

Request to SOS

From: State VAAC (working group: Making the petition process accessible to voters with disabilities)

Date to be approved: October 29, 2025

1. Description of question

The committee is asking the SOS to consider encouraging the state legislature to add clarifying language to Elections code section 100.5, in order to address the following outstanding questions:

A. Witness requirement: According to elections code section 100.5, if a petition signer cannot physically write their address on the petition form, due to a physical disability, requiring another person to print the address, an additional signature from a witness is required.

Clarifications needed:

- Voters need language on the petition document itself stating this requirement.
- Voters need adequate space for witness signatures.
- Voters need to know how an address is deemed to have been written by a different person, thereby invalidating the signature on the petition.

Clarifying this language allows all petition circulators and signers to comply with requirements, thus ensuring full participation in the democratic process for all.

B. Methods of affixing physical address to petition: According to Elections code section 100.5 petition signers must physically write their address in addition to providing a valid signature on the petition document.

Clarifications needed:

- Can the signer use a stamp for personally affixing their address to the petition, especially if such a stamp was used during the voting process as an accommodation for a disability?

- Voters need to know how a hand-written address is compared against an address entered digitally during an online registration process.

Clarifying this language will allow voters to have any accommodating tools such as an address stamp available when participating in the democratic process.

2. Reasons for this request

As the VAAC is an advisory, not an advocacy committee, it does not have authority to suggest or propose legislation. While the SOS also does not propose legislation, there is opportunity to assist or guide the legislature in addressing critical election-related concerns such as this.

3. Where responses to this request should be sent

Responses should be sent back to the VAAC with special attention to the petitions/signatures working group, so as to inform the committee as to the response from the Sos. If the SOS chooses not to communicate with the legislature, committee members may be asked to contact their legislators as individual citizens and suggest this clarifying legislation.

4. Proposed timeline for this request to be implemented:

The committee would like a response within 1 month, as this is approaching the end of the term for its current members. It is important for committee members to be informed of the disposition of the item so individuals may move forward if this cannot be continued as a committee project in 2026.