

## 1. General Information

- Candidates must file a Certificate of Candidacy with the appropriate State or local election office depending on the office sought.
- A Statement of Organization to form an authorized candidate campaign committee must accompany the Certificate of Candidacy (unless the candidate is already associated with a candidate committee or if running for federal office).
- Candidates must file a financial disclosure statement in accordance with State or local law (if applicable for that office) prior to or at the time of filing the Certificate of Candidacy.
- A filing fee is not required for a write-in candidate.
- The candidate may file the Certificate of Candidacy by mail. All required documents should be mailed together. It is important to note, the Certificate of Candidacy and the Financial Disclosure Statement must be notarized for State office.
- The Certificate of Candidacy may be filed in person. If filed in person, the candidate must provide identification (preferably a driver's license or official State ID).

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that a write-in candidate *file as early as possible* in order to appear on various candidate lists including the write-in candidate list on the specimen ballots. Additionally, early filing enables the candidate the option to designate challengers and watcher at the polling place.

## 2. Deadline

- Write-in candidates must file no later than the Wednesday before the General Election. If mailed, the appropriate election office must receive the Certificate of Candidacy and all requisite documents by the deadline. Timely postmarked or faxed copies will not be accepted. Original signatures are required. In no case will a filing be accepted later than 5:00 P.M. on the Wednesday before the General Election.
- *However*, if the write-in candidate or the authorized candidate campaign committee makes expenditures that are equal to or greater than \$51 in the promotion of the candidate, then the Certificate of Candidacy must be filed no later than 7 days after the \$51 threshold is exceeded.

## 3. Campaign Finance Entity – Required

- Each write-in candidate must file a Statement of Organization to form an authorized candidate campaign committee except for federal Write-in candidates.
- The authorized candidate campaign committee must be formed regardless of whether the candidate plans to have any financial activity. The candidate committee is required to file campaign finance reports periodically during the election year.
- Candidates who do not plan to have campaign finance activity greater than \$1,000 may file an Affidavit of Limited Contributions and Expenditures in lieu of a detailed campaign finance report.

The Affidavit may be Efiled at <http://www.elections.state.md.us/EAffidavits/index.html>. The Affidavit must be filed for every reporting period. Only when the Affidavit is marked final will the filing obligations end. It is the personal responsibility and liability of the Chairman and Treasurer of the committee to file the reports or Affidavit. The maximum late fee penalty is \$250 per report.

- Prior to the campaign finance report filing deadline, the officers of the committee and the candidate will receive a pre-report notice (Blue postcard) in the mail. If you believe the notice was sent in error, please contact SBE immediately, otherwise late fees will accrue.

#### 4. Voting

##### *To cast a write-in vote on the voting machine*

- Touch the box to the left of the word "WRITE-IN" in the contest you wish to cast a write-in vote.
- Using the electronic keyboard, enter the candidate's name, last name first. Then press RECORD WRITE-IN to cast your vote. Your vote will not be counted unless the record button is pushed.
- Any abbreviation, misspelling, or minor variation in the form of the name of a candidate shall be disregarded in determining the validity of the write-in vote as long as the intended candidate can be determined. Writing the last name only will constitute a valid vote, unless there is more than one candidate with the same last name.
- Writing in the name of the candidate for Governor or the name of the Lieutenant Governor is sufficient to the cast of a vote for the joint office.
- Candidates may give out cards containing a diagram and instructions, including how to spell the candidate's name.

##### *To cast a write-in vote on the audio ballot:*

- A voter must select "WRITE-IN" by following the audio ballot's recorded instructions for using the keypad to make selections.
- The voter will hear instruction for entering a write-in candidate's name using the keypad. Letters are assigned to the numeric keys similar to a telephone.
- The voter will use the keypad to enter, change and confirm each letter as he or she enters a write-in candidate's name.
- After entering a write-in candidate's name, the voter needs to follow the audio ballot's instructions to continue voting the rest of the ballot.
- The voter can follow the audio ballot's recorded instructions for changing a vote, including a write-in vote, before casing his or her ballot if he or she chooses.

*To cast a write-in vote on an absentee or provisional ballot:*

- A voter must write the name of the write-in candidate on the designated write-in line under the contest title.
- The voter must completely fill in the oval to the left of the write-in candidate's name.
- In the case of an absentee ballot, the voter will need to contact their local board of elections for a new ballot if he or she changes his or her mind after writing a write-in candidate's name before casting the ballot.
- In the case of a provisional ballot, the voter will need to see the Provisional Ballot Judge for a new ballot if he or she changes his or her mind after writing a write-in candidate's name before casting the ballot.

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## Instructions for Write-In Candidate Votes

Writing in the name of the candidate for President/Governor or the name of the Vice President /Lieutenant Governor is sufficient to the cast of a vote for the joint office.

Candidates may give out or publish information containing a diagram and instructions, including how to spell the candidate's name, for casting a write-in vote. Any abbreviation, misspelling, or minor variation in the form of the name of a candidate shall be disregarded in determining the validity of the write-in vote as long as the intended candidate can be determined. Writing the last name will constitute a valid vote, unless there is more than one candidate with the same last name.

To vote for a person whose name is not listed on the ballot, you must follow these instructions:

1. Touch the box to the left of the word "WRITE-IN" in the contest for which you wish to write in a person's name. A write-in QWERTY keyboard will appear, with a text box to display your write-in choice.

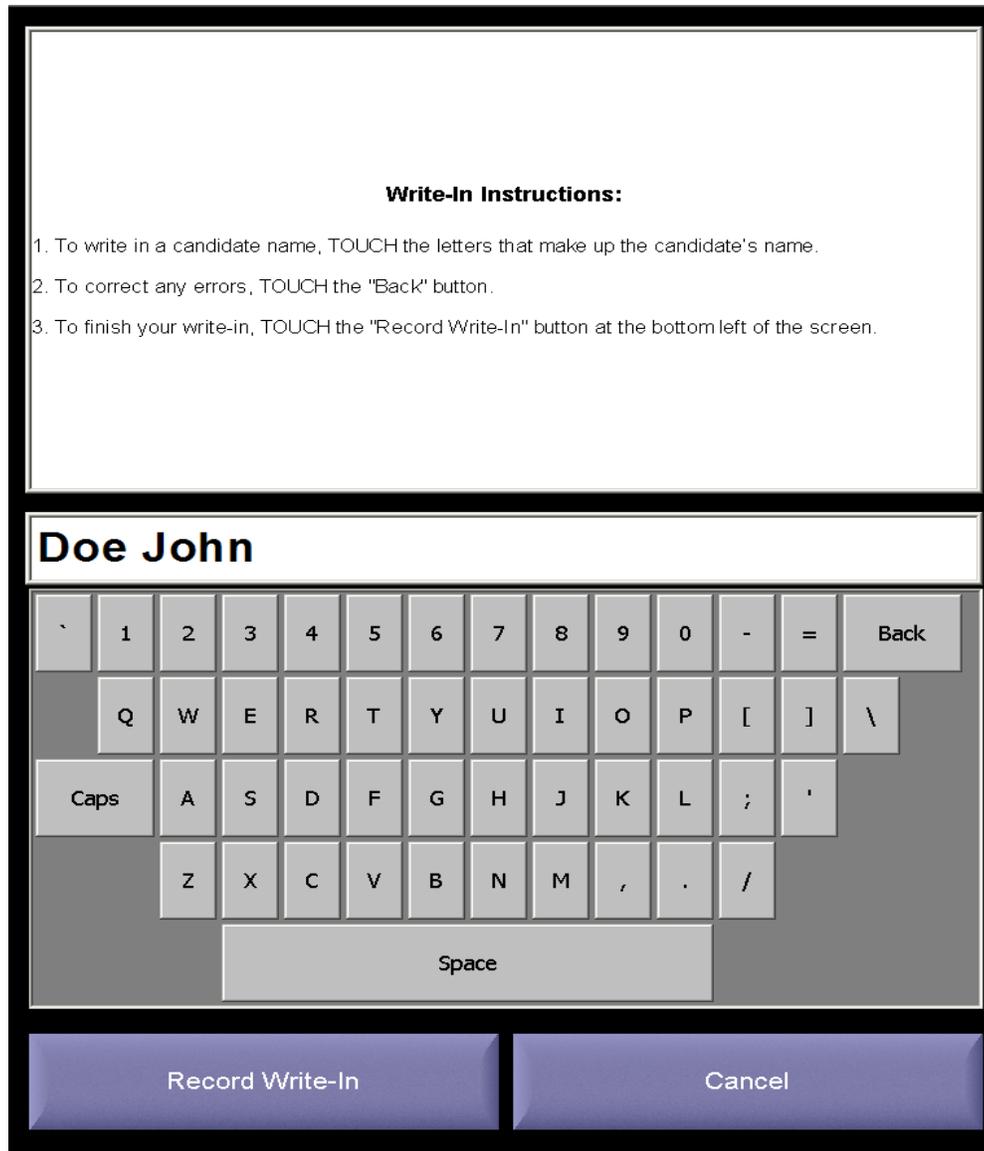
**Figure 1:**

<b>Famous Leaders</b> Vote For One	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>John Adams</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Benjamin Franklin</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dolly Madison</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Harriet Tubman</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>George Washington</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Write-in</b>

**Touch Here:** →

- 2 Using the write-in QWERTY keyboard, enter the last name then the first name (or at least the initial of the first name) of the person for whom you wish to vote, by touching the keyboard letters one at a time. The name you enter will appear in the text box display above the keyboard. To make a space between parts of the name (for example, between last and first name), use the space bar at the bottom of the keyboard. To make a correction, use the back key found at the upper right corner of the keyboard.

**Figure 2:**



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## Instructions for Write-In Candidate Votes

- When you have entered the person's name, press the RECORD WRITE-IN button on the keyboard. Your write-in choice will be electronically recorded and return back to the ballot page.

**Write-In Instructions:**

- To write in a candidate name, TOUCH the letters that make up the candidate's name.
- To correct any errors, TOUCH the "Back" button.
- To finish your write-in, TOUCH the "Record Write-In" button at the bottom left of the screen.

**Doe John**

Record Write-In Cancel

**Touch Here:** →

**Famous Leaders**  
Vote For One

John Adams

Benjamin Franklin

Dolly Madison

Harriet Tubman

George Washington

Doe John

- If you change your mind and no longer wish to cast a write-in vote, touch the red X next to the name of the write-in candidate. The red X will disappear, and you may make a new selection for that contest.

### **To cast a write-in vote on the audio ballot:**

1. A voter must select “WRITE-IN” by following the audio ballot’s recorded instructions for using the keypad to make selections.
2. The voter will hear instructions for entering a write-in candidate’s name using the keypad. Letters are assigned to the numeric keys similar to a telephone.
3. The voter will use the keypad to enter, change and confirm each letter as he or she enters a write-in candidate’s name.
4. After entering a write-in candidate’s name, the voter needs to follow the audio ballot’s instructions to continue voting the rest of the ballot.
5. The voter can follow the audio ballot’s recorded instructions for changing a vote, including a write-in vote, before casing his or her ballot if he or she chooses.

### **To cast a write-in vote on an absentee or provisional ballot:**

1. A voter must write the name of the write-in candidate on the designated write-in line under the contest title.
2. The voter must completely fill in the oval to the left of the write-in candidate’s name.
3. In the case of an absentee ballot, the voter will need to contact their local board of elections for a new ballot if he or she changes his or her mind after writing a write-in candidate’s name before casting the ballot.
4. The voter will need to see the Provisional Ballot Judge for a new ballot if he or she changes his or her mind after writing a write-in candidate’s name before casting the ballot.