



Legislative Council Staff
Research Note

Version: Final
Date: 6/15/2017

Bill Number

House Bill 17-1088

Sponsors

Representative P. Neville
Senator T. Neville

Short Title

***Voter Signature Verification &
Electronic Petition Pilot***

Research Analyst

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Status

This research note reflects the final version of the bill, which becomes effective August 9, 2017, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

Background

In Colorado, candidates for many offices, such as U.S. Senate, U.S. Representative, statewide office, General Assembly, and district attorney, who are affiliated with a party can be listed on a primary ballot after either receiving a nomination through the party assembly process or collecting enough signatures through the petition process. A candidate utilizing the petition process must meet certain requirements and collect a specified number of signatures in order to have his or her name placed on the ballot.

For elections held before January 1, 2018, the designated election official for the political subdivision in which the election is occurring determines whether the petition to place a candidate on the ballot appears to be sufficient or insufficient after verifying the validity of voter information on the petition, such as address and voter eligibility; however, the election official is not required to compare the signatures on the candidate petition to the voter signatures in the statewide voter registration system (SCORE). If the petition is deemed sufficient and the time for protest has passed, the candidate's name is placed on the ballot. State law outlines the process a candidate can follow to contest the determination if the petition is found insufficient.

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House Action

House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee (March 23, 2017). At the hearing, representatives from America Votes, Colorado Common Cause, and the Colorado Secretary of State's Office testified in support of the bill. The committee adopted amendment L.003 and a conceptual amendment, and referred the bill, as amended, to the House Appropriations Committee.

Amendment L.003, essentially a strike-below amendment:

- ! required the Department of State to compare each signature on a candidate petition with the signature stored in SCORE for any candidate petition filed for an election conducted on or after January 1, 2018;
- ! allowed an employee of the Department of State to notify a candidate within three days of identifying a signature deficiency on a candidate petition;
- ! created a process for candidates to correct signature deficiencies and circulator affidavits; and
- ! removed the electronic petition gathering pilot program from the bill.

The conceptual amendment corrected a typographical error in amendment L.003.

House Appropriations Committee (March 31, 2017). The House Appropriations Committee referred the bill, unamended, to the House Committee of the Whole.

House second reading (April 4, 2017). The House adopted the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee report and Amendment No. 2. Amendment No. 2 amended the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee report to change the bill's title. The House passed the bill on second reading, as amended.

House third reading (April 5, 2017). The House passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

Senate Action

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee (April 12, 2017). At the hearing, representatives from Colorado Common Cause and the Colorado Secretary of State's Office testified in support of the bill. The committee referred the bill, unamended, to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Senate Appropriations Committee (April 18, 2017). The Senate Appropriations Committee referred the bill, unamended, to the Senate Committee of the Whole with a recommendation that it be placed on the consent calendar.

Senate second reading (April 20, 2017). The Senate passed the bill on second reading with no amendments.

Senate third reading (April 21, 2017). The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.