

HOW TO BECOME A COMMITTEEPERSON OR A MEMBER OF THE ELECTIONS BOARD



A Non-partisan Workshop Presented by the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Organization for Women and the Philadelphia Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women

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WOMEN'S VOICES IN GOVERNMENT

One hundred fifty four years ago (July 19-20, 1848 in Seneca Falls, NY) women launched a campaign to win the right to vote for women in all states in the United States of America. They objected to being governed by laws in which they had no say. It took 72 years of hard work to win the right to vote. Since 1920 women have had the right to vote; however, women have yet to achieve political representation in proportion to their numbers. Although women have made considerable progress, women are under-represented in all parts of government. It is time to make a concerted effort to change that.

From Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University
Where we are in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia:

Pennsylvania:

No female Governor or Lt. Governor.

1 of 3 other statewide elected officials is a woman.

(Women have been somewhat more successful in state-wide judicial elections. Currently 50% of judges on Superior Court and 36% of judges on Commonwealth Court are women.)

1 Congresswoman

No US Senator from Pennsylvania has ever been a woman.

PA Senate: 11 of 50 senators are women.

PA House of Representatives: 32 of 203 representatives are women.

Philadelphia:

No female Mayor.

Philadelphia City Council: 5 women out of 17 council members.

Ward leaders: Democratic: 26 women out of 68, Republican: 8 women out of 66.

WHY SHOULD WOMEN RUN TO BE COMMITTEEPEOPLE?

To ensure that women's issues are addressed, more women must be actively involved in the political process. Becoming a Committeeperson is a good entry point. It provides an opportunity to develop leadership skills and to learn how the political system works. Committeepople have power over the ward leaders, since the ward leaders are elected directly by the committeepople. It is not a difficult or expensive race. To win, you do

not need financial resources; rather you need to invest time in building relationships with your neighbors in order to win and to be effective in the job.

WHO ARE COMMITTEEPEOPLE IN THE OVERALL POLITICAL PICTURE?

Philadelphia is divided into 66 wards. (Two Democratic wards have been divided into A and B sections, so there are effectively 68 Democratic wards.) Each ward is divided into a number of election divisions; in all, there are 1,678 divisions. Every four years, the registered voters of each party elect two party members per division to a ward committee. Between the two parties there are about 6600 committee slots in Philadelphia. Many of them go unfilled.

Committeepeople are the first level of elected officers, and as such are the most closely connected to the voter. Their duties are described below. Basically, they convey grass-roots opinion to the higher officers of the party, and work for the party's candidates in elections. In addition, they vote for ward leaders and make recommendations on endorsements for candidates for other offices. They can have considerable influence on who gets elected.

A Note About Government Employees and Politics

Most government employees are severely restricted in the extent to which they can become involved in an election. Restrictions vary considerably and depend primarily on the government agency involved and the position held by the employee. Detailed explanations of the restrictions should be obtained directly from the public agencies involved.

The following general rules apply to many -- but not all -- employees of the federal government, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the City of Philadelphia:

First, many government employees are prohibited from seeking public or party offices in partisan elections. Elections for all officials in Pennsylvania are considered "partisan." This prohibition (as well as the following prohibitions) also applies to all court employees.

Second, many government employees are prohibited from engaging in partisan campaign-related activities, including, soliciting votes, distributing literature, and serving as a candidate's campaign finance chairperson.

Of course, voting, retaining membership in a political party or body, and expressing personal opinions are permitted.

WHAT IS THE CORE JOB OF COMMITTEEPERSON?

- Registering people to vote. You are the traveling registrar; always carry a few forms with you. Your job is to get as many people as possible registered and voting in your division. (See Election Calendar by Committee of Seventy for deadlines, qualifications, who should re-register, etc. at www.seventy.org)
- Letting people know when and where to vote and explaining the voting process to people who have questions.
- Getting out information on who is running for which offices and on what issues are on the ballot.
- Letting voters know who the committeeperson thinks are the best candidates for the issues that concern their neighborhood.
- Helping to arrange transportation or child care so people can get to the polls to vote
- Reminding people who haven't voted that their input is needed.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

Being a committeeperson takes some time each year. It does not have to take a lot of time, but how much time it takes beyond your official duties depends on what kind of a job you want to do. The core job is very intense on the weekends before the Primary Election in May (except for presidential years, when it is held in April) and the General Election in November, and of course on Election Day. You will need to spend a few evenings and a Saturday or two before the election getting information out and talking to people in your division about candidates, issues and where and when to vote. You will be busy the weekend just before an election making sure people have this information.

There are two committeepeople in each political party in each division. Therefore you should have a partner with whom you can share the work of canvassing your division and staffing the polls on Election Day.

The term of service is four years. There are no term limits.

HOW DO COMMITTEEPEOPLE INFLUENCE THE POLITICAL PROCESS?

Voting for ward leader.

Committee people elect the ward leader. The ward leader represents the ward in the Philadelphia Democratic City Committee or the Philadelphia Republican City Committee. **It is often a position of considerable political influence.**

Endorsing candidates.

In some wards in Democratic primaries, committeepeople vote on which candidates the ward will support and which candidates the Party should endorse. Such wards are called Open Wards or Voting Wards. Progressive organizations such as the Philadelphia Democratic Progressive Caucus are working to make all wards open. See the Open Ward Statement of Principles at <http://philadpc.ning.com/>

If your ward is not an open ward, you can try to find allies among other committeepeople and work to make your ward democratic. If you are in an open ward, you should ask your ward leader to push for changes in the Party rules to guarantee that in all wards committee people vote on endorsements.

If you disagree with the endorsements of your ward, you can make your own endorsements as a committeeperson. Often committeepeople who make their own endorsements also inform the voters of the ward endorsements. The opinion of the committeeperson often carries great weight with the voters of the division. It is not uncommon that candidates endorsed by an active committeeperson do better than any other candidates in that division.

BEYOND THE CORE JOB

As a committeeperson, your primary job is making sure the people in your division have the information they need to make informed choices as voters. However, some committeepeople (often retired people who have the time) choose to do more.

Committeepeople are volunteers and are not expected to solve problems which are the responsibility of local government. Often, however, constituents go to their committeeperson for advice about which officials or departments they should contact regarding a specific problem. People in your division may look to you for help with problems that the government should deal with-- e.g. street lights, pot holes, abandoned cars or houses. Make a list of government services and contact information so that you can be an effective guide to government services.

Get to know the other political officials responsible to your division.

It is important for you to know how and where to reach your ward leader, your city councilperson, your state representative and state senator, and your congressional representative. Learn which issues are in the purview of which official -- e.g., streets and trash are City issues, public assistance is a State issue and immigration is a federal issue. Do not hesitate to call them and get their help in solving problems. Get to know these officials when you get a chance. They often come to ward meetings, or you can go to visit them in their district office. You can use an issue as a chance to meet with them, but

you don't have to wait until you have a problem. Go introduce yourself, let them know who you are and that you will be calling on them for help when you or your neighbors need their input.

Get to know your neighborhood organizations.

Many neighborhoods have block associations, block captains, senior citizen organizations, parent groups, other community groups, which are not directly political but are concerned about and work to try to solve neighborhood problems. Know who they are and work with them. Get involved but do not try to make them political groups. Combined political and community pressure is often key to getting really sticky problems to move.

Make a list of the organizations, newspapers, and active groups in your neighborhood, and get to know people in those groups. You have a great deal of influence as to how well the political process works in your neighborhood, whether governmental services get used well in your neighborhood, and whether your community gets its share of the resources.

RUNNING FOR COMMITTEEPERSON

What you need:

- 1) You must be a registered voter in the Democratic or Republican party and must be a resident of your division 30 days before the primary election.
- 2) You need a **street list** for your division and **petitions** to circulate for signatures to get your name on the ballot. There are electronic street-list websites maintained by third parties (such as VoterWeb.org for Democrats in Philadelphia). Ask committeepersons or candidates in your party what they use.
- 3) You must know **relevant dates for circulating and filing petitions**. Since Committeepersons are elected officials within a political Party, Committeepersons run in the primary election in every fourth year (2014, 2018, etc.). Only government officials run in the general election.

Street lists and petitions are available at the City Commissioner's Offices:

City Commissioners' Offices

*Rms. 130, 132, 134 City Hall

215-686-3460 /62 /64

or

*Riverview Place, 5th floor

Delaware Ave. & Spring Garden St.

The City Commissioners' Office is the official oversight body for elections in Philadelphia. It is responsible for all of the election processes, voter registration, petitions, validation of signatures, setting up the official ballots, preparing the records for the voting places, voting machines, etc. All official forms (voter registration cards, petitions, street lists, etc.) come from this office. It can also give you the number of your ward and division, ward leader's name and number, and answer questions about the election process. The office is answerable to three elected City Commissioners.

An Election Calendar is available from the Pennsylvania Department of State at www.votespa.com and at the Committee of Seventy at www.seventy.org

The Committee of Seventy is a not-for-profit, non-partisan political watchdog and can answer many of your questions about the political workings of Philadelphia, and where you go for specific information. They can quickly identify your ward and division from your address, and will give you your ward leader's name & number. They publish an Election Calendar that lists important dates concerning elections, deadlines, a list of elected officials for Philadelphia, registration and voting information. They also have brochures: "A Guide to the Conduct of Polling Places on Election Day" and "How to Run for Political Office."

Why do you need a street list?

A street list is the published list of voters in your division. It lists all the voters in a division by street, house number, and political party, and gives each registered voter's name and party affiliation. It is a key tool, indicating the registered voters from your party who nominate and elect you. It also lets you know who your potential voters are and who you need to be talking to, not just about your petition but also about voting for you. It also gives you an idea of where there are no registered voters.

How do you fill out and file the petition?

The petition is an official form that you must get, and on which you must collect signatures of other registered voters from your district. Get it notarized and filed by the proper deadline to get your name on the official ballot.

You need at least 10 valid signatures of registered voters from your party in your division. It is often wise to get 20 to 25 signatures to make sure that at least 10 are valid.

- Signatures must be exactly as they appear on the street list (as they are registered)
- Signatures must be in ink
- No ditto marks may be used
- No one can sign for someone else
- A person can only sign two committee person petitions, so ask if they have signed other committee person petitions. (Signing does not mean they have to vote for you.)

Guidelines for Petition Circulators

The candidate must make sure that, if he or she does not personally take the petition or paper around to obtain the necessary signatures, that those who do ("circulators") are carefully instructed on what is required.

The circulator must be a qualified voter of the district. In the case of a party nomination petition, the circulator must also be registered with the party.

With the documents completed, circulators must complete one affidavit for each individual sheet of a petition or paper that they have circulated. This process includes signing the affidavit under oath before a notary public. No two circulators should circulate the same signature sheet.

Each circulator's affidavit must provide that to the best of the circulator's knowledge and belief, the signers are qualified voters of the division (and members of the party in the case of a party nomination petition). The easiest method for ensuring that persons are qualified to sign is to canvas from door to door within the division with the voter registration street lists.

All signatures on nomination petitions must be made within a three-week period which in 2013 begins on February 19th and ends on March 12th. The deadline for filing petitions is March 12th. In subsequent years the dates can be found on the Election Calendar at the Committee of Seventy and Pennsylvania Department of State websites. Petitions and papers for Philadelphia-based offices, such as polling place officials, must be filed with the County Board of Elections at City Hall in Room 142.

SOME TIPS ON GETTING STARTED

After getting your street list and petitions from the City Commissioners' Office, look over the list to see who you know in your division who is registered in your party. (A Democratic voter can only sign a Democrat's petition and a Republican sign Republican's petition). Create a brief document introducing yourself. It can be as simple as an 8.5x11 black and white sheet of paper. It should have your name, your picture, contact information and reasons why someone should vote for you, as well as the date of the election. It should explicitly ask for a vote for you for Committeeperson.

Going door to door

Go to the people you know from the street list and tell them you are running for committeeperson. Ask them to sign your petition (exactly as they are registered). Ask them to tell their friends on the block that you are running for committeeperson. Give

them a copy of your literature. If you need more signatures, go to other people listed in your party and explain who you are, asking them to sign your petition if they have not already signed two committee person's petitions. Early evening and weekends are the best time to knock on people's doors.

After collecting your signatures you must take your form to a notary public, sign the petition in front of him/her, and have it notarized and then take it to be filed with the City Commissioners' office 10 weeks before the elections.

You need to go door-to-door as part of getting signatures, but also after you have gotten your signatures and filed your petitions. You need to continue to make contact with the voters in your division as well as to register new voters. With your street list, voter registration forms and a card or small flyer with your name and number, get out in the neighborhood and talk to people.

Introduce yourself:

You might start with something like:

"Hello, Ms. __ I'm __. I live around the corner/in the next block. We are both in the same division and I'm running for committeewoman. Have you got a minute?"

If she says no, politely ask if you can leave some information. Mark on your street list she is not interested and move on. If she says yes, tell her briefly: who you are, why you are running, and why you want the job. Ask her what concerns she has for the neighborhood. LISTEN. Mark her as a potential voter. Again leave your name and number.

If she is very interested, ask her to talk to her neighbors about you, and/or to introduce you to her friends. If any voter wants help with a problem, write down the information and get back to them quickly with contact information about the government agency that can address the problem.

Ask if there is anyone in the house who is over 18 or will turn 18 before the next election who is not registered to vote. Offer to register them to vote or come back when they are home to register them.

Apartment buildings can sometimes offer a challenge, because you may not have access to them. Phone numbers are not on the street list, but you can try looking them up in the phone book. If you call, take an approach similar to the door-to-door conversations. See if you can find someone who will distribute your literature to others in the building, or talk to their friends, or take you around to introduce you, or invite people to their apartment to meet you. If you can't make personal contact try writing a letter to those people.

LEADING UP TO ELECTION DAY

As a candidate and as an elected committeeperson in the weeks before election: get new voters registered in your division. (Remember: in Pennsylvania, registration closes four weeks before each election.)

Inform your voters. Drop off literature about candidates you support and issues that may be on the ballot, and remind people when and where to vote. You may want to make up a letter or flyer for the voters of your party and hand deliver it to their door. If you have time, stop and talk with voters about the candidates and issues.

Campaign for yourself. Introduce yourself, leave something with your name and number on it, and tell people why they should vote for you. If you are running with a partner you should each encourage people to vote for both of you. Keep track on your street list of people who say they will vote for you; you want to make sure they get to the polls.

On the last weekend before the election, you should drop off a reminder about when and where to vote. Ask people personally to remember to vote on Tuesday and to remind their friends to vote.

ELECTION DAY

The polls open at 7:00A.M. and close at 8:00P.M. Anyone already waiting in line to vote at 8:00 P.M. is legally entitled to vote. If you are an elected committeeperson, you want to get to the polling place fifteen minutes early to make sure that nothing goes wrong as the machines are being set up and you should stay afterward to watch the vote count.

Sample Ballot: This is a sheet or card that has the names and lever numbers of the candidates you are supporting. Voters can take the sample ballot into the voting machine with them. You may have an official ward sample ballot or you may make up your own.

Pink Sheet: This is posted outside of each polling place. It is a large pink sheet, which is an official document and looks exactly like the face of the voting machine inside. You can show voters on this sheet where to find the levers of particular candidates you recommend.

Outside the polls

WARNING: It is illegal for anyone to do any campaigning within ten feet of the entrance to the polling place, or inside the polling place itself. People can, however, point out information on the pink sheet that is posted outside the door.

Between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. is generally the slow time and a good time to help people who need rides, child care, etc.

After 4:00 P.M. you or one of your helpers should go around to people who haven't voted yet and encourage them to come vote.

Who is inside the polling place?

There are three elected officials, clerks hired for the day, poll watchers and voters. No one is supposed to campaign inside the polling place.

Elected Officials:

Judge of Elections is in charge of the polling place and is responsible for insuring an honest election. The Majority Inspector and Minority Inspector help check voters as they sign in or perform other duties as assigned by the Judge of Elections.

Other workers:

Clerks are hired for the day to help check in voters and work with the Judge of Elections, Majority and Minority Inspectors.

Poll watchers:

Poll watchers are representatives of the various candidates or parties and are there to protect their candidates. They are allowed inside the polling place to make sure that there is no illegal voting. Only one poll watcher at a time, per candidate is allowed in the polling place during voting hours. Poll watcher's certificates are the poll watcher's passes to be inside the polling place. A poll watcher may be there as the machines are being set up before the polls open, during the day and after the closing of the polls to watch the count.

In primary elections each candidate gets two certificates for each poll where his or her name is on the ballot. In general elections, each organization (that is, each political party or independent political body) is entitled to three watchers at each polling place where its candidates appear on the ballot. While voting is going on, only one watcher for a candidate or organization is permitted inside the polling place at a time. Watchers may challenge and report infractions or illegal activities inside the voting place. Questions about machines, materials and procedures should be directed to the County Board of Elections. Questions about the law should be directed to go to the District Attorney.

When you run for committeeperson you are entitled to two poll watcher certificates for your polling place, one in your name and one for a helper. If you are an elected committeeperson, on years where you are not a candidate, you should get a certificate from a candidate that you are supporting or from your party. **MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT AND HAVE A GOOD TIME!**

RUNNING FOR ELECTION BOARD

WHAT IS THE ELECTION BOARD?

In Pennsylvania three poll workers in each election division are elected by their neighbors for a four year term. There are about 1,700 election divisions in Philadelphia and thus there are about 5,100 elected positions for poll workers city-wide.

Judge of Elections (On the 2013 Primary and General Election ballots)

The Judge of Elections is responsible for the overseeing of the entire election process and voter activities for his or her division. Each Judge is charged with conducting the Polling place in accordance with Federal and State Election laws.

The Judge of Elections is the ultimate authority in the polling place, and must be prepared to act on that authority. The Judge of Elections must understand the election laws well enough to recognize and stop illegal behavior. The Voter ID law has drawn attention to the importance of this position. In each division, the Judge of Elections resolves disputes and makes determinations about voter eligibility in areas where the law is ambiguous.

The Judge of Elections gets paid slightly more than the Inspectors, and has more responsibility, including picking up and dropping off election day materials at the Board of Elections.

Majority Inspector (On the 2013 Primary and General Election ballots)

The leading vote getter in the Election for Inspector, the Majority Inspector helps prepare the Polling place for 7AM opening, receives assignments from the Judge of Elections, instructs voters in the use of the voting machines, enforces voting regulations at the polls, and signs all printed copies of the election results printed by the voting machines.

Minority Inspector (On the 2013 Primary and General Election ballots)

The second leading vote getter in the Election for Inspector, the Minority Inspector has the same duties as the Majority Inspector.

In addition to the elected positions there are appointed positions:

Clerk (Appointed position)

The Clerk assists in the duties of the Majority and Minority Inspectors. The clerk is appointed by the Minority Inspector.

Machine Inspector (Appointed position)

The Machine Inspector is responsible for preparing the voting machines so that the voter may cast a ballot. The Machine Inspector is appointed by the City Commissioners, usually on the advice of local community leaders such as committeepeople.

To find out more about the details of these jobs, you might watch videos from the PA Department of State at http://www.dos.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/poll_worker_training/12373

Why should you consider Running for Election Board?

There are many great reasons to run for these jobs. You can defend democracy by ensuring that elections in your neighborhood are fair and honest. You can spend a day getting to know your neighbors better, which makes your neighborhood stronger. You can earn a small amount of money. You can discharge your civic duty. You can see how American democracy works, up close and personal.

Note that members of the Election Board cannot engage in partisan politics on Election Day. If you are interested in working on political campaigns, then this is probably not the job for you. There is much truth to the old adage that elections are won and lost on Election Day and if you are involved in a campaign, you will want to be free that day to work for your candidate or your Party.

WHAT ARE THE JOB REQUIREMENTS AND COMPENSATION?

Judges and Inspectors of Elections must meet the following qualifications:

- must reside and be registered within the division and a member of your political party at least thirty days before the election;
- must be at least eighteen years old;
- must resign from any city, county, state, or federal position at least two (2) months before the election.

Election officials are paid, albeit modestly, for their work on Election Day. Judge of Elections is paid \$100; Inspectors, Clerks, and Machine Inspectors are paid \$95.

Once elected, these officials are encouraged to complete a short training program on the operation of voting machines and the general requirements of running a polling place on Election Day. Officials, clerks and machine inspectors are paid \$20 for attending these sessions, but only if they work at the next election.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

Make sure you really want the job. You are committing to work at least eight long days over the course of four years -- four primary and four general elections, as well as any special elections (e.g., if a sitting State Representative resigns or passes away in the middle of a term). For each election you must be at the polls from 6:30 AM until the voting stops and all the post-voting processes are completed, typically around 8:30 or 9:00 PM. In rare cases, e.g., if there is a long line at closing time, you may have to stay even later. As of this writing, the pay was about \$100 per election.

HOW DO I RUN FOR ELECTION BOARD?

These elections are held in the odd-numbered years that directly follow presidential election years: 2013, 2017 and so on. **Unlike the committeeperson races which are for officials of a political party and are decided in the Spring primary election, election board members are government officials and must also run in the Fall general election.**

There are three ways to run in November:

- **Win the nomination of the Democratic or Republican party in the primary election (most common)**
- **If you are not registered as a Democrat or a Republican, get your name on the November election ballot by passing nomination papers over the summer**
- **Run a write-in campaign**

To find out if there will be openings for Election Board in your division, you can contact the City Commissioners' Office. You may also find the current Judge of Elections, or the current ward leaders and committeepersons helpful.

If you are registered in the Republican or Democratic Party, you should run in and win that party's primary election in the spring. The Republican and Democratic parties will nominate one person for Judge of Elections and one for Inspector and that person will be on the ballot for the general election.

The general election for Judges and Inspectors of Elections is held in November. In order to win a term as Judge, you must get the highest number of votes for Judge in the November general election. In order to win a term as Inspector, you must get one of the top two highest numbers of votes in that election.

The process is in most ways similar to running for committeeperson. It is generally a less competitive race than that for committeeperson. Committeeperson races are much more likely to be hotly contested races than those for Election board.

You can get petitions from the City Commissioners' office to run in the Democratic or Republican primary. You must get signatures from voters in your division registered in your party. To appear on the ballot in the primary election, you are required to get **at least 10 signatures for Judge of Elections and 5 signatures for Inspector**. The period for obtaining signatures runs for three weeks starting in mid-February. **In 2013, the first day you are allowed to collect signatures is FEBRUARY 19. Petitions must be filed by MARCH 12.** Petitions and papers for Philadelphia-based offices, such as polling place officials, must be filed with the County Board of Elections at City Hall in Room 142.

The winner of the Democratic primary and the winner of the Republican primary will proceed to the general election.

HOW DO I RUN FOR ELECTION BOARD IF I AM NOT A DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN?

You can run for Judge of Elections and for Minority and Majority Inspector as an Independent or as a minor political party candidate (for example, as a Green or Libertarian) in the November General Election.

Running as a nominee of a minor political party

The Pennsylvania Election Code defines two classes of political parties: major political parties and minor political parties. A "major" political party is a party whose statewide registration is fifteen percent or more of the total registered voters in the State. In Pennsylvania, currently there are only two major political parties: the Democratic and Republican parties. A "minor" political party is a party whose statewide registration is less than fifteen percent of the total registered voters in the State. Two examples of minor political parties are the Green Party and the Libertarian Party.

To run as a nominee of a minor political party, a candidate must be selected by that party (e.g., the Green Party) to appear on the November ballot and then must obtain nominating signatures from registered voters in the division. The nominee must be a member of that party at least thirty days before the election. A minority party candidate such as a Green Party candidate is not restricted to getting signatures from other members of the Green Party. The signatures can be from voters in the division from any political party or from voters registered as independents.

Running as an independent candidate

An independent candidate can secure a position on the November ballot by filing a properly completed nomination paper. Nomination papers may be signed by members of any party, as well as voters who are registered non-partisan. [Note: A nomination **petition** is the form used by Democrats and Republicans to secure a ballot position in a

primary election. A Nomination **paper** is the form used by independent candidates to secure a ballot position in the November election.]

An independent candidate must certify that the candidate did not run for the designated office in the primary. (The intent here is to prevent a losing candidate in the Democratic or Republican primary from running for the same office in the general election--the so-called "sore loser" provision.)

An independent candidate must certify that he or she was not a registered member of any political party within thirty days prior to the primary.

Signature requirements for nominees of a minor political party and for independent candidates

The signature requirement for independents is the same as if the candidate were running as a candidate of a minor political party.

The number of valid signatures for nominees of a minor political party and for independent candidates is fixed by a formula in the Election Code and is different than the number required for nomination petitions for Major Party (that is, Democratic and Republican) candidates. The formula requires that you gather signatures equal to at least two percent of the largest vote cast for any candidate elected from the same area for any office (except judge). The candidate should contact the County Board of Elections to learn the specific number of required signatures based upon the official returns.

The two percent requirement should not present a serious obstacle for candidates seeking Election Board offices (Judges and Inspectors of Elections) since divisions are the smallest political units and turnouts on the divisional level are often very low. For example, if the turnout in the division was 600 voters, 12 signatures would be required to get on the ballot.

Independent and minor party candidates may begin collecting signatures on the tenth Wednesday before the primary which in 2013 falls on MARCH 13; no signatures may be collected before then. In 2013, nomination papers must be filed on or before AUGUST 1.

RUNNING AS A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE

This is an option if you make the decision to run after the deadline for getting on the ballot. Although write-in candidacies can sometimes win in small local elections, there are major disadvantages to conducting a write-in campaign.

Write-in candidates face a daunting task in educating voters about how to "write-in" their votes. Operating the voting machine buttons confuses many voters; to write in a vote,

voters must push the write-in button for the office for which they want to write in a vote, and then press the red write-in button at the top of the machine, which will cause the write-in window to open, and the voter can then write or stamp the candidate's name on the exposed paper and finally pull the window shut to record the vote. **A potential write-in candidate should also note that to succeed in a write-in primary campaign, he or she must not only outpoll all opponents, but also receive a number of votes at least equal to the number of signatures required on a nominating petition for that office.**

The information in this handbook is based on information found at the websites of the Committee of Seventy, the Pennsylvania Department of State Bureau of Elections, and the Philadelphia County Board of Elections website. More detailed information can be found on running for Election Board and for Committeeperson at:

The Committee of Seventy - www.seventy.org
Eight Penn Center, Suite 1002, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103, (215) 557-3600

The Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Elections - www.dos.state.pa.us
Bureau of Elections, North Office Building, Room 304, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120,
(717) 787-5280

The Philadelphia County Board of Elections – www.phillyelection.com
City Hall, Room 142, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107, (215) 686-1500

Philadelphia Board of Ethics - www.phila.gov/ethicsboard
The Packard Building, 1441 Sansom Street, Second Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
19102 (215) 686-9450

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