



ALEX PADILLA | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ELECTIONS DIVISION

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March 20, 2020

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 20066

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Jana M. Lean
Chief, Elections Division

RE: COVID-19 and Initiative Petition Filing

With growing concerns about the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and to take precautions against the spread of disease, many county governments have restricted, among other things, public access to county offices. A number of statewide initiative petitions are cleared for circulation and a number of them have approaching circulation deadlines.

Elections Code section 9030 provides that initiative petitions "shall be filed" with the elections official. Although the most current practice has been to accept the petitions in county elections offices, in-person filing is not mandatory and might not be possible given county office closures.

If your county elections office is closed to the public, it is important to offer opportunities for the public to file their petitions in ways other than in-person filing. Counties should consider offering, and notifying the public of, "by appointment" hours, or specific office hours for petition filing/drop off and/or encourage the public to mail in their petitions. For whatever options you provide, please ensure that you adopt specific COVID-19 safety precautions and sanitizing protocols. Lastly, your office should attempt to reach out to the public regarding your office's plan via county website notifications, social media postings, and/or outreach to known petition signature gathering businesses.

In addition, we suggest that you carry out the above recommendations for any county, city, and/or district petitions as well.

Please contact Rachelle Delucchi at rdelucch@sos.ca.gov should you have any questions. Thank you.