

## Making Participation in the Petition Process Accessible to Voters with Disabilities

The act of creating, filing, circulating or signing a petition or referendum is one of the most active forms of participating in our democratic process. Yet many voters with disabilities are hindered or completely excluded from participation either as a result of specific requirements in current guidelines which cannot possibly be met or due to lack of accommodation.

### Questions and Concerns

1. Do petition guidelines come from SOS or CACEO? Who creates the regulations? Who enforces them?
2. Since the registration address rather than the residential address is required, would that not catch more fraud attempts than matching hand writing?
3. What accommodations are offered to disabled voters who wish to create, submit or circulate petitions?  
(Note: Not all deaf voters use standard written language? How can circulator guidelines be adapted to allow voters who are unable to create a hand-written circulator declaration participate? What must a circulator witness a signer doing?, for instance?)
4. Could SOS office manage accessibility of all petitions and referenda? (Provide all text in accessible formats, (ASL, large print, screen-reader-friendly formats, audio, etc.) Each alternative version of the petition text should include contact information which could be used by the voter who may wish to sign the petition or referendum.
5. We need clearer documentation regarding witness requirements and procedures for those voters signing a petition, who cannot physically write their address.  
(Notes: No space on many petitions for witness information. Nothing in 2024 guidelines seems to say anything about signers needing a witness if unable to write their address, or that circulator cannot be a witness. Otherwise, If no third person is present, voters who are unable to legibly write their address cannot participate in the petition process. Most of these voters do not even know they need to have their signature witnessed. The act of voting in person does not require a witness, although the voter offers a signature by what someone else says is the correct address.)
6. What is the process for changing the guidelines so that all voters can participate fully in the petition or referendum process?