non-party candidate petitions are submitted to them on the deadline.

### **State Certification Process**

Once the proponents determine they have sufficient signatures to submit their petitions to the Secretary of State, they make one filing with the complete set of petitions on or before the deadline in the Maine Constitution (for citizen initiative or people's veto petitions) or in the election law (for candidate petitions). Once citizen initiatives or people's veto petitions are submitted to the Secretary of State, our office has 30 days to certify whether the petition effort is valid or invalid. For candidate petitions, our office must certify the petitions by the final deadline for submission (i.e. March 15<sup>th</sup> or June 1<sup>st</sup>) to allow for the 5 business day challenge period to occur.

There is a common misconception that the Secretary of State duplicates the work of the municipal officials and rechecks the voter registration status of the signers – this is not the case. The Secretary of State performs a different level of review to make sure that petitions meet the requirements of the Constitution and statutes, including, but not limited to, whether the circulators are both registered voters and residents of Maine (does not apply to candidate petitions); whether the circulator's oath was properly completed before a Maine Notary Public or Attorney; whether all signatures were gathered within a one-year period (does not apply to candidate petitions); or whether any voters have signed the petition more than once. Attached as Appendix A is a description of the steps our office follows in certifying a citizen initiative or people's veto petition.

### **Analysis of Issues Related to Centralization of Petition Signature Verification**

Depending on the number of signatures submitted for a particular effort, the time of year submitted, and the number of petition efforts submitted at the same time, the seven-member staff of the Elections Division may not be able to complete the currently required review in the statutorily mandated 30-day period without the help of other staff from the Department, temporary staff, and/or the use of paid overtime or compensatory time. A summary of the 2009 citizen initiative certification effort for five petitions is attached as Appendix B. The 2009 effort took place between October 2008 and February 2009, less than a year before the Superior Court, in *Webster v. Dunlap*, KENSC-AP-2009-55 (Me. Super. Ct., Kenn. Cty., Dec. 21, 2009)(Marden, J.), ruled that the Secretary of State must complete the certification of citizen initiative and people's veto petitions within 30 days of the submission of the petitions, rather than 30 days from the final deadline for submission as had been our office's prior interpretation.

In Appendix C of this report, we have summarized the responses to a recent survey of municipal clerks and registrars regarding their efforts over the last six months of 2011 to verify petition signatures. Although 308 of the over 500 municipalities responded to the survey, not all municipalities answered all questions. However, 303 of the responding municipalities reported using 382 staff to verify petition signatures, while 264 of the responding municipalities reported using 5,690 staff hours to certify over 37,000 petition forms with over 167,000 signatures.

The municipal survey also demonstrates that officials rely upon local records and resources to help them find voters whose signatures are illegible and thus can't be immediately searched in CVR. In fact, 57% of the respondents stated that the use of municipal resources, such as vital records, dog licenses, vehicle registrations, and personal knowledge of their residents, assists them in determining the voter represented by a signature on the form, which can then be verified in CVR.

An additional barrier to central certification is that 54% percent of the respondents report that their voter registration applications are not scanned and attached to the voter records in CVR. Without the image of the paper application or an image of the signature of the voter, our office cannot perform the verification in CVR without contacting the municipalities to obtain a copy of the application or signature for comparison with the petition. Therefore, prefatory to shifting the responsibility of petition signature verification to the State would be a requirement

for the municipalities to complete the scanning of the most recent voter registration application and signature into the CVR.

Based on the level of review that our office currently must complete, as well as the time and staff already needed at the local level to complete the signature verification, it is clear that our office could not complete both the municipal signature verification and the State certification review within the same 30-day certification period.

The most time-consuming part of the State's review of the petitions is the search for duplicate signatures. This process can take over half the allotted time for our certification of the petitions. Since CVR was implemented in 2007, our office has planned to implement a petition certification module for CVR. This petition module will allow local officials to search for the voter in CVR and designate each signature line either as valid, or as invalid for one of a number of reasons. Once a voter's record is flagged as having signed a particular petition form, when the voter is searched again for signing another form for the same effort, the second signature would automatically be designated as a duplicate signature, and thus invalid. When a municipality verifies a petition form, the verification information will be captured in CVR, and when the forms are submitted to the Secretary of State, our office can take the data from the municipal review and complete our second level of review for circulators, notaries, etc. Since the duplicate signature review already will have been completed during the municipal verification process, this will eliminate the time-consuming and manual processes now used to find and invalidate duplicate signatures.

In 2011, staff of the Elections Division worked with the CVR application software vendor, PCC Technologies Group, LLC, to develop the requirements for a statewide citizen initiative and people's veto petition certification process. The legal and business process requirements are memorialized in a 100-page Functional Requirements Specification Document that was agreed upon in mid-2011. The vendor has developed the required functionality for the module, and vendor staff and Elections Division staff have tested all the unit components of the module in the vendor's test environment.

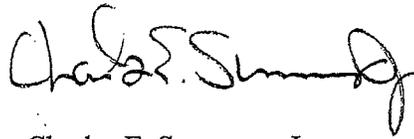
Once our certification is completed for the petition submitted on January 24<sup>th</sup>, ("*An Act To Allow Marriage Licenses for Same-sex Couples and Protect Religious Freedom*"), our staff will then begin to fully test the petitions module (i.e. end-to-end functional testing) in the State's test environment, perform a multi-user volume test, and fully regression-test the CVR application software (called *ElectioNet*) to ensure that changes made to accommodate the petitions module did not impact other modules of the CVR application software. Once this testing is completed, later in 2012, our office will conduct training for municipal officials on the use of the software, so that it can be used for any new petition efforts started after the software's implementation.

We believe that a fully-functioning statewide petitions module is essential to streamline the petition processing steps and facilitate the legally-required review by both the municipalities and the State, and recommend that any further discussion of centralization of the process be deferred until at least one petition effort has been certified using this petition certification module in CVR. If the more streamlined process results in a more accurate and timely review both at the municipal and the State level, it may be unnecessary to move toward shifting the signature certification to the State.

However, if the Legislature wishes to move forward with centralization, either before or after the CVR petitions module is fully deployed, then there needs to be a more in-depth review of the budget, staffing levels, and Constitutional and statutory deadlines and requirements involved with a centralized certification process. For comparison purposes, our office surveyed other states that have a statewide initiative or referendum petition process (only about half of the states allow these types of petitions). Information from the states that responded is summarized in Appendix D of this report.

Please let me know if I can provide any further information for the Committee or if you would like to schedule an in-person presentation of this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles E. Summers, Jr.", written in black ink.

Charles E. Summers, Jr.  
Secretary of State

## **Appendix A**

### **Current State Petition Certification Process**

This appendix outlines the process utilized by the Secretary of State, Division of Elections to determine the validity of a people's veto or citizen initiative petition. These steps are completed after the municipal election officials have reviewed the petitions to determine which signatures were made by voters in each respective municipality.

1. Petitions are filed with the Secretary of State by the deadline set by the Constitution. The filing deadline for initiative petitions submitted to the First Regular Session is by 5:00 p.m. on or before the 50th day after the convening of the Legislature. (The first regular session convenes on the first Wednesday of December following the General Election.) For the Second Regular Session, the filing deadline is by 5:00 p.m. on or before the 25th day after the convening of the Legislature. (The second regular session convenes on the first Wednesday after the first Tuesday in January in the even-numbered year following the General Election.) For people's veto petitions, the deadline is the by 5 p.m. on the 90th day after adjournment of the legislative session at which the Act was passed.
2. Petitions are alphabetized by municipality.
3. Petitions are counted into lots of 25 or 50 (based on how many pages are contained in each petition form) and the lots are placed in folders showing the petition numbers in the lot (1-25, 26-50, etc.). The folders are put into boxes. Each box is numbered and each box is labeled with the petition name and the range of petition numbers that it contains (People's Veto 1-500, etc).
4. Petitions are numbered sequentially.
5. To find potential duplicate signatures, all names of voters who signed the petition and were not either marked by the Municipal Registrar as NR (not registered) or crossed out (withdrawn) are entered into an Access database.
  - a. Data entered includes: Petition #, Line #, Surname, First/Middle Name & Suffix, Residence Municipality.
  - b. Data is sorted by Town, then by Surname and then First/Middle Name & Suffix.
  - c. Sorted list is printed, reviewed manually and potential duplicate groups are highlighted.
  - d. Each petition in the highlighted group is pulled from its folder and they are compared to see if the signatures are the same.
    - i. If the signatures are the same then 1 petition is marked that the voter who signed on line # also signed petition # and line # (14 Also 523/27), while the duplicate petition(s) is marked that the voter who signed on line # is a duplicate signer on petition # and line # (27 Dup 233/14). The petitions are then filed back in their folders.
    - ii. If the signatures are not the same the petitions are filed back in their folders without noting a duplicate.
6. During the certification process, division staff members manually review each petition form to find and document many items including errors in the form itself, in the Circulator's Oath section, in the Registrar's Certification section and calculate the number of signatures on the petition by categories. In addition to reviewing the petitions, staff note in the "Petition Log" the number of valid signatures and invalid signatures as well as

## **Appendix A**

### **Current State Petition Certification Process**

the reason each signature is invalid. An explanation of each signature code is provided below.

- a. VALID:
  - i. Total of all signatures that have been checked off by the municipal registrar as registered voters and have not been discounted for any other reason listed below.
- b. FORM:
  - i. Must be an approved form.
  - ii. There can not be any missing or out-of-order pages.
  - iii. If there is an issue with the form, then all of the signatures are listed as invalid with FORM as the reason.
- c. OATH:
  - i. Must have both the Circulator's and the Notary's original signatures, no signature stamps will be accepted.
  - ii. Must have the date that the Notary administered the oath to the circulator.
  - iii. If any of the above is missing from the petition, then all of the signatures are listed as invalid with OATH as the reason.
- d. OWN:
  - i. The Circulator and the Notary on a petition must not be related and must not be the same person.
  - ii. If the Circulator and Notary are related or are the same person, then all of the signatures are listed as invalid with OWN as the reason.
- e. DATE:
  - i. The date that the Notary administered the oath for the Circulator must be on or after the dates of the signatures on the petition.
  - ii. Any signatures that are dated after the Notary administered the oath for the Circulator are listed as invalid with DATE as the reason.
- f. CIRC:
  - i. The Circulator must be registered to vote prior to collecting signatures on a petition.
  - ii. Any signatures collected before the date that the Circulator registered to vote will be listed as invalid with CIRC as the reason.
- g. CERT:
  - i. The Certification of the Registrar must be completed and must include the date of certification and the Registrar's original signature.
    - 1. If the date of certification is missing and/or the Registrar's signature is missing, staff contact the Registrar to see if they kept a copy of the petition and if they can determine when they certified the petition.

**Appendix A**  
**Current State Petition Certification Process**

2. If the Registrar used a signature stamp, staff will contact the Registrar to see if they remember stamping the signature themselves. If the Registrar did stamp the signature themselves, note this fact on the petition.
  - ii. If after the above research there is still no confirmation of when or if the Registrar certified the petition, then all of the signatures are listed as invalid with a reason of CERT.
- h. REG:
- i. The Registrar must indicate whether or not each voter who signed the petition is registered to vote in their municipality as of the date the voter signed the petition.
    1. Voters who are found to be registered in their municipality are marked with a check mark.
    2. Voters who are not found to be registered in their municipality are marked with NR.
  - ii. All signatures that are marked with NR are listed as invalid with a reason of REG.
- i. AMD (After Municipal Deadline):
- i. Petitions must be filed with the Secretary of State by a specific date and must be filed with the municipality by 5 or 10 days prior to the Secretary of State's deadline. The municipal deadline varies based on the type of petition.
    1. If the municipality did not date stamp or note on the petition when the petition was received in their office, then the municipality is contacted to see if they know whether or not the petition was received by the deadline.
  - ii. If the petition was not received in the municipality by the deadline, then all of the signatures on the petition are listed as invalid with a reason of AMD.
- j. DATE:
- i. There is a specific date range in which the petition could be circulated.
  - ii. Any signatures with a date outside the date range in which petitions could be circulated are listed as invalid with a reason of DATE.
- k. DUP:
- i. A voter may only sign 1 petition effort 1 time.
  - ii. Any signatures that were determined to be duplicates during the process to find duplicates are listed as invalid with DUP as the reason.
- l. SIG:
- i. Each voter must sign their name on the petition.
  - ii. Any voters who did not sign the petition are listed as invalid with SIG as the reason.

**Appendix A**  
**Current State Petition Certification Process**

- m. WD (WithDrawn):
    - i. Any signatures for which information has been crossed out are listed as invalid with WD as the reason.
  - n. ANO (ANOther):
    - i. The registered voter must sign the petition personally.
    - ii. Any voter's signature that is determined to be made by another person is listed as invalid with ANO as the reason.
  - o. ALT (Altered):
    - i. The information added to petitions by voters, Registrar, Notary and/or Circulator must not be altered by another in any way.
    - ii. All signatures on a petition that is deemed to have been altered are listed as invalid with a reason of ALT.
7. Following the manual review of all petition forms, the results of the review must be entered into an Access database. Prior to entering data from each form, all circulators and Notaries Public must also be entered into this database.
  8. Circulators are required to be Maine registered voters and residents. All circulators are entered into the Access database so they can be chosen from a list as the petition certification information is entered into the database.
    - a. Circulators must be registered to vote prior to collecting signatures.
    - b. Data to be entered includes circulator name, municipality of residence and date of registration
  9. A copy of the current Notary Public database is copied into the Access database so they can be chosen from a list as the petition certification information is entered the database.
  10. Data Enter Certification. Data required to be entered for each petition includes: Petition #, Municipality, Circulator, Notary, Notary Date, Total Valid, and up to 3 reasons for Invalid with their counts.
  11. After all data entry is completed, the entry is then proofread. This is accomplished by:
    - a. Printing a report listing the certification data input for a specific box of petitions.
    - b. 2 people proofread each report.
    - c. If errors are found, the data entry is corrected.
    - d. The report is printed again and the corrections are proofed.
  12. This final data is then used to complete the Secretary of State's Determination of Validity. This document includes the total number of valid signatures as well as the number of invalid signatures itemized by reason. This Determination will include whether the petition effort was determined to be valid or invalid.

**Appendix B**  
**2009 Certification Summary for Five Citizen Initiatives**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Matthew Dunlap, Secretary of State  
**From:** Julie Flynn, Deputy Secretary of State  
**Re:** 2009 Citizen Initiative Petition Certification Efforts  
**Date:** March 27, 2009

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**Overview of Certification Process**

- The 2009 deadline for citizen initiative petition efforts to be submitted to the Secretary of State for certification was January 22, 2009. Five (5) petitions were submitted prior to that date; one in October 2008, three in November 2008, and one on January 21, 2009.
- The scope of the certification included:
  - 11 weeks of full-time effort (12/1/08 – 2/23/09);
  - 93 archive boxes of documents;
  - 1,811 circulators to be verified as registered voters and residents of Maine;
  - 37,459 petition forms to be reviewed through several stages;
  - 306,216 possible valid signatures to be data entered and reviewed for duplicates;
  - 340,717 total signatures to be reviewed and certified.

**Summary of Regular Workday Efforts by Department Staff**

- 7 Elections Division staff began the certification effort on December 1, 2008, after the post-general election activities were completed, and worked for the entire 11 week period.
  - Four (4) administrative staff worked 100% of their time;
  - Three (3) paraprofessional/management staff worked 50% to 75% of their time;
  - **A total of 2,503 regular hours were worked by the 7 Elections Division staff.**
- 18 staff from the rest of the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions joined the effort on January 5<sup>th</sup> and worked for the remainder of the effort. They contributed part or all of their workdays to the certification effort, in lieu of regular duties, for a total of **3,192 regular hours worked by Bureau staff outside of the Elections Division.**
- 5 additional Department staff joined the effort on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and worked for the remainder of the effort. They contributed a total of **307 regular work hours**, in lieu of usual duties.
- Summary of regular workday hours used: 30 staff worked an average of 200 hours each on petition certification, for a **total of 6002 person-hours.**
- Total value of unburdened payroll costs: \$103,159.51 (\$59,179.99 by non-elections staff)

**Summary of Temporary Staff Efforts and Overtime Efforts by Department Staff**

- 2 temporary staff; 880 hours; **total contract cost of \$12,240 (All Other dollars);**
- 21 Bureau staff each worked an average of 57 hours of overtime in January and February;
- **Total of 1202.8 overtime hours;** accrued as compensatory time rather than paid hours;
- **Value of overtime, if paid: \$21,187.69.**

**Appendix C  
2012 Petition Survey to Municipal Clerks**

# Municipalities Surveyed 505  
# Municipalities Who Answered Survey 308 61%

From 7-1-2011 to 12-31-2011		Municipalities Responding
# Petitions Certified	37,285	294
# Sigs Certified	167,579	281
# Staff	382	303
# Staff Hours	5,690	264
# Petitions Logged Since Oct	19,898	291

Methods to Certify Petitions	CVR	Printed List	Memory or Local Knowledge	Card File	Total Responding
	143	48	46	27	264
	54%	18%	17%	10%	

	Only Unfamiliar	Every Signature	Don't Compare Any
Compare Signatures?	176	75	45
	59%	25%	15%

	Seldom	Few	Several	Most
Encounter Questionable Signatures: (i.e. Signed by Another Person - ANO)?	236	50	10	3
	79%	17%	3%	1%
Encounter Illegible Names?	157	86	38	18
	53%	29%	13%	6%

Methods to Check Possible ANO?	Voter Registration Card	CVR Image	Municipal Documents	None
	259	177	43	12
	53%	36%	9%	2%

What Do You Do with Illegible Names?	CVR Street Lookup	Check Municipal Documents	Not Registered
	198	48	31
	71%	17%	11%

What Municipal Resources Do You Use?	BMV	Staff	Tax	IF&W	Other
	147	141	140	106	93
	23%	22%	22%	17%	15%

How important are Municipal Resources?	Very Much to Essential	Not at All to Somewhat
	165	126
	57%	43%

Registration Cards Scanned?	No	Yes
	160	138
	54%	46%

Problems with Scanning?	No Time	Equipment	Training	Internet
	105	65	27	26
	47%	29%	12%	12%

**Addendum to Appendix C  
2012 Petition Survey to Municipal Clerks**

1. Other municipal resources used:

- Vital statistics
- Dog licenses
- Shellfish licenses
- Recreational vehicle registrations
- E911 data
- Personal knowledge
- Census data
- Real estate records
- Phone book
- Call family member or person to confirm

2. Problems with scanning – equipment:

Although “equipment problem” was selected as one of the prominent reasons why registration cards have not been scanned, our office has not been aware of a high instance of scanning equipment problems. When CVR equipment is not functioning properly, municipal clerks and registrars are supposed to call our office and report it, and we dispatch technicians to repair or replace equipment. “Equipment problems” could actually be operator error.

Some reported having odd-sized cards or dark cards (pink) that they were having trouble scanning.

3. Other various repeated comments:

- If I can't read the names, I don't certify them.
- Complaints about circulators demanding certification while they wait.
- Complaints about circulators not coming to get petitions after they have been certified.
- Circulators should be required to take training course.
- Not enough time for certifying in the 5 days after the municipal deadline.
- So many petitions with only one signature.
- Very time consuming.

**Appendix D  
Current State Petition Processes**

State	Signatures Needed		Deadline	# Staff	Certification time	Certified by	Process
	%	#					
AK	10% of votes cast in preceding general election, 7% of those must be from 30 of 40 House districts	25,870	May be filed any time. Question will be placed on first state wide election held more than 120 days after the adjournment of the Legislative session following the filing.	3 full time and at least 8 temps that have already been trained	SOS has 60 days to complete and report to the Lieutenant Governor	State	Petitions are filed directly with SOS. SOS provides petitioners with 500 pre-numbered booklets with pages for 150 signature lines that also ask for address and an identifier (license #, voter ID #). A petition module is already in place to record all the information and check for duplicate signatures. Signatures are not compared to other records, just that a record does exist for that voter, based on identifier. If identifier is missing, then the division researches the signature. (Last effort cost approx. \$68,000 to certify at State level)
AZ	10% of votes cast for Governor	172,809	4 months before the election (July 12)	Hire temps-in 2008, during 9 efforts, used 70 temp staff.	SOS has 20 business days to review forms and select 5% random sample to submit to County officials. County officials have 15 business days to certify sample and SOS has 72 hours after receipt from County to tabulate	County	Petitions are filed directly with SOS. SOS reviews forms for validity first, then a 2nd review is done for signature lines. Data is entered into a computer program that identifies a 5% random sample. The petitions with a random sample are copied, lines highlighted and sent to county officials. Decision based on county verification.
AR	8% of votes cast for Governor	62,507	4 months before the General election (July 6)	If multiple petitions, can use 30 temps, managed by an accounting firm.	SOS has 30 days to certify a certain percentage of signatures from 15 counties.	State	Petitions are filed directly with SOS. Petitions are sorted by county. Petitions are numbered and copied. Staff works from copy, notations are not made on original petition form. An overall check is done first for form issues. Line by line certification checked, up to 10% over required signatures. If petition does not have enough signatures, proponents have 30 days to collect and submit additional signatures.

**Appendix D  
Current State Petition Processes**

State	Signatures Needed		Deadline	# Staff	Certification time	Certified by	Process
	%	#					
CO	5% of total votes cast for candidates for Sec. of State	86,105	Within 6 months from date of final approval, no later than 3 months before the election	5-6 in ballot access section, 30 for entire division. Line by line verification contracted out-staff of 60	SOS has 30 calendar days from submission to verify	State	Petitions are filed with SOS, who certifies a random sample-5% of submitted signatures. Less than 90% valid-fail; more than 110% valid-sufficient. If between 90-110%-a contracted group (quasi-government agency) performs line-by-line verification. Decision is based either random sample verified by SOS or by every signature verified by contracted agency. No county or municipal involvement in statewide petitions.
FL	8% of votes case in last Presidential Election. Must include 61,683 from voters residing in at least 7 CG Districts	676,811	Feb. 1st is the deadline for counties to certify to SOS. No statutory deadline to send to county, but they have 30 days to certify signatures	67 Counties with staff. 1 person in Elections for initiatives	County officials have 30 days from date of submission to certify. SOS tabulates numbers immediately	County	Petitions are filed with County Officials, who certify valid signatures on a rolling basis. County officials submit a certificate to SOS. One person tabulates the county certifications.
ID	6% of total votes cast at last General Election	47,432	4 months before the election (May 1st of election year or 18 months from date of issuance)	44 Counties with staff, 3 in Elections	County officials have 60 days, but no later than last day in June. SOS has no statutory deadline, done as soon as possible	County	Petitions are certified by County officials. County officials report numbers on a certificate to the SOS, they tabulate based on county certifications. Currently there is a line by line certification requirement, but the last Constitutional Amendment was filed in 2007. Illinois is in the process of creating a random sample procedure for certifying petitions. Certification is done by the State Board of Elections. Petitions are initially filed with SOS, who has 24 hours to submit to State Board.
IL	8% of votes cast for Governor	298,400	6 Months before the election. (May 7th)	75 total employees, 6 in Division	State Board has until 74 days before the election. (End of August) About 3 months to certify	State	

**Appendix D  
Current State Petition Processes**

State	Signatures Needed		Deadline	# Staff	Certification time	Certified by	Process
	%	#					
IA	3% of votes cast for Governor, excluding blanks. No more than 1/4 may come from any one county	68,911	1st Wednesday in December (Dec. 7)	3 to 6	Transmit to Legislature by first date of Convening (Jan. 4)	Municipal	Signatures are certified by Municipal Official by entering the signatures into the Central Registration System, which tracks duplicates. Petitions are then submitted to SOS, where they inspect forms for stray marks, based on a lawsuit. The SOS has no certification of the form, the decision is based on numbers certified by local officials. Petitions are submitted to SOS, but immediately turned over to State Election Board. Election Board sorts petitions by county, numbers each page and sends to County officials for line by line certification. Petitions are entered into a voter registration database and then the State Board tabulates numbers. Decision based on county reports.
MD	3% of votes case for Governor	55,736	May 1st-1/3 of required signatures. June 30th-remainder of required signatures	Not confirmed, Election Board has own staff	20 Calendar days	County	Petitions are submitted to SOS. An initial check for form issues, circulator issues-problems that will invalidate entire petition-those petitions are separated out. The remaining petitions are stamped numerically and a raw signature count is taken. Based on the #required and the #submitted, they have a complicated formula for sampling. Only verify every signature if there is a challenge.
MI	8% of votes cast for Governor 5% of votes cast for Governor-needs representation of 6 of 9 Congressional Districts	258,088	May 30th	1 Full-time, can use up to 8 temp or other division staff	30 days to copy and send to County officials. County has until last Tues in July to report to SOS. Decision deadline is 13th Tues. prior to election.	State	Proponent is required to sort and number petitions by county and submit in folders of no more than 100 per folder. SOS copies petitions and sends to County officials who enter into CVR and certify. Decision is based on numbers of signatures validated by County officials.
MO		143,920	election (May 6th)	25 people		County	

**Appendix D  
Current State Petition Processes**

State	Signatures Needed		Deadline	# Staff	Certification time	Certified by	Process
	%	#					
MT	5% of total registered voters must include 5% of voters in each of 34 House districts	24,337	3 Months before the election	56 counties with staff, 4 in Division	County officials have 30 days from date of submission to certify and send to SOS. Law says SOS renders an immediate decision, but within a couple of days of final submission, SOS reports to Governor	County	Petitions are submitted to County officials who validate signatures in centralized system that tracks duplicates. (56 counties) Counties submit certified petitions on a rolling basis until the final deadline. SOS checks form for issues that would invalidate entire petition. Decision is then based on signatures validated by County officials.
ND	2% of resident population based on last federal decennial census	13,452	Not less than 90 days before statewide election. For the Primary Election, the deadline is March 14; for the General Election, the deadline is August 8	1 person works on petitions, 3 in division	Elections staff have 35 days to complete	State	Petitions are submitted to SOS. The forms are reviewed for issues that would invalidate individual petition forms. Once those are set aside, a random sample of 2,000 signatures is identified. Those voters are sent postcards with the questions: Are you a registered voter?; Did you sign the petition?; and Did you sign in front of the circulator? If someone answers no-1 staff calls them and other voters on that particular petition.
NE	7% of total registered voters must include 5% of voters in 38 of 93 counties	79,061	4 Months before the general election	93 counties with staff-4 in Division	County officials have 40 days from date of receipt from SOS.	County	Petitions are submitted to SOS. Proponents are asked to have petitions sorted by county prior to submission. SOS sends to County officials within 1-2 days of receipt. County officials verify circulators and voter signatures and enter into a centralized database. SOS has access to database and is able to keep running totals. Decision is based on totals certified by county.
NV	10% of votes in last general election-must include 18,088 in each of 4 Congressional Districts	72,352	Not less than 30 days prior to any Regular session of the Legislature-(Mid-November)	17 counties with staff. Counties hire temp staff to certify. 5 in Elections	County officials have 4 days to report "raw count" to SOS. If random sample is needed, County has 9 business days. If line by line certification-12 days	County	Petitions are submitted to County officials who report raw numbers of signatures to SOS. Based on percentage of raw numbers vs. required numbers, SOS instructs officials to validate random sample of signatures (5% or 500, whichever is greater). If sampling results are 90% to 100%, counties are instructed to verify signatures line by line. Petitions are only submitted county level and not to SOS for certification.

**Appendix D  
Current State Petition Processes**

State	Signatures Needed		Deadline	# Staff	Certification time	Certified by	Process
	%	#					
OH	3% of votes cast for Governor, must include signatures from voters in 44 of 88 counties	115,570	Not less than 10 days prior to commencement of any session of Ohio General Assembly	For a recent effort, the largest county used 40 full-time temp staff	No deadline, but worked on constantly until done	County	Petitions are submitted to Elections Division (SOS). Elections Div. date stamps and numbers forms. Petitions are sent to County officials for line by line signature verification. Names are entered into a database within the voter registration system. Counties certify signatures through database uploaded to Elections Division.
OR	5% of votes cast for Governor	87,769	No later than 4 months prior to general election	7 SOS staff. Have used 8 temp staff	30 days after final submission deadline	State	Petitions signatures are submitted to SOS monthly, by the 10th business day of each month. Petitions have to be numbered prior to submission and signatures gathered from the previous month are submitted. Petitions are checked for form, circulators' registrations checked and signature lines are entered into a database. Elections Division uses Statistical Sampling Procedure based on number of petitions turned in.
SD	5% of votes cast for Governor	15,855	Within 90 days of adjournment of session	3-4 in Division	No deadline to certify	State	Petitions are submitted to SOS and a 5% random sample is identified. Staff compares just name and county (not signature or street address) to information in Central Registration System. If there is a challenge, SOS checks 100%.
WA	8% of total ballots cast in Gubernatorial election	241,153	No later than 4 months prior to general election	15-25 SOS staff. Have used up to 48 temp staff when working on 6 efforts	40 days to submit initiative to Legislature-submitted in December	State	Proponent is asked to make an appointment when submitting petitions. Petitions should be unfolded and separated into bundles of 50. (No statutory requirement.) Petitions are submitted to SOS, who hires temporary staff to check signatures with a copy of the voter registration database. If 75,000 signatures over the minimum required are submitted, SOS is authorized to use random sampling. If the effort fails in the random sampling, then line by line certification is done.

**Appendix D  
Current State Petition Processes**

State	Signatures Needed		Deadline	# Staff	Certification time	Certified by	Process
	%	#					
WY	15% of total votes cast in previous general election, must include 15% from 2/3 of counties	28,624	Prior to beginning of Legislative session	Hire 8-10 temp staff for initiatives	60 days after submission	State	Petitions are submitted to SOS. Petitions are set up in voter registration system. Line by line certification captured by voter reg. system as signatures are checked.