

Acceptable Petition Signatures

The purpose of elections-related petitions is to gather signatures to show support for a candidate or position. After the petition is submitted, the filing officer will determine whether there are sufficient number of signatures that meet eligibility requirements. Candidates or campaigns collecting signatures should understand the following practices of the Office of the Secretary of State regarding what is an acceptable signature.

Figure 1 Example of Nominating Petition Signature Area

SIGNER'S OATH							
"I swear (or affirm) that I know the contents and purpose of this petition and that I signed the petition only once and of my own free will."							
ALL INFORMATION ON THIS PETITION IS SUBJECT TO PUBLIC INSPECTION							
*****ALL INFORMATION MUST BE FILLED IN BY PERSON(S) SIGNING THE PETITION UNLESS DISABILITY PREVENTS THE PERSON(S) FROM DOING SO.*****							
	DATE	PRINT FIRST, MIDDLE, AND LAST NAME	YEAR OF BIRTH (If born in 1998 list month and day)	SIGNATURE	RESIDENCE ADDRESS (number and street or route and box number) (Not a P.O. Box)	CITY OR TOWNSHIP	COUNTY
1.							
2.							

Blank Year of Birth

Year of Birth should not be blank.

Minnesota Rules 8205.1030, subpart 2 states “the person signing the petition shall complete the signature, date, name, year of birth, and residence address lines on the petition.” The standard practice of the Secretary of State’s Office has been to reject signatures that do not list the year of birth because giving no information does not qualify as completing the signature line. It must be possible to determine eligibility to sign and without a year of birth eligibility cannot be established.

Ditto Marks

Ditto marks may be used for Date, Year of Birth, Residence Address, City/Township, and County, and may NOT be used for the Signature and Name.

Ditto marks are not specifically addressed in the Petition Rules. The standard practice of the Secretary of State’s Office is to require an actual signature on the petition by the signatory and not to allow ditto marks to substitute for the actual signature or the person’s name. However, if the ditto marks are used on other parts of the signature line it is acceptable as long as it is clear to what information the ditto marks are referring.

Middle Names

Middle names are not required, but there must be enough information to verify eligibility of the person signing.

Minnesota Rules 8205.1050, subpart 2b states: “the filing officer shall inspect the petition to determine whether it has been signed by the required number of signatories and whether the signatories meet the applicable eligibility requirements.” It does not specifically state that the signatory provide their complete legal name including their full middle name. The practice of the Secretary of State’s Office is to not require a complete middle-name. However, it is necessary to provide a complete enough name to verify the eligibility of the person who is signing the petition.