



**S3994 (1R)**

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| <b>INTRODUCED BILL:</b> (Includes sponsor(s) statement) | Yes |  |
| <b>REPRINT(S):</b>                                      | Yes | Senate 1/14/25 1R                                      |
| <b>TECHNICAL REVIEW OF BILL:</b>                        | No  |  |
| <b>COMMITTEE STATEMENT:</b>                             |     |  |
| <b>ASSEMBLY:</b>  | No  |  |
| <b>SENATE:</b>  | Yes | State Gov't, Wagering, Tourism & Historic Preservation |

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, **may possibly** be found at [www.njleg.state.nj.us](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us))

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:</b>           | Yes |
| <b>LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:</b>         | No  |
| <b>VETO MESSAGE:</b>                        | No  |
| <b>GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:</b> | Yes |
| <b>LEGISLATOR STATEMENT:</b>                | No  |

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

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| <b>REPORTS:</b>            | No  |
| <b>HEARINGS:</b>           | No  |
| <b>NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:</b> | Yes |

Steve Strunsky - For The Star-Ledger, 'Registration open for N.J.'s 1st election with voting age of 16 Newark teens canweigh in on the city's school board elections starting in April.', *Star-Ledger, The* (online), 2 Feb 2025 009<<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=NewsBank&docref=news/19E81B3E7A4C7428>>

Nikita Biryukov; newjerseymonitor.com, 'Legislature passes bill to increase the signature threshold Legislaturepasses bill to increase signature threshold for office-seekers', *Press of Atlantic City, The* (online), 1 Feb 2025 6A<<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=NewsBank&docref=news/19E77FCC96090978>>

CL/MMcB

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 20, *approved February 3, 2025*  
Assembly, No. 5117 (*Second Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the number of signatures required for  
2 candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general,  
3 nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various  
4 sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title  
5 19 of the Revised Statutes.

6  
7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:

9  
10 1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:

11 19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters  
12 of this State residing within the district or political division in and  
13 for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal  
14 in number to at least **【two per centum (2%)】** five percent of the  
15 entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last  
16 preceding general election, held for the election of all of the  
17 members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or  
18 other political division in and for which the nominations are made;  
19 except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the  
20 voters of the entire State **【eight hundred】** 2,000 signatures in the  
21 aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be  
22 sufficient; and except that no more than **【one hundred】** 250  
23 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be  
24 elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the  
25 State at large.

26 In case of a first general election to be held in a newly  
27 established election district, county, city or other political division,  
28 the number of **【fifty】** 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient  
29 to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election  
30 district, county, city or other political division.

31 A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign  
32 and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
33 elective public office.

34 (cf: P.L.2010, c.68, s.1)

35  
36 2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:

37 19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the  
38 voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is  
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted December 16, 2024.

<sup>2</sup>Senate floor amendments adopted January 14, 2025.

1 aggregate be signed by at least ~~1,000~~ 2,500 of such voters; in the  
2 case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
3 throughout a congressional district by at least ~~200~~ 500 of such  
4 voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General  
5 Assembly at least ~~100~~ 250 of such voters ~~;~~; in the case of  
6 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
7 throughout a county or any county election district, by at least 100  
8 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be voted for by the  
9 voters of a political party throughout a municipality having a  
10 population in excess of 14,000 as ascertained by the last Federal  
11 census by at least 50 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be  
12 voted for by the voters of a political party throughout all other  
13 municipalities or any ward of any municipality by at least 25 of  
14 such voters; in the case of a candidate to be voted for by the voters  
15 of a political party within a single election district by at least 10 of  
16 such voters.

17 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the case of petitions for  
18 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
19 throughout any municipality having a population that is less than  
20 7,000 as ascertained by the last federal census, or any ward or  
21 election district of any municipality, the number of signers of any  
22 such petition may be fewer than the minimum number specified  
23 above, but shall be at least five percent in number of the total vote  
24 cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
25 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for  
26 the General Assembly. In no case, however, shall there be fewer  
27 than one signer of any such petition].

28 b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
29 political party throughout a county or any county election district  
30 shall in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of  
31 the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
32 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
33 candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 of such voters,  
34 whichever is less <sup>2</sup>, but in no case shall the petition be signed by  
35 fewer than 150 of such voters<sup>2</sup>.

36 c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
37 political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be  
38 signed by <sup>1</sup>[at least five percent in number of the total votes cast by  
39 the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary  
40 election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
41 General Assembly, or by]<sup>1</sup> a number of such voters based upon the  
42 population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by the last  
43 Federal census, <sup>1</sup>[whichever is less,]<sup>1</sup> as follows:

44 <sup>1</sup>[(1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities having a  
45 population in excess of 100,000;

- 1       (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities having a  
2 population in excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;
- 3       (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities having a  
4 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;
- 5       (4) at least 25 of such voters in municipalities having a  
6 population of 25,000 or below, or any ward of any municipality. ]
- 7       (1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
8 population in excess of 50,000;
- 9       (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
10 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;
- 11       (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
12 population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;
- 13       (4) at least 25 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
14 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
15 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
16 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
17 municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and  
18 up to 10,000;
- 19       (5) at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
20 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
21 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
22 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
23 municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and  
24 up to 5,000; and
- 25       (6) at least five of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
26 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
27 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
28 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
29 municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.<sup>1</sup>
- 30       d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
31 political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate  
32 be signed by at least 10 of such voters<sup>1</sup>, or five percent in number  
33 of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
34 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
35 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less<sup>1</sup>.
- 36       e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
37 petition.
- 38       f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any  
39 political party position at the primary election by having the  
40 person's name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot,  
41 that person shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the  
42 number of signatures required on a candidate nominating petition  
43 pursuant to this section.
- 44       (cf: P.L.2023, c.288, s.1)
- 45
- 46       3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read  
47 as follows:

1       7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be  
2 nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such  
3 nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions  
4 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for  
5 nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title  
6 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
7 R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall  
8 be signed by at least ~~10~~ 25 persons, one of whom may be the  
9 candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on  
10 or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April  
11 school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of  
12 the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as  
13 applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single  
14 petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any  
15 candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint  
16 petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a  
17 designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles  
18 which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such  
19 designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a  
20 noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a  
21 primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a  
22 board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address  
23 for the candidate.

24       Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election  
25 by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such  
26 withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the  
27 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county  
28 clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as  
29 applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be  
30 withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not  
31 be printed on the ballot.

32       A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal  
33 by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled  
34 under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

35       Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination  
36 hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary  
37 of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be  
38 appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the  
39 objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school  
40 election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of  
41 the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the  
42 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
43 board of education at the November school election, as applicable.  
44 The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior  
45 Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened  
46 invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of  
47 nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the

1 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates  
2 seeking election as a member of a board of education at the  
3 November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a  
4 candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is  
5 defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day  
6 before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the  
7 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
8 board of education at the November election, as applicable.

9 In each school district in which candidates for the office of  
10 member of a board of education will seek election at the November  
11 school election, the school business administrator thereof shall  
12 certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the  
13 primary election for the general election next occurring a statement  
14 designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the  
15 number of such offices to be filled.

16 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.14)

17  
18 4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read  
19 as follows:

20 4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal  
21 election, the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be  
22 filed with the municipal clerk, in the following manner and form  
23 and subject to the following conditions:

24 a. <sup>1</sup>【The petition of nomination shall consist of individual  
25 certificates, equal in number to at least 【1%, but in no event less  
26 than 25,】 five percent of the registered voters of the municipality or  
27 the ward, as the case may be, 【and】 or equal to a number based  
28 upon the population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by  
29 the last Federal census, whichever is less, as follows:

30 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
31 excess of 100,000;

32 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
33 excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

34 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
35 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

36 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population of  
37 25,000 or below.】

38 The petition of nomination shall consist of individual certificates  
39 equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or  
40 ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as follows:

41 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
42 excess of 50,000;

43 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
44 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

45 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
46 excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

1       (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
2 excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

3       (5) at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
4 excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

5       (6) at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up  
6 to 2,500.<sup>1</sup>

7       b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as  
8 follows:

9       "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of  
10 ....., residing at ..... certify that I do  
11 hereby join in a petition of the nomination of .....  
12 whose residence is at ..... for the office  
13 of mayor (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the  
14 ..... ward, or commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may  
15 be) to be voted for at the election to be held in the municipality on  
16 the ....., 20....., and I further certify that I know this candidate  
17 to be a registered voter, for the period required by law, of the  
18 municipality (and the ward, in the case of ward councilman) and a  
19 person of good moral character, and qualified, in my judgment, to  
20 perform the duties of the office, and I further certify that I have not  
21 signed more petitions or certificates of nomination than there are  
22 places to be filled for the above office.

23       Signed ....."

24       The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-  
25 mail address for the candidate.

26       Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates  
27 by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice:  
28 All candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of  
29 the 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures  
30 Reporting Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone  
31 number of the Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

32       **[b.] c.** Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of  
33 paper and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The  
34 candidate for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath  
35 before an officer competent to administer oaths that the statements  
36 made therein are true, and that each signature to the papers  
37 appended thereto is the genuine signature of the person whose name  
38 it purports to be, to their best knowledge and belief. The oath,  
39 signed by the candidate, shall constitute his acceptance of  
40 nomination and shall be annexed to the petition, together with the  
41 oath of his campaign manager, at the time the petition is submitted.

42       **[c.] d.** The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the  
43 Election Law Enforcement Commission with official certification  
44 of the filing or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

45       **[d.] e.** A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or  
46 both sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that

1 candidate for elective public office in any municipality holding  
2 regular municipal elections.

3 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.17)

4

5 5. <sup>2</sup>(New Section) a.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the provisions of any  
6 other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State  
7 shall promulgate and publish the forms to be used for petitions  
8 nominating candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the  
9 general election by January 1 of each year in which a primary  
10 election is to be held.

11 <sup>2</sup>b. Any petition signatures collected by a candidate for office to  
12 be voted for at the 2025 primary election utilizing the petition forms  
13 published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this  
14 act, P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall  
15 be required to comply with the provisions of this act but shall not be  
16 subject to a petition challenge based upon the use of a form  
17 published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this  
18 act.<sup>2</sup>

19

20 6. This act shall take effect <sup>2</sup>**January 1 next following the date**  
21 **of enactment** immediately and shall be retroactive to January 1,  
22 2025<sup>2</sup>.

23

24

25

26

27 \_\_\_\_\_  
28 Modifies number of signatures required for candidates to be  
29 placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school  
30 election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain  
nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year.

## CHAPTER 20

**AN ACT** concerning the number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:

Signatures to petition; number.

19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters of this State residing within the district or political division in and for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal in number to at least five percent of the entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last preceding general election, held for the election of all of the members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or other political division in and for which the nominations are made; except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the voters of the entire State 2,000 signatures in the aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be sufficient; and except that no more than 250 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the State at large.

In case of a first general election to be held in a newly established election district, county, city or other political division, the number of 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election district, county, city or other political division.

A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for elective public office.

2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:

Numbers of signers to petitions.

19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the aggregate be signed by at least 2,500 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a congressional district by at least 500 of such voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General Assembly at least 250 of such voters.

b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a county or any county election district shall in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly or at least 300 of such voters, whichever is less, but in no case shall the petition be signed by fewer than 150 of such voters.

c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be signed by a number of such voters based upon the population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by the last Federal census as follows:

(1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 50,000;

(2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

(3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

(4) at least 25 of such voters, or five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

(5) at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

(6) at least five of such voters or five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.

d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate be signed by at least 10 of such voters or five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less.

e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such petition.

f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any political party position at the primary election by having the person's name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot, that person shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the number of signatures required on a candidate nominating petition pursuant to this section.

3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read as follows:

C.19:60-7 Nomination procedure; withdrawal, vacancy; objections.

7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall be signed by at least 25 persons, one of whom may be the candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address for the candidate.

Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as applicable, and thereupon the name of that

candidate shall be withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not be printed on the ballot.

A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a board of education at the November school election, as applicable. The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a board of education at the November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a board of education at the November election, as applicable.

In each school district in which candidates for the office of member of a board of education will seek election at the November school election, the school business administrator thereof shall certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the primary election for the general election next occurring a statement designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the number of such offices to be filled.

4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read as follows:

C.40:45-8 Petitions of nomination.

4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal election, the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be filed with the municipal clerk, in the following manner and form and subject to the following conditions:

a. The petition of nomination shall consist of individual certificates equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as follows:

(1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 50,000;

(2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

(3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

(4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

(5) at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

(6) at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.

b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as follows:

"I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of ....., residing at ..... certify that I do hereby join in a petition of the nomination of ..... whose residence is at ..... for the office of mayor (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the ..... ward, or commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may be) to be voted for at the election to be held in the municipality on the ....., 20....., and I further certify that I know this candidate to be a registered voter, for the period required by law, of the municipality (and the ward, in the case of ward councilman) and a person of good moral character, and qualified, in my judgment, to perform the duties of the office, and I further certify that I have not signed more petitions or certificates of nomination than there are places to be filled for the above office.

Signed ....."

The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-mail address for the candidate.

Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice: All candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of the 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone number of the Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

c. Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of paper and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The candidate for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath before an officer competent to administer oaths that the statements made therein are true and that each signature to the papers appended thereto is the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be, to their best knowledge and belief. The oath, signed by the candidate, shall constitute his acceptance of nomination and shall be annexed to the petition, together with the oath of his campaign manager, at the time the petition is submitted.

d. The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the Election Law Enforcement Commission with official certification of the filing or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

e. A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for elective public office in any municipality holding regular municipal elections.

C.19:23-7.1 Promulgation, publication, candidate nomination petitions.

5. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State shall promulgate and publish the forms to be used for petitions nominating candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the general election by January 1 of each year in which a primary election is to be held.

b. Any petition signatures collected by a candidate for office to be voted for at the 2025 primary election utilizing the petition forms published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this act, P.L.2025, c.20 (C.19:23-7.1 et al.), shall be required to comply with the provisions of this act but shall not be subject to a petition challenge based upon the use of a form published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this act.

6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall be retroactive to January 1, 2025.

Approved February 3, 2025.

# ASSEMBLY, No. 5117

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 9, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Increases number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



A5117 GREENWALD

2

1 AN ACT concerning the number of signatures required for  
2 candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general,  
3 nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various  
4 sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title  
5 19 of the Revised Statutes.

6

7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:

9

10 1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:

11 19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters  
12 of this State residing within the district or political division in and  
13 for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal  
14 in number to at least **【two per centum (2%)】** five percent of the  
15 entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last  
16 preceding general election, held for the election of all of the  
17 members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or  
18 other political division in and for which the nominations are made;  
19 except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the  
20 voters of the entire State **【eight hundred】** 2,000 signatures in the  
21 aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be  
22 sufficient; and except that no more than **【one hundred】** 250  
23 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be  
24 elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the  
25 State at large.

26 In case of a first general election to be held in a newly  
27 established election district, county, city or other political division,  
28 the number of **【fifty】** 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient  
29 to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election  
30 district, county, city or other political division.

31 A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign  
32 and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
33 elective public office.

34 (cf: P.L.2010, c.68, s.1)

35

36 2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:

37 19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the  
38 voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the  
39 aggregate be signed by at least **【1,000】** 2,500 of such voters; in the  
40 case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
41 throughout a congressional district by at least **【200】** 500 of such  
42 voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General  
43 Assembly at least **【100】** 250 of such voters **【;** in the case of  
44 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
45 throughout a county or any county election district, by at least 100

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

1 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be voted for by the  
2 voters of a political party throughout a municipality having a  
3 population in excess of 14,000 as ascertained by the last Federal  
4 census by at least 50 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be  
5 voted for by the voters of a political party throughout all other  
6 municipalities or any ward of any municipality by at least 25 of  
7 such voters; in the case of a candidate to be voted for by the voters  
8 of a political party within a single election district by at least 10 of  
9 such voters.

10 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the case of petitions for  
11 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
12 throughout any municipality having a population that is less than  
13 7,000 as ascertained by the last federal census, or any ward or  
14 election district of any municipality, the number of signers of any  
15 such petition may be fewer than the minimum number specified  
16 above, but shall be at least five percent in number of the total vote  
17 cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
18 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for  
19 the General Assembly. In no case, however, shall there be fewer  
20 than one signer of any such petition】.

21 b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
22 political party throughout a county or any county election district  
23 shall in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of  
24 the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
25 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
26 candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 of such voters,  
27 whichever is less.

28 c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
29 political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be  
30 signed by at least five percent in number of the total votes cast by  
31 the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary  
32 election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
33 General Assembly, or by a number of such voters based upon the  
34 population of the municipality as ascertained by the last Federal  
35 census, whichever is less, as follows:

36 (1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities having a  
37 population in excess of 100,000;

38 (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities having a  
39 population in excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

40 (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities having a  
41 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

42 (4) at least 25 of such voters in municipalities having a  
43 population of 25,000 or below, or any ward of any municipality.

44 d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
45 political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate  
46 be signed by at least 10 of such voters.

47 e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
48 petition.

1       f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any  
2 political party position at the primary election by having the  
3 person's name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot,  
4 that person shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the  
5 number of signatures required on a candidate nominating petition  
6 pursuant to this section.  
7 (cf: P.L.2023, c.288, s.1)

8  
9       3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read  
10 as follows:

11       7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be  
12 nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such  
13 nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions  
14 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for  
15 nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title  
16 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
17 R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall  
18 be signed by at least **[10]** 25 persons, one of whom may be the  
19 candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on  
20 or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April  
21 school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of  
22 the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as  
23 applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single  
24 petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any  
25 candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint  
26 petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a  
27 designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles  
28 which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such  
29 designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a  
30 noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a  
31 primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a  
32 board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address  
33 for the candidate.

34       Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election  
35 by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such  
36 withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the  
37 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county  
38 clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as  
39 applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be  
40 withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not  
41 be printed on the ballot.

42       A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal  
43 by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled  
44 under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

45       Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination  
46 hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary  
47 of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be  
48 appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the

1 objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school  
2 election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of  
3 the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the  
4 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
5 board of education at the November school election, as applicable.  
6 The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior  
7 Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened  
8 invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of  
9 nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the  
10 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates  
11 seeking election as a member of a board of education at the  
12 November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a  
13 candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is  
14 defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day  
15 before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the  
16 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
17 board of education at the November election, as applicable.

18 In each school district in which candidates for the office of  
19 member of a board of education will seek election at the November  
20 school election, the school business administrator thereof shall  
21 certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the  
22 primary election for the general election next occurring a statement  
23 designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the  
24 number of such offices to be filled.

25 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.14)

26

27 4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read  
28 as follows:

29 4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal  
30 election, the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be  
31 filed with the municipal clerk, in the following manner and form  
32 and subject to the following conditions:

33 a. The petition of nomination shall consist of individual  
34 certificates, equal in number to at least **1%**, but in no event less  
35 than **25,** five percent of the registered voters of the municipality or  
36 the ward, as the case may be, **[and]** or equal to a number based  
37 upon the population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by  
38 the last Federal census, whichever is less, as follows:

39 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
40 excess of 100,000;

41 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
42 excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

43 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
44 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

45 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population of  
46 25,000 or below.

47 b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as  
48 follows:

1 "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of  
2 ....., residing at ..... certify that I do  
3 hereby join in a petition of the nomination of .....  
4 whose residence is at ..... for the office  
5 of mayor (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the  
6 ..... ward, or commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may  
7 be) to be voted for at the election to be held in the municipality on  
8 the ....., 20....., and I further certify that I know this candidate  
9 to be a registered voter, for the period required by law, of the  
10 municipality (and the ward, in the case of ward councilman) and a  
11 person of good moral character, and qualified, in my judgment, to  
12 perform the duties of the office, and I further certify that I have not  
13 signed more petitions or certificates of nomination than there are  
14 places to be filled for the above office.

15 Signed ....."

16 The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-  
17 mail address for the candidate.

18 Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates  
19 by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice:  
20 All candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of  
21 the 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures  
22 Reporting Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone  
23 number of the Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

24 **[b.] c.** Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of  
25 paper and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The  
26 candidate for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath  
27 before an officer competent to administer oaths that the statements  
28 made therein are true, and that each signature to the papers  
29 appended thereto is the genuine signature of the person whose name  
30 it purports to be, to their best knowledge and belief. The oath,  
31 signed by the candidate, shall constitute his acceptance of  
32 nomination and shall be annexed to the petition, together with the  
33 oath of his campaign manager, at the time the petition is submitted.

34 **[c.] d.** The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the  
35 Election Law Enforcement Commission with official certification  
36 of the filing or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

37 **[d.] e.** A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or  
38 both sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that  
39 candidate for elective public office in any municipality holding  
40 regular municipal elections.

41 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.17)

42

43 5. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, rule, or  
44 regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State shall promulgate  
45 and publish the forms to be used for petitions nominating  
46 candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the general  
47 election by January 1 of each year in which a primary election is to  
48 be held.



1 who have the support of their community, and erodes voter  
2 confidence in elected representative democracy.

3 Furthermore, the signature requirements for nominating petitions  
4 under current law have existed at least since the reorganization of  
5 the New Jersey Revised Statutes completed in 1937. Eighty-seven  
6 years later, this has created imbalanced thresholds requirements.

7 Current law requires at least 50 signatures to appear on the  
8 primary ballot in a municipality having a population greater than  
9 14,000. As a result, municipalities with 20,000 residents and  
10 municipalities with 75,000 residents are required to meet the same  
11 signature requirement. Revising the signature requirements will  
12 promote fairness in the nominating petition process by better  
13 reflecting the population of New Jersey in 2024 and beyond.

14 Accordingly, this bill updates and increases the signature  
15 requirements for candidates to be placed on a primary election  
16 ballot in this State.

17

#### 18 *Direct Nominating Petitions for General Elections*

19

20 Under this bill, candidates running for an office in a general  
21 election will be required to collect signatures on their direct  
22 nominating petitions for the general election of at least five percent,  
23 an increase from at least two percent, of the entire vote cast for  
24 members of the General Assembly at the last preceding general  
25 election held for the election of all of the members of the General  
26 Assembly, in the State, county, district, or other political division in  
27 and for which the nominations are made.

28 Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a  
29 general election will be required to collect 2,000 signatures on their  
30 direct nominating petitions, an increase from 800. Candidates  
31 running for any other office will be required to collect no more than  
32 250 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from  
33 100.

34

#### 35 *Nominating Petitions for Primary Elections*

36

37 Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a  
38 primary election will be required to collect 2,500 signatures on their  
39 nominating petitions, an increase from 1,000; candidates for a  
40 congressional seat will be required to collect 500 signatures, an  
41 increase from 200; and candidates for the Senate and General  
42 Assembly will be required to collect 250 signatures, an increase  
43 from 100.

44 Under this bill, candidates for a countywide position in a primary  
45 election will be required to collect at least one percent of the total  
46 vote cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
47 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for  
48 the General Assembly, or at least 300 signatures, whichever is less.

1 Under the bill, the signature requirements for candidates running  
2 for office in a primary election in a municipality will be either at  
3 least five percent of the total vote cast by the voters of that political  
4 party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of  
5 that party's candidates for the General Assembly, or a certain  
6 number of voter signatures based upon the municipality's  
7 population, whichever is less, as follows:

8 at least 100 in municipalities with a population over 100,000;  
9 at least 75 in municipalities with a population over 50,000 and  
10 up to 100,000;

11 at least 50 in municipalities with a population over 25,000 and  
12 up to 50,000;

13 at least 25 in municipalities with a population of 25,000 or  
14 below, or any ward of any municipality.

15 Candidates running in a single election district in a primary  
16 election will be required to collect 10 signatures, which remains the  
17 same as under current law.

18 In no case will a petition be permitted to be signed by less than  
19 one person.

20

21 *Nominating Petitions for School Elections*

22

23 Under this bill, candidates for a school election will be required  
24 to collect 25 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an  
25 increase from 10.

26

27 *Nominating Petitions for Nonpartisan Local Elections*

28

29 Under this bill, candidates for a nonpartisan municipal office will  
30 be required to collect five percent, an increase from at least one  
31 percent, of the registered voters of the municipality or the ward, as  
32 the case may be, or equal to a number based upon the population of  
33 the municipality or ward, whichever is less, as follows:

34 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
35 excess of 100,000;

36 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
37 excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

38 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
39 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

40 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population of  
41 25,000 or below.

42

43 *Publication of Petitions*

44

45 Lastly, the bill also requires that the Secretary of State publish  
46 the forms required to be used for certain nominating petitions by  
47 January 1 in each year when a primary election is going to be held.  
48 Making the nominating petition forms available by January 1 of

**A5117 GREENWALD**

10

- 1 each year gives candidates the time and opportunity to meet the
- 2 requirements enumerated in this bill.

[First Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 5117**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**221st LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED DECEMBER 9, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman Speight**

**SYNOPSIS**

Modifies number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on December 16, 2024, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/14/2025)**

1 AN ACT concerning the number of signatures required for  
2 candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general,  
3 nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various  
4 sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title  
5 19 of the Revised Statutes.

6  
7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:

9  
10 1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:  
11 19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters  
12 of this State residing within the district or political division in and  
13 for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal  
14 in number to at least **two per centum (2%)** five percent of the  
15 entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last  
16 preceding general election, held for the election of all of the  
17 members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or  
18 other political division in and for which the nominations are made;  
19 except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the  
20 voters of the entire State **eight hundred** 2,000 signatures in the  
21 aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be  
22 sufficient; and except that no more than **one hundred** 250  
23 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be  
24 elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the  
25 State at large.

26 In case of a first general election to be held in a newly  
27 established election district, county, city or other political division,  
28 the number of **fifty** 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient  
29 to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election  
30 district, county, city or other political division.

31 A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign  
32 and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
33 elective public office.

34 (cf: P.L.2010, c.68, s.1)

35  
36 2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:  
37 19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the  
38 voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the  
39 aggregate be signed by at least **1,000** 2,500 of such voters; in the  
40 case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
41 throughout a congressional district by at least **200** 500 of such  
42 voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General  
43 Assembly at least **100** 250 of such voters **;** in the case of  
44 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **thus** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted December 16, 2024.

1 throughout a county or any county election district, by at least 100  
2 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be voted for by the  
3 voters of a political party throughout a municipality having a  
4 population in excess of 14,000 as ascertained by the last Federal  
5 census by at least 50 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be  
6 voted for by the voters of a political party throughout all other  
7 municipalities or any ward of any municipality by at least 25 of  
8 such voters; in the case of a candidate to be voted for by the voters  
9 of a political party within a single election district by at least 10 of  
10 such voters.

11 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the case of petitions for  
12 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
13 throughout any municipality having a population that is less than  
14 7,000 as ascertained by the last federal census, or any ward or  
15 election district of any municipality, the number of signers of any  
16 such petition may be fewer than the minimum number specified  
17 above, but shall be at least five percent in number of the total vote  
18 cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
19 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for  
20 the General Assembly. In no case, however, shall there be fewer  
21 than one signer of any such petition】.

22 b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
23 political party throughout a county or any county election district  
24 shall in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of  
25 the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
26 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
27 candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 of such voters,  
28 whichever is less.

29 c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
30 political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be  
31 signed by <sup>1</sup>【at least five percent in number of the total votes cast by  
32 the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary  
33 election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
34 General Assembly, or by】<sup>1</sup> a number of such voters based upon the  
35 population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by the last  
36 Federal census, <sup>1</sup>【whichever is less,】<sup>1</sup> as follows:

37 <sup>1</sup>【(1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities having a  
38 population in excess of 100,000;

39 (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities having a  
40 population in excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

41 (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities having a  
42 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

43 (4) at least 25 of such voters in municipalities having a  
44 population of 25,000 or below, or any ward of any municipality.】

45 (1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
46 population in excess of 50,000;

1       (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
2 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

3       (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
4 population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

5       (4) at least 25 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
6 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
7 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
8 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
9 municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and  
10 up to 10,000;

11       (5) at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
12 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
13 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
14 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
15 municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and  
16 up to 5,000; and

17       (6) at least five of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
18 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
19 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
20 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
21 municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.<sup>1</sup>

22       d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
23 political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate  
24 be signed by at least 10 of such voters<sup>1</sup>, or five percent in number  
25 of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
26 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
27 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less<sup>1</sup>.

28       e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
29 petition.

30       f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any  
31 political party position at the primary election by having the  
32 person's name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot,  
33 that person shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the  
34 number of signatures required on a candidate nominating petition  
35 pursuant to this section.

36 (cf: P.L.2023, c.288, s.1)

37

38       3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read  
39 as follows:

40       7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be  
41 nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such  
42 nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions  
43 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for  
44 nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title  
45 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
46 R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall  
47 be signed by at least **[10]** 25 persons, one of whom may be the  
48 candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on

1 or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April  
2 school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of  
3 the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as  
4 applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single  
5 petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any  
6 candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint  
7 petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a  
8 designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles  
9 which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such  
10 designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a  
11 noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a  
12 primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a  
13 board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address  
14 for the candidate.

15 Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election  
16 by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such  
17 withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the  
18 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county  
19 clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as  
20 applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be  
21 withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not  
22 be printed on the ballot.

23 A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal  
24 by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled  
25 under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

26 Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination  
27 hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary  
28 of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be  
29 appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the  
30 objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school  
31 election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of  
32 the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the  
33 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
34 board of education at the November school election, as applicable.  
35 The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior  
36 Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened  
37 invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of  
38 nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the  
39 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates  
40 seeking election as a member of a board of education at the  
41 November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a  
42 candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is  
43 defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day  
44 before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the  
45 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
46 board of education at the November election, as applicable.

47 In each school district in which candidates for the office of  
48 member of a board of education will seek election at the November

1 school election, the school business administrator thereof shall  
2 certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the  
3 primary election for the general election next occurring a statement  
4 designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the  
5 number of such offices to be filled.

6 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.14)

7

8 4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read  
9 as follows:

10 4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal  
11 election, the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be  
12 filed with the municipal clerk, in the following manner and form  
13 and subject to the following conditions:

14 a. <sup>1</sup>~~【~~The petition of nomination shall consist of individual  
15 certificates, equal in number to at least ~~【~~1%, but in no event less  
16 than 25,~~】~~ five percent of the registered voters of the municipality or  
17 the ward, as the case may be, ~~【and】~~ or equal to a number based  
18 upon the population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by  
19 the last Federal census, whichever is less, as follows:

20 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
21 excess of 100,000;

22 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
23 excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

24 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
25 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

26 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population of  
27 25,000 or below.】

28 The petition of nomination shall consist of individual certificates  
29 equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or  
30 ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as follows:

31 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
32 excess of 50,000;

33 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
34 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

35 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
36 excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

37 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
38 excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

39 (5) at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
40 excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

41 (6) at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up  
42 to 2,500.<sup>1</sup>

43 b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as  
44 follows:

45 "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of  
46 ....., residing at ..... certify that I do  
47 hereby join in a petition of the nomination of .....

1 whose residence is at ..... for the office  
2 of mayor (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the  
3 ..... ward, or commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may  
4 be) to be voted for at the election to be held in the municipality on  
5 the ....., 20....., and I further certify that I know this candidate  
6 to be a registered voter, for the period required by law, of the  
7 municipality (and the ward, in the case of ward councilman) and a  
8 person of good moral character, and qualified, in my judgment, to  
9 perform the duties of the office, and I further certify that I have not  
10 signed more petitions or certificates of nomination than there are  
11 places to be filled for the above office.

12 Signed ....."

13 The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-  
14 mail address for the candidate.

15 Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates  
16 by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice:  
17 All candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of  
18 the 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures  
19 Reporting Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone  
20 number of the Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

21 **[b.] c.** Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of  
22 paper and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The  
23 candidate for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath  
24 before an officer competent to administer oaths that the statements  
25 made therein are true, and that each signature to the papers  
26 appended thereto is the genuine signature of the person whose name  
27 it purports to be, to their best knowledge and belief. The oath,  
28 signed by the candidate, shall constitute his acceptance of  
29 nomination and shall be annexed to the petition, together with the  
30 oath of his campaign manager, at the time the petition is submitted.

31 **[c.] d.** The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the  
32 Election Law Enforcement Commission with official certification  
33 of the filing or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

34 **[d.] e.** A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or  
35 both sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that  
36 candidate for elective public office in any municipality holding  
37 regular municipal elections.

38 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.17)

39

40 5. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, rule, or  
41 regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State shall promulgate  
42 and publish the forms to be used for petitions nominating  
43 candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the general  
44 election by January 1 of each year in which a primary election is to  
45 be held.

46

47 6. This act shall take effect January 1 next following the date  
48 of enactment.

[Second Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 5117**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 9, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Senator PAUL A. SARLO**

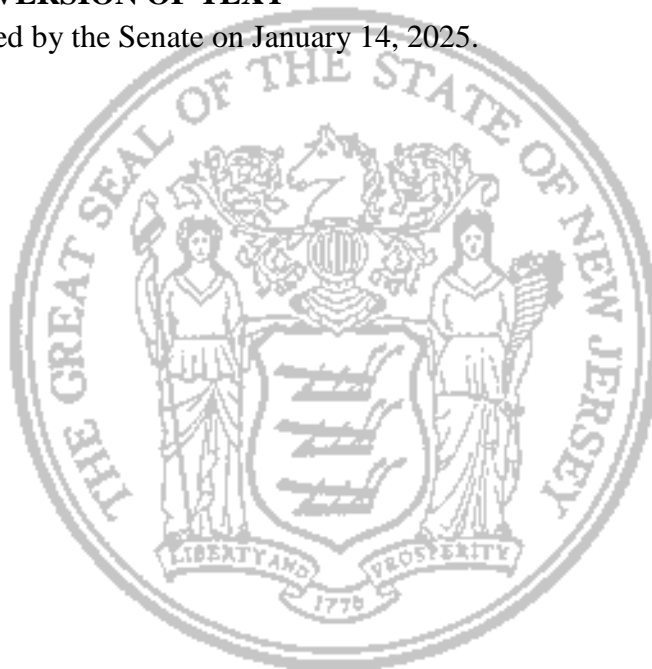
**District 36 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Modifies number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As amended by the Senate on January 14, 2025.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/30/2025)**

1 AN ACT concerning the number of signatures required for  
2 candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general,  
3 nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various  
4 sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title  
5 19 of the Revised Statutes.

6  
7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:

9  
10 1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:

11 19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters  
12 of this State residing within the district or political division in and  
13 for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal  
14 in number to at least **two per centum (2%)** five percent of the  
15 entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last  
16 preceding general election, held for the election of all of the  
17 members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or  
18 other political division in and for which the nominations are made;  
19 except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the  
20 voters of the entire State **eight hundred** 2,000 signatures in the  
21 aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be  
22 sufficient; and except that no more than **one hundred** 250  
23 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be  
24 elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the  
25 State at large.

26 In case of a first general election to be held in a newly  
27 established election district, county, city or other political division,  
28 the number of **fifty** 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient  
29 to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election  
30 district, county, city or other political division.

31 A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign  
32 and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
33 elective public office.

34 (cf: P.L.2010, c.68, s.1)

35

36 2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:

37 19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the  
38 voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the  
39 aggregate be signed by at least **1,000** 2,500 of such voters; in the  
40 case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
41 throughout a congressional district by at least **200** 500 of such  
42 voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General  
43 Assembly at least **100** 250 of such voters **;** in the case of  
44 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **thus** in the above bill is  
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted December 16, 2024.

<sup>2</sup>Senate floor amendments adopted January 14, 2025.

1 throughout a county or any county election district, by at least 100  
2 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be voted for by the  
3 voters of a political party throughout a municipality having a  
4 population in excess of 14,000 as ascertained by the last Federal  
5 census by at least 50 of such voters; in the case of candidates to be  
6 voted for by the voters of a political party throughout all other  
7 municipalities or any ward of any municipality by at least 25 of  
8 such voters; in the case of a candidate to be voted for by the voters  
9 of a political party within a single election district by at least 10 of  
10 such voters.

11 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the case of petitions for  
12 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
13 throughout any municipality having a population that is less than  
14 7,000 as ascertained by the last federal census, or any ward or  
15 election district of any municipality, the number of signers of any  
16 such petition may be fewer than the minimum number specified  
17 above, but shall be at least five percent in number of the total vote  
18 cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
19 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for  
20 the General Assembly. In no case, however, shall there be fewer  
21 than one signer of any such petition】.

22 b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
23 political party throughout a county or any county election district  
24 shall in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of  
25 the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
26 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
27 candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 of such voters,  
28 whichever is less <sup>2</sup>, but in no case shall the petition be signed by  
29 fewer than 150 of such voters<sup>2</sup>.

30 c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
31 political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be  
32 signed by <sup>1</sup>【at least five percent in number of the total votes cast by  
33 the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary  
34 election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
35 General Assembly, or by】<sup>1</sup> a number of such voters based upon the  
36 population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by the last  
37 Federal census, <sup>1</sup>【whichever is less,】<sup>1</sup> as follows:

38 <sup>1</sup>【(1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities having a  
39 population in excess of 100,000;

40 (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities having a  
41 population in excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

42 (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities having a  
43 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

44 (4) at least 25 of such voters in municipalities having a  
45 population of 25,000 or below, or any ward of any municipality.】

46 (1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
47 population in excess of 50,000;

1       (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
2 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

3       (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
4 population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

5       (4) at least 25 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
6 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
7 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
8 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
9 municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and  
10 up to 10,000;

11       (5) at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
12 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
13 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
14 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
15 municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and  
16 up to 5,000; and

17       (6) at least five of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
18 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
19 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
20 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less, in  
21 municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.<sup>1</sup>

22       d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
23 political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate  
24 be signed by at least 10 of such voters<sup>1</sup>, or five percent in number  
25 of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
26 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
27 candidates for the General Assembly, whichever is less<sup>1</sup>.

28       e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
29 petition.

30       f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any  
31 political party position at the primary election by having the  
32 person's name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot,  
33 that person shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the  
34 number of signatures required on a candidate nominating petition  
35 pursuant to this section.

36 (cf: P.L.2023, c.288, s.1)

37

38       3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read  
39 as follows:

40       7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be  
41 nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such  
42 nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions  
43 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for  
44 nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title  
45 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
46 R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall  
47 be signed by at least **[10]** 25 persons, one of whom may be the  
48 candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on

1 or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April  
2 school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of  
3 the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as  
4 applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single  
5 petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any  
6 candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint  
7 petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a  
8 designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles  
9 which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such  
10 designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a  
11 noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a  
12 primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a  
13 board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address  
14 for the candidate.

15 Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election  
16 by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such  
17 withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the  
18 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county  
19 clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as  
20 applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be  
21 withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not  
22 be printed on the ballot.

23 A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal  
24 by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled  
25 under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

26 Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination  
27 hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary  
28 of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be  
29 appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the  
30 objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school  
31 election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of  
32 the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the  
33 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
34 board of education at the November school election, as applicable.  
35 The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior  
36 Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened  
37 invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of  
38 nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the  
39 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates  
40 seeking election as a member of a board of education at the  
41 November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a  
42 candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is  
43 defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day  
44 before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the  
45 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
46 board of education at the November election, as applicable.

47 In each school district in which candidates for the office of  
48 member of a board of education will seek election at the November

1 school election, the school business administrator thereof shall  
2 certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the  
3 primary election for the general election next occurring a statement  
4 designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the  
5 number of such offices to be filled.

6 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.14)

7

8 4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read  
9 as follows:

10 4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal  
11 election, the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be  
12 filed with the municipal clerk, in the following manner and form  
13 and subject to the following conditions:

14 a. <sup>1</sup>~~【~~The petition of nomination shall consist of individual  
15 certificates, equal in number to at least ~~【~~1%, but in no event less  
16 than 25,~~】~~ five percent of the registered voters of the municipality or  
17 the ward, as the case may be, ~~【and】~~ or equal to a number based  
18 upon the population of the municipality or ward as ascertained by  
19 the last Federal census, whichever is less, as follows:

20 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
21 excess of 100,000;

22 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
23 excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

24 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
25 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

26 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population of  
27 25,000 or below.】

28 The petition of nomination shall consist of individual certificates  
29 equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or  
30 ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as follows:

31 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
32 excess of 50,000;

33 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
34 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

35 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
36 excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

37 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
38 excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

39 (5) at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
40 excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

41 (6) at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up  
42 to 2,500.<sup>1</sup>

43 b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as  
44 follows:

45 "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of  
46 ....., residing at ..... certify that I do  
47 hereby join in a petition of the nomination of .....

1 whose residence is at ..... for the office  
2 of mayor (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the  
3 ..... ward, or commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may  
4 be) to be voted for at the election to be held in the municipality on  
5 the ....., 20....., and I further certify that I know this candidate  
6 to be a registered voter, for the period required by law, of the  
7 municipality (and the ward, in the case of ward councilman) and a  
8 person of good moral character, and qualified, in my judgment, to  
9 perform the duties of the office, and I further certify that I have not  
10 signed more petitions or certificates of nomination than there are  
11 places to be filled for the above office.

12 Signed ....."

13 The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-  
14 mail address for the candidate.

15 Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates  
16 by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice:  
17 All candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of  
18 the 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures  
19 Reporting Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone  
20 number of the Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

21 **[b.] c.** Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of  
22 paper and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The  
23 candidate for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath  
24 before an officer competent to administer oaths that the statements  
25 made therein are true, and that each signature to the papers  
26 appended thereto is the genuine signature of the person whose name  
27 it purports to be, to their best knowledge and belief. The oath,  
28 signed by the candidate, shall constitute his acceptance of  
29 nomination and shall be annexed to the petition, together with the  
30 oath of his campaign manager, at the time the petition is submitted.

31 **[c.] d.** The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the  
32 Election Law Enforcement Commission with official certification  
33 of the filing or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

34 **[d.] e.** A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or  
35 both sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that  
36 candidate for elective public office in any municipality holding  
37 regular municipal elections.

38 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.17)

39

40 5. <sup>2</sup>(New Section) a.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the provisions of any  
41 other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State  
42 shall promulgate and publish the forms to be used for petitions  
43 nominating candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the  
44 general election by January 1 of each year in which a primary  
45 election is to be held.

46 <sup>2</sup>b. Any petition signatures collected by a candidate for office to  
47 be voted for at the 2025 primary election utilizing the petition forms  
48 published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this

1 act, P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall  
2 be required to comply with the provisions of this act but shall not be  
3 subject to a petition challenge based upon the use of a form  
4 published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this  
5 act.<sup>2</sup>

6  
7 6. This act shall take effect <sup>2</sup>January 1 next following the date  
8 of enactment] immediately and shall be retroactive to January 1,  
9 2025<sup>2</sup>.

ASSEMBLY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5117

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 12, 2024

The Assembly State and Local Government Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5117.

This bill increases the number of signatures required for candidates to be eligible to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots.

On October 24, 2024, the General Assembly passed AR167, which established the “Assembly Select Committee on Ballot Design.” During the following public hearings the Select Committee heard testimony from election experts that the signature threshold for candidate nominating petitions could be considered unusually low.

Neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New York, states with population sizes relatively similar to New Jersey, require significantly more signatures than does this State. Additionally, States such as California and Colorado require as many as 2,000 and 1,000 nominating petition signatures, respectively, from qualifying voters in order to appear on the ballot. This bill will bring New Jersey more in line with its peer states, but far below states such as California and Colorado, and will correct New Jersey’s outlier status.

The Select Committee also heard testimony from the public that nominating petition signature requirements should be increased, because too many candidates on the ballot make the ballot unmanageable from the perspective of voters.

Indeed, the Supreme Court of the United States has also recognized a State interest in requiring “candidates to make a preliminary showing of substantial support in order to qualify for a place on the ballot, because it is both wasteful and confusing to encumber the ballot with the names of frivolous candidates.” Anderson v. Celebrezze, 460 U.S. 780 (1983).

Moreover, the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized that the State has an interest in requiring a significant modicum of support to be shown before printing a name on a ballot in order to avoid voter confusion. Jenness v. Fortson, 403 U.S. 431 (1971).

More recently, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, the jurisdiction which includes New Jersey, stated in a case upholding Pennsylvania's petition requirements that the State has a legitimate interest in "avoiding ballot clutter and ensuring viable candidates." Rogers v. Corbett, 468 F.3d 188 (2006).

Too many unserious and frivolous candidates that lack support from their community complicates ballot design, provides opportunity to confuse and misdirect voters away from candidates who have the support of their community, and erodes voter confidence in elected representative democracy.

Furthermore, the signature requirements for nominating petitions under current law have existed at least since the reorganization of the New Jersey Revised Statutes completed in 1937. Eighty-seven years later, this has created imbalanced thresholds requirements.

Current law requires at least 50 signatures to appear on the primary ballot in a municipality having a population greater than 14,000. As a result, municipalities with 20,000 residents and municipalities with 75,000 residents are required to meet the same signature requirement. Revising the signature requirements will promote fairness in the nominating petition process by better reflecting the population of New Jersey in 2024 and beyond.

Accordingly, this bill updates and increases the signature requirements for candidates to be placed on a primary election ballot in this State.

#### *Direct Nominating Petitions for General Elections*

Under this bill, candidates running for an office in a general election will be required to collect signatures on their direct nominating petitions for the general election of at least five percent, an increase from at least two percent, of the entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last preceding general election held for the election of all of the members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district, or other political division in and for which the nominations are made.

Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a general election will be required to collect 2,000 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 800. Candidates running for any other office will be required to collect no more than 250 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 100.

#### *Nominating Petitions for Primary Elections*

Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a primary election will be required to collect 2,500 signatures on their nominating petitions, an increase from 1,000; candidates for a

congressional seat will be required to collect 500 signatures, an increase from 200; and candidates for the Senate and General Assembly will be required to collect 250 signatures, an increase from 100.

Under this bill, candidates for a countywide position in a primary election will be required to collect at least one percent of the total vote cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 signatures, whichever is less.

Under the bill, the signature requirements for candidates running for office in a primary election in a municipality will be either at least five percent of the total vote cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, or a certain number of voter signatures based upon the municipality's population, whichever is less, as follows:

at least 100 in municipalities with a population over 100,000;

at least 75 in municipalities with a population over 50,000 and up to 100,000;

at least 50 in municipalities with a population over 25,000 and up to 50,000;

at least 25 in municipalities with a population of 25,000 or below, or any ward of any municipality.

Candidates running in a single election district in a primary election will be required to collect 10 signatures, which remains the same as under current law.

In no case will a petition be permitted to be signed by less than one person.

#### *Nominating Petitions for School Elections*

Under this bill, candidates for a school election will be required to collect 25 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 10.

#### *Nominating Petitions for Nonpartisan Local Elections*

Under this bill, candidates for a nonpartisan municipal office will be required to collect five percent, an increase from at least one percent, of the registered voters of the municipality or the ward, as the case may be, or equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or ward, whichever is less, as follows:

(1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 100,000;

(2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 50,000 and up to 100,000;

(3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

(4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population of 25,000 or below.

*Publication of Petitions*

Lastly, the bill also requires that the Secretary of State publish the forms required to be used for certain nominating petitions by January 1 in each year when a primary election is going to be held. Making the nominating petition forms available by January 1 of each year gives candidates the time and opportunity to meet the requirements enumerated in this bill.

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 5117

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 16, 2024

As amended by the committee, this bill modifies the number of signatures required for candidates to be eligible to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots.

On October 24, 2024, the General Assembly passed AR167, which established the “Assembly Select Committee on Ballot Design.” During the following public hearings the Select Committee heard testimony from election experts that the signature threshold for candidate nominating petitions could be considered unusually low.

Neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New York, states with population sizes relatively similar to New Jersey, require significantly more signatures than does this State. Additionally, States such as California and Colorado require as many as 2,000 and 1,000 nominating petition signatures, respectively, from qualifying voters in order to appear on the ballot. This bill will bring New Jersey more in line with its peer states, but far below states such as California and Colorado, and will correct New Jersey’s outlier status.

The Select Committee also heard testimony from the public that nominating petition signature requirements should be increased, because too many candidates on the ballot make the ballot unmanageable from the perspective of voters.

Indeed, the Supreme Court of the United States has also recognized a State interest in requiring “candidates to make a preliminary showing of substantial support in order to qualify for a place on the ballot, because it is both wasteful and confusing to encumber the ballot with the names of frivolous candidates.” Anderson v. Celebrezze, 460 U.S. 780 (1983).

Moreover, the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized that the State has an interest in requiring a significant modicum of support to be shown before printing a name on a ballot in order to avoid voter confusion. Jenness v. Fortson, 403 U.S. 431 (1971).

More recently, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, the jurisdiction which includes New Jersey, stated in a case upholding Pennsylvania’s petition requirements that the State has a legitimate interest in “avoiding ballot clutter and ensuring viable candidates.” Rogers v. Corbett, 468 F.3d 188 (2006).

Too many unserious and frivolous candidates that lack support from their community complicates ballot design, provides opportunity to confuse and misdirect voters away from candidates who have the support of their community, and erodes voter confidence in elected representative democracy.

Furthermore, the signature requirements for nominating petitions under current law have existed at least since the reorganization of the New Jersey Revised Statutes completed in 1937. Eighty-seven years later, this has created imbalanced thresholds requirements.

Current law requires at least 50 signatures to appear on the primary ballot in a municipality having a population greater than 14,000. As a result, municipalities with 20,000 residents and municipalities with 75,000 residents are required to meet the same signature requirement. Revising the signature requirements will promote fairness in the nominating petition process by better reflecting the population of New Jersey in 2024 and beyond.

Accordingly, this bill updates and increases the signature requirements for candidates to be placed on a primary election ballot in this State.

#### *Direct Nominating Petitions for General Elections*

Under this bill, candidates running for an office in a general election will be required to collect signatures on their direct nominating petitions for the general election of at least five percent, an increase from at least two percent, of the entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last preceding general election held for the election of all of the members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district, or other political division in and for which the nominations are made.

Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a general election will be required to collect 2,000 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 800. Candidates running for any other office will be required to collect no more than 250 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 100.

#### *Nominating Petitions for Primary Elections*

Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a primary election will be required to collect 2,500 signatures on their nominating petitions, an increase from 1,000; candidates for a congressional seat will be required to collect 500 signatures, an increase from 200; and candidates for the Senate and General Assembly will be required to collect 250 signatures, an increase from 100.

Under this bill, candidates for a countywide position in a primary election will be required to collect at least one percent of the total vote cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 signatures, whichever is less.

Under the bill, the signature requirements for candidates running for office in a primary election in a municipality will be a certain number of voter signatures based upon the municipality's population, as follows:

at least 100 in municipalities or wards with populations over 50,000;

at least 75 in municipalities or wards with populations over 25,000 and up to 50,000;

at least 50 in municipalities or wards with populations over 10,000 and up to 25,000;

at least 25 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 5,000 and up to 10,000;

at least 10 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

at least five of such voters in municipalities or wards with populations up to 2,500.

The specified number of signatures, or signatures at least five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding General Assembly are also permitted for municipalities with populations of up to 10,000, whichever is less.

Candidates running in a single election district in a primary election will be required to collect 10 signatures, which remains the same as under current law, or five percent of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding General Assembly primary election, whichever is less.

In no case will a petition be permitted to be signed by less than one person.

#### *Nominating Petitions for School Elections*

Under this bill, candidates for a school election will be required to collect 25 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 10.

#### *Nominating Petitions for Nonpartisan Local Elections*

Under this bill, candidates for a nonpartisan municipal office will be required to collect individual certificates equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or ward, as follows:

at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 50,000;

at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population of in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.

#### *Publication of Petitions*

Lastly, the bill also requires that the Secretary of State publish the forms required to be used for certain nominating petitions by January 1 in each year when a primary election is going to be held. Making the nominating petition forms available by January 1 of each year gives candidates the time and opportunity to meet the requirements enumerated in this bill.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments to this bill change the number of signatures required for petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a municipality as follows:

at least 100 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 50,000;

at least 75 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 25,000 and up to 50,000; and

at least 50 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 10,000 and up to 25,000;

at least 25 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 5,000 and up to 10,000;

at least 10 signatures in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

at least five of such voters in municipalities or wards with populations up to 2,500.

Signatures of five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding General Assembly are also permitted for municipalities with populations of up to 10,000, whichever is less.

The committee amendments allow the petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party within a single election district to be signed by five percent of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding General Assembly primary election, in addition to the 10 signature requirement as previously established in the bill, whichever is less.

The committee amendments to this bill change the number of individual signatures required for petitions of nominations for nonpartisan municipal elections based upon the population of the municipality or ward as follows:

at least 100 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 50,000;

at least 75 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 25,000 and up to 50,000;

at least 50 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 10,000 and up to 25,000;

at least 25 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 5,000 and up to 10,000;

at least 10 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

at least five in municipalities or wards with populations up to 2,500.

STATEMENT TO  
[First Reprint]  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 5117**

with Senate Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Senator BEACH)

ADOPTED: JANUARY 14, 2025

These floor amendments add a minimum signature requirement for nominating petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a county or any county election district, by providing that in no case will the petition be signed by fewer than 150 of such voters.

These floor amendments also permit candidates to be voted for at the 2025 primary election to utilize petition forms for the collection of signatures published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this bill, as long as the candidate complies with the provisions of this bill, and further provide that utilization of petition forms published by the Secretary of State in 2025 prior to the effective date of this bill will not constitute the basis for a petition challenge.

These floor amendments also change the effective date from January 1 next following the date of enactment, to instead be effective immediately and retroactive to January 1, 2025.

**SENATE, No. 3994**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**221st LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 16, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Senator PAUL A. SARLO**

**District 36 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Modifies number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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2

1 AN ACT concerning the number of signatures required for  
2 candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general,  
3 nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various  
4 sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title  
5 19 of the Revised Statutes.

6

7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:

9

10 1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:

11 19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters  
12 of this State residing within the district or political division in and  
13 for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal  
14 in number to at least **【two per centum (2%)】** five percent of the  
15 entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last  
16 preceding general election, held for the election of all of the  
17 members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or  
18 other political division in and for which the nominations are made;  
19 except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the  
20 voters of the entire State **【eight hundred】** 2,000 signatures in the  
21 aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be  
22 sufficient; and except that no more than **【one hundred】** 250  
23 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be  
24 elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the  
25 State at large.

26 In case of a first general election to be held in a newly  
27 established election district, county, city or other political division,  
28 the number of **【fifty】** 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient  
29 to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election  
30 district, county, city or other political division.

31 A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign  
32 and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
33 elective public office.

34 (cf: P.L.2010, c.68, s.1)

35

36 2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:

37 19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the  
38 voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the  
39 aggregate be signed by at least **【1,000】** 2,500 of such voters; in the  
40 case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
41 throughout a congressional district by at least **【200】** 500 of such  
42 voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General  
43 Assembly at least **【100】** 250 of such voters **【;** in the case of candidates  
44 to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a county or  
45 any county election district, by at least 100 of such voters; in the case

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

1 of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
2 throughout a municipality having a population in excess of 14,000 as  
3 ascertained by the last Federal census by at least 50 of such voters; in  
4 the case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
5 throughout all other municipalities or any ward of any municipality by  
6 at least 25 of such voters; in the case of a candidate to be voted for by  
7 the voters of a political party within a single election district by at least  
8 10 of such voters.

9 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the case of petitions for  
10 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout  
11 any municipality having a population that is less than 7,000 as  
12 ascertained by the last federal census, or any ward or election district  
13 of any municipality, the number of signers of any such petition may be  
14 fewer than the minimum number specified above, but shall be at least  
15 five percent in number of the total vote cast by the voters of that  
16 political party at the last preceding primary election held for the  
17 election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly. In no  
18 case, however, shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
19 petition].

20 b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
21 political party throughout a county or any county election district shall  
22 in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of the  
23 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
24 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
25 General Assembly, or at least 300 of such voters, whichever is less.

26 c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
27 political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be  
28 signed by a number of such voters based upon the population of the  
29 municipality or ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as  
30 follows:

31 (1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
32 population in excess of 50,000;

33 (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
34 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

35 (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
36 population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

37 (4) at least 25 of such voters, or five percent in number of the total  
38 votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
39 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
40 General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards  
41 having a population in excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

42 (5) at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the total  
43 votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
44 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
45 General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards  
46 having a population in excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

47 (6) at least five of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
48 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding

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1 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
2 General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards  
3 having a population up to 2,500.

4 d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
5 political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate be  
6 signed by at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
7 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
8 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
9 General Assembly, whichever is less.

10 e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
11 petition.

12 f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any  
13 political party position at the primary election by having the person's  
14 name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot, that person  
15 shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the number of  
16 signatures required on a candidate nominating petition pursuant to this  
17 section.

18 (cf: P.L.2023, c.288, s.1)

19

20 3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read  
21 as follows:

22 7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be  
23 nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such  
24 nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions  
25 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for  
26 nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title  
27 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
28 R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall  
29 be signed by at least **【10】** 25 persons, one of whom may be the  
30 candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on  
31 or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April  
32 school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of  
33 the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as  
34 applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single  
35 petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any  
36 candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint  
37 petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a  
38 designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles  
39 which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such  
40 designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a  
41 noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a  
42 primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a  
43 board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address  
44 for the candidate.

45 Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election  
46 by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such  
47 withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the  
48 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county

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1 clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as  
2 applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be  
3 withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not  
4 be printed on the ballot.

5 A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal  
6 by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled  
7 under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

8 Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination  
9 hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary  
10 of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be  
11 appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the  
12 objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school  
13 election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of  
14 the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the  
15 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
16 board of education at the November school election, as applicable.  
17 The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior  
18 Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened  
19 invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of  
20 nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the  
21 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates  
22 seeking election as a member of a board of education at the  
23 November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a  
24 candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is  
25 defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day  
26 before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the  
27 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
28 board of education at the November election, as applicable.

29 In each school district in which candidates for the office of  
30 member of a board of education will seek election at the November  
31 school election, the school business administrator thereof shall  
32 certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the  
33 primary election for the general election next occurring a statement  
34 designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the  
35 number of such offices to be filled.

36 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.14)

37

38 4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read as  
39 follows:

40 4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal election,  
41 the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be filed with the  
42 municipal clerk, in the following manner and form and subject to the  
43 following conditions:

44 a. **【**The petition of nomination shall consist of individual  
45 certificates, equal in number to at least 1%, but in no event less than  
46 25, of the registered voters of the municipality or the ward, as the case  
47 may be, and**】**

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1       The petition of nomination shall consist of individual certificates  
2 equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or  
3 ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as follows:

4       (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
5 excess of 50,000;

6       (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
7 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

8       (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
9 excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

10       (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
11 excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

12       (5) at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
13 excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

14       (6) at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up  
15 to 2,500.

16       b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as follows:

17       "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of  
18 ....., residing at ..... certify that I do hereby  
19 join in a petition of the nomination of ..... whose  
20 residence is at ..... for the office of mayor  
21 (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the ..... ward, or  
22 commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may be) to be voted for at  
23 the election to be held in the municipality on the ....., 20....., and I  
24 further certify that I know this candidate to be a registered voter, for  
25 the period required by law, of the municipality (and the ward, in the  
26 case of ward councilman) and a person of good moral character, and  
27 qualified, in my judgment, to perform the duties of the office, and I  
28 further certify that I have not signed more petitions or certificates of  
29 nomination than there are places to be filled for the above office.

30       Signed ....."

31       The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-mail  
32 address for the candidate.

33       Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates  
34 by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice: All  
35 candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of the  
36 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting  
37 Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone number of the  
38 Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

39       **[b.]** c. Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of paper  
40 and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The candidate  
41 for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath before an  
42 officer competent to administer oaths that the statements made therein  
43 are true, and that each signature to the papers appended thereto is the  
44 genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be, to their  
45 best knowledge and belief. The oath, signed by the candidate, shall  
46 constitute his acceptance of nomination and shall be annexed to the  
47 petition, together with the oath of his campaign manager, at the time  
48 the petition is submitted.

1       **[c.] d.** The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the Election  
2 Law Enforcement Commission with official certification of the filing  
3 or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

4       **[d.] e.** A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both  
5 sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
6 elective public office in any municipality holding regular municipal  
7 elections.

8 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.17)

9  
10       5. (New Section) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other  
11 law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State shall  
12 promulgate and publish the forms to be used for petitions  
13 nominating candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the  
14 general election by January 1 of each year in which a primary  
15 election is to be held.

16  
17       6. This act shall take effect January 1 next following the date  
18 of enactment.

19

20

21

#### STATEMENT

22

23       This bill modifies the number of signatures required for  
24 candidates to be eligible to be placed on primary, general,  
25 nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots.

26       On October 24, 2024, the General Assembly passed AR167,  
27 which established the “Assembly Select Committee on Ballot  
28 Design.” During the following public hearings the Select  
29 Committee heard testimony from election experts that the signature  
30 threshold for candidate nominating petitions could be considered  
31 unusually low.

32       Neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New York, states with  
33 population sizes relatively similar to New Jersey, require  
34 significantly more signatures than does this State. Additionally,  
35 States such as California and Colorado require as many as 2,000  
36 and 1,000 nominating petition signatures, respectively, from  
37 qualifying voters in order to appear on the ballot. This bill will  
38 bring New Jersey more in line with its peer states, but far below  
39 states such as California and Colorado, and will correct New  
40 Jersey’s outlier status.

41       The Select Committee also heard testimony from the public that  
42 nominating petition signature requirements should be increased,  
43 because too many candidates on the ballot make the ballot  
44 unmanageable from the perspective of voters.

45       Indeed, the Supreme Court of the United States has also  
46 recognized a State interest in requiring “candidates to make a  
47 preliminary showing of substantial support in order to qualify for a  
48 place on the ballot, because it is both wasteful and confusing to

1 encumber the ballot with the names of frivolous candidates.”  
2 Anderson v. Celebrezze, 460 U.S. 780 (1983).

3 Moreover, the Supreme Court of the United States has  
4 recognized that the State has an interest in requiring a significant  
5 modicum of support to be shown before printing a name on a ballot  
6 in order to avoid voter confusion. Jenness v. Fortson, 403 U.S. 431  
7 (1971).

8 More recently, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third  
9 Circuit, the jurisdiction which includes New Jersey, stated in a case  
10 upholding Pennsylvania’s petition requirements that the State has a  
11 legitimate interest in “avoiding ballot clutter and ensuring viable  
12 candidates.” Rogers v. Corbett, 468 F.3d 188 (2006).

13 Too many unserious and frivolous candidates that lack support  
14 from their community complicates ballot design, provides  
15 opportunity to confuse and misdirect voters away from candidates  
16 who have the support of their community, and erodes voter  
17 confidence in elected representative democracy.

18 Furthermore, the signature requirements for nominating petitions  
19 under current law have existed at least since the reorganization of  
20 the New Jersey Revised Statutes completed in 1937. Eighty-seven  
21 years later, this has created imbalanced threshold requirements.

22 Current law requires at least 50 signatures to appear on the  
23 primary ballot in a municipality having a population greater than  
24 14,000. As a result, municipalities with 20,000 residents and  
25 municipalities with 75,000 residents are required to meet the same  
26 signature requirement. Revising the signature requirements will  
27 promote fairness in the nominating petition process by better  
28 reflecting the population of New Jersey in 2024 and beyond.

29 Accordingly, this bill updates and increases the signature  
30 requirements for candidates to be placed on a primary election  
31 ballot in this State.

32

### 33 *Direct Nominating Petitions for General Elections*

34

35 Under this bill, candidates running for an office in a general  
36 election will be required to collect signatures on their direct  
37 nominating petitions for the general election of at least five percent,  
38 an increase from at least two percent, of the entire vote cast for  
39 members of the General Assembly at the last preceding general  
40 election held for the election of all of the members of the General  
41 Assembly, in the State, county, district, or other political division in  
42 and for which the nominations are made.

43 Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a  
44 general election will be required to collect 2,000 signatures on their  
45 direct nominating petitions, an increase from 800. Candidates  
46 running for any other office will be required to collect no more than  
47 250 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from  
48 100.

1 *Nominating Petitions for Primary Elections*

2

3 Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a  
4 primary election will be required to collect 2,500 signatures on their  
5 nominating petitions, an increase from 1,000; candidates for a  
6 congressional seat will be required to collect 500 signatures, an  
7 increase from 200; and candidates for the Senate and General  
8 Assembly will be required to collect 250 signatures, an increase  
9 from 100.

10 Under this bill, candidates for a countywide position in a primary  
11 election will be required to collect at least one percent of the total  
12 vote cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
13 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for  
14 the General Assembly, or at least 300 signatures, whichever is less.

15 Under the bill, the signature requirements for candidates running  
16 for office in a primary election in a municipality will be a certain  
17 number of voter signatures based upon the municipality's or ward's  
18 population, as follows:

19 at least 100 in municipalities or wards with populations greater  
20 than 50,000;

21 at least 75 in municipalities or wards with populations greater  
22 than 25,000 and up to 50,000;

23 at least 50 in municipalities or wards with populations greater  
24 than 10,000 and up to 25,000;

25 at least 25 in municipalities or wards with populations greater  
26 than 5,000 and up to 10,000;

27 at least 10 in municipalities or wards with populations greater  
28 than 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

29 at least five in municipalities or wards with populations up to  
30 2,500.

31 The specified number of signatures, or signatures of at least five  
32 percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that  
33 political party at the last preceding General Assembly are also  
34 permitted for municipalities with populations of up to 10,000,  
35 whichever is less.

36 Candidates running in a single election district in a primary  
37 election will be required to collect a minimum of 10 signatures,  
38 which remains the same as under current law, or five percent of the  
39 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
40 preceding General Assembly primary election, whichever is less.

41 In no case will a petition be permitted to be signed by less than  
42 one person.

43

44 *Nominating Petitions for School Elections*

45

46 Under this bill, candidates for a school election will be required  
47 to collect 25 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an  
48 increase from 10.

1 *Nominating Petitions for Nonpartisan Local Elections*

2

3 Under this bill, candidates for a nonpartisan municipal office will  
4 be required to collect individual certificates equal to a certain  
5 number based upon the population of the municipality or ward, as  
6 follows:

7 at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
8 excess of 50,000;

9 at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess  
10 of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

11 at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population of in  
12 excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

13 at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess  
14 of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

15 at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess  
16 of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

17 at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up to  
18 2,500.

19

20 *Publication of Petitions*

21

22 Lastly, the bill also requires that the Secretary of State publish  
23 the forms required to be used for certain nominating petitions by  
24 January 1 in each year when a primary election is going to be held.  
25 Making the nominating petition forms available by January 1 of  
26 each year gives candidates the time and opportunity to meet the  
27 requirements enumerated in this bill.

[First Reprint]

**SENATE, No. 3994**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED DECEMBER 16, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Senator PAUL A. SARLO**

**District 36 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Modifies number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As amended by the Senate on January 14, 2025.



1 AN ACT concerning the number of signatures required for  
2 candidates to be placed on the ballots for the primary, general,  
3 nonpartisan municipal, and school elections, amending various  
4 sections of statutory law, and supplementing chapter 23 of Title  
5 19 of the Revised Statutes.

6  
7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:

9  
10 1. R.S.19:13-5 is amended to read as follows:

11 19:13-5. The petition shall be signed by legally qualified voters  
12 of this State residing within the district or political division in and  
13 for which the officer or officers nominated are to be elected, equal  
14 in number to at least **two per centum (2%)** five percent of the  
15 entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last  
16 preceding general election, held for the election of all of the  
17 members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district or  
18 other political division in and for which the nominations are made;  
19 except that when the nomination is for an office to be filled by the  
20 voters of the entire State **eight hundred** 2,000 signatures in the  
21 aggregate for each candidate nominated in the petition shall be  
22 sufficient; and except that no more than **one hundred** 250  
23 signatures shall be required to any petition for any officers to be  
24 elected save only such as are to be voted for by the voters of the  
25 State at large.

26 In case of a first general election to be held in a newly  
27 established election district, county, city or other political division,  
28 the number of **fifty** 50 signatures to a petition shall be sufficient  
29 to nominate a candidate to be voted for only in such election  
30 district, county, city or other political division.

31 A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both sign  
32 and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
33 elective public office.

34 (cf: P.L.2010, c.68, s.1)

35

36 2. R.S.19:23-8 is amended to read as follows:

37 19:23-8. a. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the  
38 voters of a political party throughout the entire State shall in the  
39 aggregate be signed by at least **1,000** 2,500 of such voters; in the  
40 case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
41 throughout a congressional district by at least **200** 500 of such  
42 voters; and in the case of candidates for the Senate and General  
43 Assembly at least **100** 250 of such voters **;** in the case of candidates  
44 to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a county or  
45 any county election district, by at least 100 of such voters; in the case

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **thus** in the above bill is  
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Senate floor amendments adopted January 14, 2025.

1 of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
2 throughout a municipality having a population in excess of 14,000 as  
3 ascertained by the last Federal census by at least 50 of such voters; in  
4 the case of candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party  
5 throughout all other municipalities or any ward of any municipality by  
6 at least 25 of such voters; in the case of a candidate to be voted for by  
7 the voters of a political party within a single election district by at least  
8 10 of such voters.

9 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the case of petitions for  
10 candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout  
11 any municipality having a population that is less than 7,000 as  
12 ascertained by the last federal census, or any ward or election district  
13 of any municipality, the number of signers of any such petition may be  
14 fewer than the minimum number specified above, but shall be at least  
15 five percent in number of the total vote cast by the voters of that  
16 political party at the last preceding primary election held for the  
17 election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly. In no  
18 case, however, shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
19 petition].

20 b. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
21 political party throughout a county or any county election district  
22 shall in the aggregate be signed by at least one percent in number of  
23 the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last  
24 preceding primary election held for the election of that party's  
25 candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 of such voters,  
26 whichever is less <sup>1</sup>, but in no case shall the petition be signed by  
27 fewer than 150 of such voters<sup>1</sup>.

28 c. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
29 political party throughout a municipality shall in the aggregate be  
30 signed by a number of such voters based upon the population of the  
31 municipality or ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as  
32 follows:

33 (1) at least 100 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
34 population in excess of 50,000;

35 (2) at least 75 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
36 population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

37 (3) at least 50 of such voters in municipalities or wards having a  
38 population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

39 (4) at least 25 of such voters, or five percent in number of the total  
40 votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
41 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
42 General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards  
43 having a population in excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

44 (5) at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the total  
45 votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
46 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
47 General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards  
48 having a population in excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

1       (6) at least five of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
2 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
3 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
4 General Assembly, whichever is less, in municipalities or wards  
5 having a population up to 2,500.

6       d. The petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a  
7 political party within a single election district shall in the aggregate be  
8 signed by at least 10 of such voters, or five percent in number of the  
9 total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding  
10 primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the  
11 General Assembly, whichever is less.

12       e. In no case shall there be fewer than one signer of any such  
13 petition.

14       f. For a person to be nominated for any office or elected to any  
15 political party position at the primary election by having the person's  
16 name written or pasted upon the primary election ballot, that person  
17 shall receive a number of votes at least equal to the number of  
18 signatures required on a candidate nominating petition pursuant to this  
19 section.

20 (cf: P.L.2023, c.288, s.1)

21  
22       3. Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read  
23 as follows:

24       7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be  
25 nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such  
26 nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions  
27 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for  
28 nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title  
29 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
30 R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall  
31 be signed by at least **[10]** 25 persons, one of whom may be the  
32 candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on  
33 or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April  
34 school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of  
35 the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as  
36 applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single  
37 petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any  
38 candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint  
39 petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a  
40 designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles  
41 which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such  
42 designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof, as a  
43 noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a  
44 primary election. The petitions of a candidate for member of a  
45 board of education shall also include a functioning e-mail address  
46 for the candidate.

47       Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election  
48 by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such

1 withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the  
2 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county  
3 clerk on the 81st day before the date of the November election, as  
4 applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be  
5 withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education and shall not  
6 be printed on the ballot.

7 A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal  
8 by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled  
9 under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

10 Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination  
11 hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary  
12 of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be  
13 appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the  
14 objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school  
15 election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of  
16 the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the  
17 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
18 board of education at the November school election, as applicable.  
19 The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior  
20 Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened  
21 invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of  
22 nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the  
23 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates  
24 seeking election as a member of a board of education at the  
25 November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a  
26 candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is  
27 defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day  
28 before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the  
29 filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a  
30 board of education at the November election, as applicable.

31 In each school district in which candidates for the office of  
32 member of a board of education will seek election at the November  
33 school election, the school business administrator thereof shall  
34 certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the  
35 primary election for the general election next occurring a statement  
36 designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the  
37 number of such offices to be filled.

38 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.14)

39

40 4. Section 4 of P.L.1981, c.379 (C.40:45-8) is amended to read as  
41 follows:

42 4. On or before the 75th day prior to a regular municipal election,  
43 the names of candidates for all elective offices shall be filed with the  
44 municipal clerk, in the following manner and form and subject to the  
45 following conditions:

46 a. **【**The petition of nomination shall consist of individual  
47 certificates, equal in number to at least 1%, but in no event less than

1 25, of the registered voters of the municipality or the ward, as the case  
2 may be, and**】**

3 The petition of nomination shall consist of individual certificates  
4 equal to a number based upon the population of the municipality or  
5 ward as ascertained by the last Federal census, as follows:

6 (1) at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
7 excess of 50,000;

8 (2) at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
9 excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

10 (3) at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
11 excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

12 (4) at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
13 excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

14 (5) at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in  
15 excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

16 (6) at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up  
17 to 2,500.

18 b. The petition of nomination shall read substantially as follows:

19 "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the municipality of  
20 ....., residing at ..... certify that I do hereby  
21 join in a petition of the nomination of ..... whose  
22 residence is at ..... for the office of mayor  
23 (or councilman-at-large, or ward councilman of the ..... ward, or  
24 commissioner, or village trustee, as the case may be) to be voted for at  
25 the election to be held in the municipality on the ....., 20....., and I  
26 further certify that I know this candidate to be a registered voter, for  
27 the period required by law, of the municipality (and the ward, in the  
28 case of ward councilman) and a person of good moral character, and  
29 qualified, in my judgment, to perform the duties of the office, and I  
30 further certify that I have not signed more petitions or certificates of  
31 nomination than there are places to be filled for the above office.

32 Signed ....."

33 The petition of nomination shall also include a functioning e-mail  
34 address for the candidate.

35 Any such petition of nomination which is provided to candidates  
36 by the municipal clerk shall contain the following notice: "Notice: All  
37 candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of the  
38 'New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting  
39 Act.' For further information, please call (insert phone number of the  
40 Election Law Enforcement Commission)."

41 **【b.】** c. Each petition signature shall be on a separate sheet of paper  
42 and shall bear the name and address of the petitioner. The candidate  
43 for office and his campaign manager shall make an oath before an  
44 officer competent to administer oaths that the statements made therein  
45 are true, and that each signature to the papers appended thereto is the  
46 genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be, to their  
47 best knowledge and belief. The oath, signed by the candidate, shall  
48 constitute his acceptance of nomination and shall be annexed to the

1 petition, together with the oath of his campaign manager, at the time  
2 the petition is submitted.

3 **[c.] d.** The municipal clerk shall immediately provide the Election  
4 Law Enforcement Commission with official certification of the filing  
5 or withdrawal of a petition of nomination.

6 **[d.] e.** A candidate shall be permitted to sign or circulate, or both  
7 sign and circulate, the petition required to nominate that candidate for  
8 elective public office in any municipality holding regular municipal  
9 elections.

10 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.17)

11

12 5. (New Section) <sup>1</sup>a.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the provisions of any other  
13 law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the Secretary of State shall  
14 promulgate and publish the forms to be used for petitions nominating  
15 candidates to be voted for at the primary election for the general  
16 election by January 1 of each year in which a primary election is to be  
17 held.

18 <sup>1</sup>b. Any petition signatures collected by a candidate for office to  
19 be voted for at the 2025 primary election utilizing the petition forms  
20 published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this  
21 act, P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall be  
22 required to comply with the provisions of this act but shall not be  
23 subject to a petition challenge based upon the use of a form published  
24 by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this act<sup>1</sup>.

25

26 6. This act shall take effect <sup>1</sup>**[**January 1 next following the date of  
27 enactment**]** immediately and shall be retroactive to January 1, 2025<sup>1</sup>.

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT, WAGERING, TOURISM &  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 3994**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 19, 2024

The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism & Historic Preservation Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3994.

This bill modifies the number of signatures required for candidates to be eligible to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots.

On October 24, 2024, the General Assembly passed AR167, which established the “Assembly Select Committee on Ballot Design.” During the following public hearings the Select Committee heard testimony from election experts that the signature threshold for candidate nominating petitions could be considered unusually low.

Neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New York, states with population sizes relatively similar to New Jersey, require significantly more signatures than does this State. Additionally, States such as California and Colorado require as many as 2,000 and 1,000 nominating petition signatures, respectively, from qualifying voters in order to appear on the ballot. This bill will bring New Jersey more in line with its peer states, but far below states such as California and Colorado, and will correct New Jersey’s outlier status.

The Select Committee also heard testimony from the public that nominating petition signature requirements should be increased, because too many candidates on the ballot make the ballot unmanageable from the perspective of voters.

Indeed, the Supreme Court of the United States has also recognized a State interest in requiring “candidates to make a preliminary showing of substantial support in order to qualify for a place on the ballot, because it is both wasteful and confusing to encumber the ballot with the names of frivolous candidates.” Anderson v. Celebrezze, 460 U.S. 780 (1983).

Moreover, the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized that the State has an interest in requiring a significant modicum of support to be shown before printing a name on a ballot in order to avoid voter confusion. Jenness v. Fortson, 403 U.S. 431 (1971).

More recently, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, the jurisdiction which includes New Jersey, stated in a case upholding Pennsylvania’s petition requirements that the State has a

legitimate interest in “avoiding ballot clutter and ensuring viable candidates.” Rogers v. Corbett, 468 F.3d 188 (2006).

Too many unserious and frivolous candidates that lack support from their community complicates ballot design, provides opportunity to confuse and misdirect voters away from candidates who have the support of their community, and erodes voter confidence in elected representative democracy.

Furthermore, the signature requirements for nominating petitions under current law have existed at least since the reorganization of the New Jersey Revised Statutes completed in 1937. Eighty-seven years later, this has created imbalanced threshold requirements.

Current law requires at least 50 signatures to appear on the primary ballot in a municipality having a population greater than 14,000. As a result, municipalities with 20,000 residents and municipalities with 75,000 residents are required to meet the same signature requirement. Revising the signature requirements will promote fairness in the nominating petition process by better reflecting the population of New Jersey in 2024 and beyond.

Accordingly, this bill updates and increases the signature requirements for candidates to be placed on a primary election ballot in this State.

#### *Direct Nominating Petitions for General Elections*

Under this bill, candidates running for an office in a general election will be required to collect signatures on their direct nominating petitions for the general election of at least five percent, an increase from at least two percent, of the entire vote cast for members of the General Assembly at the last preceding general election held for the election of all of the members of the General Assembly, in the State, county, district, or other political division in and for which the nominations are made.

Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a general election will be required to collect 2,000 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 800. Candidates running for any other office will be required to collect no more than 250 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 100.

#### *Nominating Petitions for Primary Elections*

Under this bill, candidates running for a Statewide office in a primary election will be required to collect 2,500 signatures on their nominating petitions, an increase from 1,000; candidates for a congressional seat will be required to collect 500 signatures, an increase from 200; and candidates for the Senate and General Assembly will be required to collect 250 signatures, an increase from 100.

Under this bill, candidates for a countywide position in a primary election will be required to collect at least one percent of the total vote cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding primary election held for the election of that party's candidates for the General Assembly, or at least 300 signatures, whichever is less.

Under the bill, the signature requirements for candidates running for office in a primary election in a municipality will be a certain number of voter signatures based upon the municipality's or ward's population, as follows:

at least 100 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 50,000;

at least 75 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 25,000 and up to 50,000;

at least 50 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 10,000 and up to 25,000;

at least 25 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 5,000 and up to 10,000;

at least 10 in municipalities or wards with populations greater than 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

at least five in municipalities or wards with populations up to 2,500.

The specified number of signatures, or signatures of at least five percent in number of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding General Assembly primary election are also permitted for municipalities with populations of up to 10,000, whichever is less.

Candidates running in a single election district in a primary election will be required to collect a minimum of 10 signatures, which remains the same as under current law, or five percent of the total votes cast by the voters of that political party at the last preceding General Assembly primary election, whichever is less.

In no case will a petition be permitted to be signed by less than one person.

#### *Nominating Petitions for School Elections*

Under this bill, candidates for a school election will be required to collect 25 signatures on their direct nominating petitions, an increase from 10.

#### *Nominating Petitions for Nonpartisan Local Elections*

Under this bill, candidates for a nonpartisan municipal office will be required to collect individual certificates equal to a certain number based upon the population of the municipality or ward, as follows:

at least 100 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 50,000;

at least 75 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 25,000 and up to 50,000;

at least 50 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 10,000 and up to 25,000;

at least 25 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 5,000 and up to 10,000;

at least 10 in municipalities or wards having a population in excess of 2,500 and up to 5,000; and

at least five in municipalities or wards having a population up to 2,500.

#### *Publication of Petitions*

Lastly, the bill also requires that the Secretary of State publish the forms required to be used for certain nominating petitions by January 1 in each year when a primary election is going to be held. Making the nominating petition forms available by January 1 of each year gives candidates the time and opportunity to meet the requirements enumerated in this bill.

STATEMENT TO  
  
**SENATE, No. 3994**

with Senate Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Senator BEACH)

ADOPTED: JANUARY 14, 2025

These floor amendments add a minimum signature requirement for nominating petitions for candidates to be voted for by the voters of a political party throughout a county or any county election district, by providing that in no case will the petition be signed by fewer than 150 of such voters.

These floor amendments also permit candidates to be voted for at the 2025 primary election to utilize petition forms for the collection of signatures published by the Secretary of State prior to the effective date of this bill, as long as the candidate complies with the provisions of this bill, and further provide that utilization of petition forms published by the Secretary of State in 2025 prior to the effective date of this bill will not constitute the basis for a petition challenge.

These floor amendments also change the effective date from January 1 next following the date of enactment, to instead be effective immediately and retroactive to January 1, 2025.

# Governor Murphy Takes Action on Legislation

02/3/2025

**TRENTON** – Today, Governor Murphy signed the following bills into law:

**A-1899/S-1981 (Conaway, Speight/Vitale, Mukherji)** - Expands authority of pharmacy technician in administering drugs and vaccines and permits certain pharmacists and pharmacy interns, externs, and technicians to administer COVID-19 vaccine

**A-3414/SCS for S-2245 (Murphy, Lampitt, Speight/Ruiz, Turner, McKnight)** - Modifies regulation of student permits by NJ State Board of Cosmetology and Hairstyling and establishes oversight of individuals seeking employment as shampoo technicians

**A-3894/S-2580 (Murphy, Quijano/Bucco, Singleton)** - Amends certain fire safety statutes to update licensure and equipment requirements and liability, fee, and penalty provisions; expands membership of Fire Protection Equipment Advisory Committee

**A-5117/S-3994 (Greenwald/Beach, Sarlo)** - Modifies number of signatures required for candidates to be placed on primary, general, nonpartisan municipal, and school election ballots; requires Secretary of State to publish certain nominating petition forms by January 1 of each year