

AN ACT

To amend sections 3501.05, 3501.29, 3501.38, and 3505.01 and to enact section 3519.08 of the Revised Code to ensure handicapped parking at polling places, to require the director of a board of elections to sign a statement verifying the availability of that parking before each election, and to permit petitions proposing to place initiatives and referenda on the ballot to be withdrawn.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 3501.05, 3501.29, 3501.38, and 3505.01 be amended and section 3519.08 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 3501.05. The secretary of state shall do all of the following:

(A) Appoint all members of boards of elections;

(B) Issue instructions by directives and advisories to members of the boards as to the proper methods of conducting elections. In addition to any other publication of those directives and advisories, the secretary of state shall publish those directives and advisories on a web site of the office of the secretary of state as soon as is practicable after they are issued, but not later than the close of business on the same day as a directive or advisory is issued. The secretary of state shall not remove from the web site any directives and advisories so posted. The secretary of state shall provide on that web site access to all directives and advisories currently in effect and to an archive of all directives and advisories previously published on that web site.

(C) Prepare rules and instructions for the conduct of elections;

(D) Publish and furnish to the boards from time to time a sufficient number of indexed copies of all election laws then in force;

(E) Edit and issue all pamphlets concerning proposed laws or amendments required by law to be submitted to the voters;

(F) Prescribe the form of registration cards, blanks, and records;

(G) Determine and prescribe the forms of ballots and the forms of all

blanks, cards of instructions, pollbooks, tally sheets, certificates of election, and forms and blanks required by law for use by candidates, committees, and boards;

(H) Prepare the ballot title or statement to be placed on the ballot for any proposed law or amendment to the constitution to be submitted to the voters of the state;

(I) ~~Certify~~ Except as otherwise provided in section 3519.08 of the Revised Code, certify to the several boards the forms of ballots and names of candidates for state offices, and the form and wording of state referendum questions and issues, as they shall appear on the ballot;

(J) ~~Give~~ Except as otherwise provided in division (I)(2)(b) of section 3501.38 of the Revised Code, give final approval to ballot language for any local question or issue approved and transmitted by boards of elections under section 3501.11 of the Revised Code;

(K) Receive all initiative and referendum petitions on state questions and issues and determine and certify to the sufficiency of those petitions;

(L) Require such reports from the several boards as are provided by law, or as the secretary of state considers necessary;

(M) Compel the observance by election officers in the several counties of the requirements of the election laws;

(N)(1) Except as otherwise provided in division (N)(2) of this section, investigate the administration of election laws, frauds, and irregularities in elections in any county, and report violations of election laws to the attorney general or prosecuting attorney, or both, for prosecution;

(2) On and after August 24, 1995, report a failure to comply with or a violation of a provision in sections 3517.08 to 3517.13, 3517.17, 3517.18, 3517.20 to 3517.22, 3599.03, or 3599.031 of the Revised Code, whenever the secretary of state has or should have knowledge of a failure to comply with or a violation of a provision in one of those sections, by filing a complaint with the Ohio elections commission under section 3517.153 of the Revised Code;

(O) Make an annual report to the governor containing the results of elections, the cost of elections in the various counties, a tabulation of the votes in the several political subdivisions, and other information and recommendations relative to elections the secretary of state considers desirable;

(P) Prescribe and distribute to boards of elections a list of instructions indicating all legal steps necessary to petition successfully for local option elections under sections 4301.32 to 4301.41, 4303.29, 4305.14, and 4305.15 of the Revised Code;

(Q) Adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to require each board of elections to remove ineligible voters from the statewide voter registration database and, if already prepared for a particular election, from the poll list or signature pollbook used in each precinct, which rules shall provide for all of the following:

(1) A process for the removal of voters who have changed residence, which shall be uniform, nondiscriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, including a program that uses the national change of address service provided by the United States postal system through its licensees;

(2) A process for the removal of ineligible voters under section 3503.21 of the Revised Code;

(3) A uniform system for marking or removing the name of an ineligible voter from the statewide voter registration database and, if already prepared for a particular election, from the poll list or signature pollbook used in each precinct and noting the reason for that mark or removal.

(R) Prescribe a general program for registering voters or updating voter registration information, such as name and residence changes, at designated agencies, the offices of deputy registrars of motor vehicles, public high schools and vocational schools, public libraries, and the offices of county treasurers, and prescribe a program of distribution of voter registration forms through those agencies, the offices of the registrar and deputy registrars of motor vehicles, public high schools and vocational schools, public libraries, and the offices of county treasurers;

(S) To the extent feasible, provide copies, at no cost and upon request, of the voter registration form in post offices in this state;

(T) Adopt rules pursuant to section 111.15 of the Revised Code for the purpose of implementing the program for registering voters at designated agencies and the offices of the registrar and deputy registrars of motor vehicles consistent with this chapter;

(U) Establish the full-time position of Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator within the office of the secretary of state to do all of the following:

(1) Assist the secretary of state with ensuring that there is equal access to polling places for persons with disabilities;

(2) Assist the secretary of state with ensuring that each voter may cast the voter's ballot in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, as for other voters;

(3) Advise the secretary of state in the development of standards for the certification of voting machines, marking devices, and automatic tabulating

equipment.

(V) Establish a computerized statewide database of all legally registered voters under section 3503.15 of the Revised Code that complies with the requirements of the "Help America Vote Act of 2002," Pub. L. No. 107-252, 116 Stat. 1666, and provide training in the operation of that system;

(W) Ensure that all directives, advisories, other instructions, or decisions issued or made during or as a result of any conference or teleconference call with a board of elections to discuss the proper methods and procedures for conducting elections, to answer questions regarding elections, or to discuss the interpretation of directives, advisories, or other instructions issued by the secretary of state are posted on a web site of the office of the secretary of state as soon as is practicable after the completion of the conference or teleconference call, but not later than the close of business on the same day as the conference or teleconference call takes place.

(X) Publish a report on a web site of the office of the secretary of state not later than one month after the completion of the canvass of the election returns for each primary and general election, identifying, by county, the number of absent voter's ballots cast and the number of those ballots that were counted, and the number of provisional ballots cast and the number of those ballots that were counted, for that election. The secretary of state shall maintain the information on the web site in an archive format for each subsequent election.

(Y) Conduct voter education outlining voter identification requirements;

(Z) Establish a procedure by which a registered elector may update the elector's signature used in the poll list or signature pollbook produced by the board of elections of the county in which the elector resides;

(AA) Perform other duties required by law.

Whenever a primary election is held under section 3513.32 of the Revised Code or a special election is held under section 3521.03 of the Revised Code to fill a vacancy in the office of representative to congress, the secretary of state shall establish a deadline, notwithstanding any other deadline required under the Revised Code, by which any or all of the following shall occur: the filing of a declaration of candidacy and petitions or a statement of candidacy and nominating petition together with the applicable filing fee; the filing of protests against the candidacy of any person filing a declaration of candidacy or nominating petition; the filing of a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate; the filing of campaign finance reports; the preparation of, and the making of corrections or challenges to, precinct voter registration lists; the receipt of applications for

absent voter's ballots or armed service absent voter's ballots; the supplying of election materials to precincts by boards of elections; the holding of hearings by boards of elections to consider challenges to the right of a person to appear on a voter registration list; and the scheduling of programs to instruct or reinstruct election officers.

In the performance of the secretary of state's duties as the chief election officer, the secretary of state may administer oaths, issue subpoenas, summon witnesses, compel the production of books, papers, records, and other evidence, and fix the time and place for hearing any matters relating to the administration and enforcement of the election laws.

In any controversy involving or arising out of the adoption of registration or the appropriation of funds for registration, the secretary of state may, through the attorney general, bring an action in the name of the state in the court of common pleas of the county where the cause of action arose or in an adjoining county, to adjudicate the question.

In any action involving the laws in Title XXXV of the Revised Code wherein the interpretation of those laws is in issue in such a manner that the result of the action will affect the lawful duties of the secretary of state or of any board of elections, the secretary of state may, on the secretary of state's motion, be made a party.

The secretary of state may apply to any court that is hearing a case in which the secretary of state is a party, for a change of venue as a substantive right, and the change of venue shall be allowed, and the case removed to the court of common pleas of an adjoining county named in the application or, if there are cases pending in more than one jurisdiction that involve the same or similar issues, the court of common pleas of Franklin county.

Public high schools and vocational schools, public libraries, and the office of a county treasurer shall implement voter registration programs as directed by the secretary of state pursuant to this section.

Sec. 3501.29. (A) The board of elections shall provide for each precinct a polling place and provide adequate facilities at each polling place for conducting the election. The board shall provide a sufficient number of screened or curtained voting compartments to which electors may retire and conveniently mark their ballots, protected from the observation of others. Each voting compartment shall be provided at all times with writing implements, instructions how to vote, and other necessary conveniences for marking the ballot. The presiding judge shall ensure that the voting compartments at all times are adequately lighted and contain the necessary supplies. The board shall utilize, in so far as practicable, rooms in public schools and other public buildings for polling places. Upon application of

the board of elections, the authority which has the control of any building or grounds supported by taxation under the laws of this state, shall make available the necessary space therein for the purpose of holding elections and adequate space for the storage of voting machines, without charge for the use thereof. A reasonable sum may be paid for necessary janitorial service. When polling places are established in private buildings, the board may pay a reasonable rental therefor, and also the cost of liability insurance covering the premises when used for election purposes, or the board may purchase a single liability policy covering the board and the owners of the premises when used for election purposes. When removable buildings are supplied by the board, they shall be constructed under the contract let to the lowest and best bidder, and the board shall observe all ordinances and regulations then in force as to safety. The board shall remove all such buildings from streets and other public places within thirty days after an election, unless another election is to be held within ninety days.

(B) ~~The (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the board shall assure that~~ ensure all of the following:

(a) That polling places are free of barriers that would impede ingress and egress of handicapped persons,~~that;~~

(b) That the minimum number of special parking locations, also known as handicapped parking spaces or disability parking spaces, for handicapped persons are designated at each polling place in accordance with 28 C.F.R. Part 36, Appendix A, and in compliance with division (E) of section 4511.69 of the Revised Code.

(c) That the entrances of polling places are level or are provided with a nonskid ramp of not over eight per cent gradient,~~and that;~~

(d) That doors are a minimum of thirty-two inches wide. ~~Each county shall comply with these requirements according to the following timetable:~~

~~(1) At least fifty per cent of the polling places in each county shall be in compliance by November 1, 1980;~~

~~(2) At least seventy-five per cent of the polling places in each county shall be in compliance by November 1, 1981;~~

~~(3) All Notwithstanding division (B)(1)(a), (c), or (d) of this section, certain polling places in each county shall may be in compliance by November 1, 1982, except those that are specifically exempted by the secretary of state upon certification by a board of elections that a good faith, but unsuccessful, effort has been made to modify, or change the location of, such polling places.~~

(C) At any polling place that is ~~not in compliance with the requirements of division (B) of this section or is exempted from compliance by the~~

secretary of state, the board of elections shall permit any handicapped elector who travels to that elector's polling place, but who is unable to enter the polling place, to vote, with the assistance of two polling place officials of major political parties, in the vehicle that conveyed that elector to the polling place, or to receive and cast that elector's ballot at the door of the polling place.

(D) The secretary of state shall:

(1) Work with other state agencies to facilitate the distribution of information and technical assistance to boards of elections to meet the requirements of division (B) of this section;

(2) Work with organizations that represent or provide services to handicapped, disabled, or elderly citizens to effect a wide dissemination of information about the availability of absentee voting, voting in the voter's vehicle or at the door of the polling place, or other election services to handicapped, disabled, or elderly citizens.

(E) Before the day of an election, the director of the board of elections of each county shall sign a statement verifying that each polling place that will be used in that county at that election meets the requirements of division (B)(1)(b) of this section. The signed statement shall be sent to the secretary of state by certified mail.

(F) As used in this section, "handicapped" means having lost the use of one or both legs, one or both arms, or any combination thereof, or being blind or so severely disabled as to be unable to move about without the aid of crutches or a wheelchair.

Sec. 3501.38. All declarations of candidacy, nominating petitions, or other petitions presented to or filed with the secretary of state or a board of elections or with any other public office for the purpose of becoming a candidate for any nomination or office or for the holding of an election on any issue shall, in addition to meeting the other specific requirements prescribed in the sections of the Revised Code relating to them, be governed by the following rules:

(A) Only electors qualified to vote on the candidacy or issue which is the subject of the petition shall sign a petition. Each signer shall be a registered elector pursuant to section 3503.11 of the Revised Code. The facts of qualification shall be determined as of the date when the petition is filed.

(B) Signatures shall be affixed in ink. Each signer may also print the signer's name, so as to clearly identify the signer's signature.

(C) Each signer shall place on the petition after the signer's name the date of signing and the location of the signer's voting residence, including

the street and number if in a municipal corporation or the rural route number, post office address, or township if outside a municipal corporation. The voting address given on the petition shall be the address appearing in the registration records at the board of elections.

(D) Except as otherwise provided in section 3501.382 of the Revised Code, no person shall write any name other than the person's own on any petition. Except as otherwise provided in section 3501.382 of the Revised Code, no person may authorize another to sign for the person. If a petition contains the signature of an elector two or more times, only the first signature shall be counted.

(E)(1) On each petition paper, the circulator shall indicate the number of signatures contained on it, and shall sign a statement made under penalty of election falsification that the circulator witnessed the affixing of every signature, that all signers were to the best of the circulator's knowledge and belief qualified to sign, and that every signature is to the best of the circulator's knowledge and belief the signature of the person whose signature it purports to be or of an attorney in fact acting pursuant to section 3501.382 of the Revised Code. On the circulator's statement for a declaration of candidacy or nominating petition for a person seeking to become a statewide candidate or for a statewide initiative or a statewide referendum petition, the circulator shall identify the circulator's name, the address of the circulator's permanent ~~resident~~ residence, and the name and address of the person employing the circulator to circulate the petition, if any.

(2) As used in division (E) of this section, "statewide candidate" means the joint candidates for the offices of governor and lieutenant governor or a candidate for the office of secretary of state, auditor of state, treasurer of state, or attorney general.

(F) Except as otherwise provided in section 3501.382 of the Revised Code, if a circulator knowingly permits an unqualified person to sign a petition paper or permits a person to write a name other than the person's own on a petition paper, that petition paper is invalid; otherwise, the signature of a person not qualified to sign shall be rejected but shall not invalidate the other valid signatures on the paper.

(G) The circulator of a petition may, before filing it in a public office, strike from it any signature the circulator does not wish to present as a part of the petition.

(H) Any signer of a petition or an attorney in fact acting pursuant to section 3501.382 of the Revised Code on behalf of a signer may remove the signer's signature from that petition at any time before the petition is filed in

a public office by striking the signer's name from the petition; no signature may be removed after the petition is filed in any public office.

(I)(1) No alterations, corrections, or additions may be made to a petition after it is filed in a public office.

(2)(a) No declaration of candidacy, nominating petition, or other petition for the purpose of becoming a candidate may be withdrawn after it is filed in a public office. Nothing in this division prohibits a person from withdrawing as a candidate as otherwise provided by law.

(b) No petition presented to or filed with the secretary of state, a board of elections, or any other public office for the purpose of the holding of an election on any question or issue may be resubmitted after it is withdrawn from a public office. Nothing in this division prevents a question or issue petition from being withdrawn by the filing of a written notice of the withdrawal by a majority of the members of the petitioning committee with the same public office with which the petition was filed prior to the sixtieth day before the election at which the question or issue is scheduled to appear on the ballot.

(J) All declarations of candidacy, nominating petitions, or other petitions under this section shall be accompanied by the following statement in boldface capital letters: **WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE.**

(K) All separate petition papers shall be filed at the same time, as one instrument.

(L) If a board of elections distributes for use a petition form for a declaration of candidacy, nominating petition, or any type of question or issue petition that does not satisfy the requirements of law as of the date of that distribution, the board shall not invalidate the petition on the basis that the petition form does not satisfy the requirements of law, if the petition otherwise is valid. Division (L) of this section applies only if the candidate received the petition from the board within ninety days of when the petition is required to be filed.

Sec. 3505.01. ~~On~~ Except as otherwise provided in section 3519.08 of the Revised Code, on the sixtieth day before the day of the next general election, the secretary of state shall certify to the board of elections of each county the forms of the official ballots to be used at that general election, together with the names of the candidates to be printed on those ballots whose candidacy is to be submitted to the electors of the entire state. In the case of the presidential ballot for a general election, that certification shall be made on the fifty-fifth day before the day of the general election. On the seventy-fifth day before a special election to be held on the day specified by

division (E) of section 3501.01 of the Revised Code for the holding of a primary election, designated by the general assembly for the purpose of submitting to the voters of the state constitutional amendments proposed by the general assembly, the secretary of state shall certify to the board of elections of each county the forms of the official ballots to be used at that election.

The board of the most populous county in each district comprised of more than one county but less than all of the counties of the state, in which there are candidates whose candidacies are to be submitted to the electors of that district, shall, on the sixtieth day before the day of the next general election, certify to the board of each county in the district the names of those candidates to be printed on such ballots.

The board of a county in which the major portion of a subdivision, located in more than one county, is located shall, on the sixtieth day before the day of the next general election, certify to the board of each county in which other portions of that subdivision are located the names of candidates whose candidacies are to be submitted to the electors of that subdivision, to be printed on such ballots.

If, subsequently to the sixtieth day before, or in the case of a presidential ballot for a general election the fifty-fifth day before, and prior to the tenth day before the day of a general election, a certificate is filed with the secretary of state to fill a vacancy caused by the death of a candidate, the secretary of state shall forthwith make a supplemental certification to the board of each county amending and correcting the secretary of state's original certification provided for in the first paragraph of this section. If, within that time, such a certificate is filed with the board of the most populous county in a district comprised of more than one county but less than all of the counties of the state, or with the board of a county in which the major portion of the population of a subdivision, located in more than one county, is located, the board with which the certificate is filed shall forthwith make a supplemental certification to the board of each county in the district or to the board of each county in which other portions of the subdivision are located, amending and correcting its original certification provided for in the second and third paragraphs of this section. If, at the time such supplemental certification is received by a board, ballots carrying the name of the deceased candidate have been printed, the board shall cause strips of paper bearing the name of the candidate certified to fill the vacancy to be printed and pasted on those ballots so as to cover the name of the deceased candidate, except that in voting places using marking devices, the board shall cause strips of paper bearing the revised list of candidates for the

office, after certification of a candidate to fill the vacancy, to be printed and pasted on the ballot cards so as to cover the names of candidates shown prior to the new certification, before such ballots are delivered to electors.

Sec. 3519.08. (A) Notwithstanding division (I)(2) of section 3501.38 of the Revised Code, at any time prior to the sixtieth day before the day of an election at which an initiative or referendum is scheduled to appear on the ballot, a majority of the members of the committee named to represent the petitioners in the petition proposing that initiative or referendum under section 3519.02 of the Revised Code may withdraw the petition by giving written notice of the withdrawal to the secretary of state.

(B) After a majority of the members of the committee named to represent the petitioners gives notice to the secretary of state that the petition proposing the initiative or referendum is withdrawn under division (A) of this section, all of the following shall apply:

(1) If the Ohio ballot board has not already certified the ballot language at the time a majority of the members of the committee gives the written notice of withdrawal, the board shall not certify ballot language for that proposed initiative or referendum to the secretary of state.

(2) The secretary of state shall not certify a ballot form or wording to the boards of elections under sections 3501.05 and 3505.01 of the Revised Code that includes ballot language for that proposed initiative or referendum.

(3) The proposed initiative or referendum shall not appear on the ballot.

(C) No petition that has been filed, and subsequently withdrawn under this section, may be resubmitted.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 3501.05, 3501.29, 3501.38, and 3505.01 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. (A) The amendments to sections 3501.05, 3501.38, and 3505.01 and the enactment of section 3519.08 of the Revised Code relating to the withdrawal of statewide initiative and referendum petitions shall be considered to be purely remedial in operation and shall be applied to any statewide initiative or referendum petition for which the Secretary of State has not yet certified a ballot form or wording to the boards of elections regardless of when the statewide initiative or referendum petition was filed with the Secretary of State and regardless of whether the statewide initiative or referendum petition has been verified by the Secretary of State.

(B) The amendments to sections 3501.05 and 3501.38 of the Revised Code relating to the withdrawal of initiative and referendum petitions filed for a municipal corporation, county, township, other political subdivision, or other statutory body exercising governmental authority shall be considered to be purely remedial in operation and shall be applied to any initiative or referendum petition for which the applicable board of elections has not yet given approval to or submitted to the Secretary of State ballot language and for which the Secretary of State has not yet given final approval to ballot language, regardless of when the initiative or referendum petition was filed and regardless of whether the initiative or referendum petition has been verified.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ___ day of _____, A. D. 20____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____