



ELECTIONS BULLETIN

Office of the VT Secretary of State – Elections Division

(802) 828-2464 FAX: (802) 828-5171

<http://www.sec.state.vt.us>

FOR SEPTEMBER 14TH PRIMARY

To: Senatorial District and County Clerks
From: Kathy DeWolfe, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance
Melanie Jacobs, Elections Administrator
David Crossman, Elections Administrator
Re: **Canvassing Committee Duties following the September 14, 2004 Primary
Preparation of Official Canvassing Report and Certificates of Nomination**
Date: September 7, 2004

Sept 3 to Sept 17, 2004: Independent Candidates **for all offices except Justice of the Peace** must file petitions with the Secretary of State **to be placed on the General Election Ballot. Minor Parties also file their Statements of Nomination for Candidates with the Secretary of State. Justices of the Peace file either statements of nomination by party caucus or committee with the Town Clerk.**

County and Senatorial District Clerks do not have any responsibilities for handling Independent Petitions nor for Minor Party filings. All forms are available from the Secretary of State. In order to assist Independent Candidates for the Vermont Senate you can tell them that the signatures of voters on these petitions **MUST BE VERIFIED BY TOWN CLERKS** before the petition is filed with the Secretary of State. Please feel free to refer any other questions from Independent Candidates to our office.

The canvassing committee meeting for both senate and county offices is at 10:00 a.m. on the third day following the election: **Friday, September 17, 2004.** (17 V.S.A. §2368). At this meeting, the County Clerk, with the assistance of the county party chair for each of the three major parties, will tally the results from the official return of vote forms that you have been given by Town Clerks within your Districts. We have included a list of county party chairs for your use. If your county does not have a chair for one of the parties, you can write or call the state party chair to ask him to designate a representative. If the state party declines to appoint a designee, then you meet with the other available party chairs and if no chairs are available, at least one additional election official. We suggest that you call or send a note to the party chairs to remind them of their responsibilities for the canvassing committee meeting.

Please make sure that you have received all of the election results from the towns within your senatorial district or county. Please note that there are some towns that are in one county but within a different senatorial district. Listed below are the towns that will have different county and senatorial district clerks:

- All towns in Essex County will send a copy to the Orleans County Clerk for the Essex-Orleans Senatorial District.
- Grand Isle, Isle LaMotte, North Hero and South Hero (from Grand Isle County), will send a copy to the Chittenden County Clerk for the Grand Isle Senatorial District.
- Alburg, which is in Grand Isle County, will send a copy to the Franklin County Clerk for the Franklin Senatorial District.
- Brandon, which is in Rutland County, will send a copy to the Addison County Clerk for the Addison Senatorial District.
- Wilmington, which is in Windham County, will send a copy to the Bennington County Clerk for the Bennington Senatorial District.
- Bradford, Fairlee, Newbury, Orange, Topsham, and West Fairlee, which are in Orange County, will send a copy to the Caledonia County Clerk for the Caledonia Senatorial District.
- Montgomery and Richford, which are in Franklin County, and Eden and Wolcott, which are in Lamoille County, will send a copy to the Orleans County Clerk for the Essex-Orleans Senatorial District.

Kathy DeWolfe, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance, 828-2304 (kdewolfe@sec.state.vt.us)

Melanie Jacobs, Elections Administrator, 828-0175 (mjacobs@sec.state.vt.us)

David Crossman, Elections Administrator, 828-0771 (dcrossman@sec.state.vt.us)

At the canvassing committee meeting the ceremony is brief. Your committee will tally the votes from the Official Return of Votes sent to you by the town clerks in your Senatorial District, Probate District(s) and your county. The Official return of vote forms (ORV's) this year will be laser printed and copied, so there will not be any hard-to-read colored form paper. We are also urging Town Clerks to get together to hand deliver the ORV's to you or make sure they are mailed on Wednesday morning. If you have not received these reports by Thursday afternoon, call the Town Clerk(s) and ask them to bring a copy to you before 10 a.m. on Friday.

Enclosed with this memorandum are the Canvassing Report Forms for you to use at your Canvassing Committee meeting for the Democratic, Progressive, and Republican candidates running for State Senator in your senatorial district(s) and for the candidates running for High Bailiff in your county.

We will not send any tally or summary sheets for the Primary to County or Senatorial Clerks. We think that using a spreadsheet in Excel is the easiest way to do a tally of all of the results from the Official Return of Votes that are sent to you.

A few reminders for your counting. **If there are any candidate names printed on the party ballot in a race, then the candidate with the highest number of votes wins, whether write-in or preprinted on the ballot.** If there are no candidate names printed on the party ballot for a particular race, then a Write-In Candidate must receive at least ½ half (or 50%) of the number of votes required for a petition for that office, in order to be declared the winner. A candidate for high bailiff needs 100 signatures on a petition to have his or her name added to a primary ballot. So, a write-in candidate for high bailiff in a party with no candidates printed on the ballot must receive at least 50 votes in order to win the primary and receive a certificate of nomination by a party to be placed on the ballot for the General Election. 17 V.S.A. §2370

If there are no names on the ballot for a race, and no candidate for a particular county office or senatorial office receives 50 votes, then there is NO NOMINATION for that party for that office. (State Senate candidates need 50 votes to win as a write-in if there are no names on the ballot for that race and party.) (17 V.S.A. §2355)

After you complete the tally for each office, fill out a copy of the Official Canvassing Report for each County Office for each party (this year it is just Bailiff for County Office and for the Senators in each party in your Senatorial District.)

Then complete a Certificate of Nomination for each winner/nominee for each office for each party and have them signed by the members of the canvassing committee. 17 V.S.A. §2371 The law requires the canvassing committee **to mail or deliver in person** a copy of the original signed Certificate of Nomination to each candidate nominated in a party primary within two days of the canvassing meeting.

Immediately after your meeting, fax the completed canvassing reports to us at (802) 828-5171.

Then make a copy of the Certificates of Nomination for your files and for our office and mail or hand deliver Certificates of Nomination to all winning candidates.

Finally, mail the originals of the completed canvassing committee reports along with a copy of each Certificate of Nomination to: Elections Division, Secretary of State, 26 Terrace Street, Montpelier, VT 05609-1101.

We have enclosed only ONE COPY OF EACH FORM. **Please make copies** before you fill out the Canvassing Reports or Certificates of Nomination. If it would be easier for you to have an electronic copy to use, send an email request to Melanie at mjacobs@sec.state.vt.us and she will email you the forms as an attachment.

PLEASE CALL US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

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Please make multiple copies of each form before you begin to fill in forms!!

Form for Official Report of the Canvassing Committee for the County Office of High Bailiff

Form for Official Report of the Canvassing Committee for State Senator

Form for Certificates of Nomination

List of Major Party Chairs

List of Towns within County

List of Towns with Senatorial District

