

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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## COUNTY OF MERCER

## VOTER REGISTRATION/ELECTIONS

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## Being a Write-in Candidate for the 2021 Municipal Primary Election

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If you are interested in being a write-in candidate in the 2021 Municipal Primary Election, which will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>, please consider doing the following actions so that we can provide you the best service possible.

**Contact the Election's Office:** Please contact our office at least 2 weeks before election day and let us know that you will be running an active write-in campaign. We will accumulate your votes regardless, but it helps us know in advance of your interest in a specific position.

**Complete a Declaration Form:** By completing the form, you can specify the names that we should accept as votes for you.

- For example, if your name is Joseph P. Smith, you can ask for us to accept Joe Smith, Joseph Smith, Joseph Peter Smith, Joe Smyth.
- There are limits to the names we can accept. In this example, if there are several people with the first initial J. and the last name Smith in your municipality of voting district, we could not accept J. Smith as a vote for you.
- Also, if you are a Jr., Sr., the III, etc. and you all live in the same district or municipality, we could not accept votes for you unless the suffix is a part of the name written in.
- The voter's intent must be clear; we cannot guess or make assumptions.

### Receive the Requisite Number of Votes:

In the Primary Election, a write-in candidate can only win the nomination and move onto the November Election if they perform well enough to move forward in the election. If there are other candidates running for a given office, the write-in must have enough votes to place among the top candidates advancing to the General Election.

There is a minimum vote threshold for write-in candidates in the Primary Election based on the number of signatures that are required to get on the ballot during the partisan candidate nomination process. The number of votes a write-in candidate receives in the Primary Election must equal or exceed the number of signatures required to get on the ballot during the partisan candidate nomination process.

- For example, if you are a Republican write-in candidate for Township Supervisor, you must (1) receive at least 10 votes and (2) receive more votes than anyone else on the Republican Party Primary Election for that race.

The table below lists the minimum number of votes a candidate must receive to qualify as a write-in candidate.

### Minimum Vote Requirements

Office	Signatures Required/ Minimum Votes Required
County Offices	100
City Offices	100
Township/Borough Offices	10
Magisterial District Judge	100
School Director	10
Judge of Election	10
Inspector of Elections	5
Constable	10

**Ask Voters to Write You in:** As a write-in candidate, you can receive votes from both Democrats and Republicans, regardless of your own party affiliation. To qualify as a write-in candidate, you will need to receive the minimum number of votes on either the Democratic Party Ballot or the Republican Party ballot. The write-in votes you receive as a Democratic candidate and the write-in votes you receive as a Republican are not added together.

- For example, if you are a write-in candidate to be a Judge of Elections and you receive 7 write-in votes on the Democratic Party ballots and 9 votes on the Republican Party ballots, you would not qualify as a candidate from either party because you did not receive 10 votes on either party's ballot.

**Follow Campaign Finance Laws:** Write-in candidates are required to adhere to Campaign Finance Laws. If you spend or receive over \$250.00 in a reporting period, you are required to file a Campaign Finance Report. The Election Office can provide you with additional information.

**Complete Required Paperwork and Pay Required Fees:** If you are successful in your write-in campaign you will be required to file paperwork and pay a filing fee, if applicable, depending on the office in question. If you fail to complete all post-nomination requirements, your name will not appear on the November ballot.

#### **Accumulating Write-in Votes:**

Please be aware that, if you run a write-in campaign, it can take several weeks to accumulate write-in votes. The official write-in results will not be available until we certify the election, which is generally completed three weeks after the primary election.