

To: All Registrars of Voters

From: Legislation and Elections Administration Division

Date: March 9, 2017

Re: Calculation of Required Signatures for Primary Petitions

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This memorandum is intended to address the issue of the calculation of the required signature total for primary petitions. More specifically, this memorandum will address the timing and creation of the enrollment list created for use during the endorsement period for municipal office and the calculation of the required number of signatures for primary petitions for municipal office.

It is important to be clear that this memorandum is intended to address the calculation of the required number of signatures for primary petitions for municipal office. Primary petitions for statewide and district offices are issued by the Secretary of the State.

Connecticut General Statutes §9-400(c) defines the time and basis for the calculation of the required number of signatures for statewide and district offices as follows:

“For the purposes of this section, the number of enrolled members of a party shall be determined by the latest enrollment records in the office of the Secretary of the State prior to the earliest date that primary petitions were available. The names of electors on the inactive registry list compiled under section 9-35 shall not be counted for purposes of computing the number of petition signatures required under this section, as provided in section 9-35c.”

Connecticut General Statutes §9-406 contains similar language with regard to the calculation of signature requirements for municipal primary petitions. Connecticut General Statutes §9-406 states that the signature requirement for a municipal primary petition is:

“five per cent of the electors whose names appear upon the last-completed enrollment list of such party in such municipality or in such political subdivision…For the purpose of computing five per cent of the last-completed enrollment list, the registrar shall use the last printed enrollment list and the printed updated list, if any, of a political party certified and last completed by the registrars of voters prior to the date the first primary petition was issued, excluding therefrom the names of individuals who have ceased to be electors.”

Our office has interpreted this language to mean that a municipality must generate an enrollment list of eligible party members at the beginning of the relevant endorsement period to be used at any caucus, town committee meeting or local convention for the endorsement of candidates for municipal office. This is because, it is the conduct of the caucus, town committee meeting or local convention that triggers the availability of primary petitions for municipal office.[[1]](#footnote-1) In addition, any town that does not use a caucus, town committee meeting or local convention to endorse candidates but rather uses a “direct primary” or primary petition process as the sole manner by which candidates are endorsed must also generate an enrollment list at the beginning of the relevant endorsement period because Connecticut General Statutes §9-406 expressly requires an enrollment list to be generated prior to the date the first primary petition is issued.

The reasoning of the legislature with regard to this requirement is clear, to ensure that all candidates running for the same municipal office have the same primary petition signature requirement without regard to when each candidate applies for the primary petition.

1. **Sec. 9-409. Availability and issuance of primary petition forms for candidacies for nomination to municipal office or election as town committee members.** Petition forms for candidacies for nomination to municipal office or for election as members of town committees shall be available from the registrar beginning on the day following the making of the party’s endorsement of a candidate or candidates for such office or position, or beginning on the day following the final day for the making of such endorsement under the provisions of section 9-391, whichever comes first…. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)