

**GUIDELINES  
FOR  
BALLOT  
NAME CERTIFICATION**

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**STATE BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS**

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## **GUIDELINES FOR BALLOT NAME CERTIFICATION**

The following guidelines have been developed by the office of the State Board of Election Commissioners for the purpose of certifying the names and titles proposed to be used by candidates filing for office.

### **Arkansas Code Annotated § 7-7-305. Printing of ballots - Form.**

(c)(1)(A) "A person who shall file for any elective office in this state may use not more than three (3) given names, one (1) of which may be a nickname or any other word used for the purpose of identifying the person to the voters, and may add as a prefix to his or her name the title or an abbreviation of an elective public office the person currently holds.

(B) A person may only use as the prefix the title of a nonpartisan judicial office only if:

(i) The person is currently serving in a nonpartisan judicial office to which the person has been elected in the last election for the office; or

(ii) The person:

(a) Is a candidate for the office of circuit judge or district judge;

(b) Is currently serving in the office of circuit judge or district judge as an appointee; and

(c) Has been serving in that position for at least twelve (12) months.

(2) The person filing for office shall include his or her surname in addition to any given names permitted under subdivision (c)(1)(A) of this section.

(C) A nickname shall not include a professional or honorary title.

(3) The names and titles as proposed to be used by each candidate on the political practice pledge or, if the political practice pledge is not filed by the filing deadline, then the names and titles that appear on the party certificate shall be reviewed no later than one (1) business day after the filing deadline by the Secretary of State for state and district offices and by the county board of election commissioners for county, township, school, and municipal offices.

(4)(A) The name of every candidate shall be printed on the ballot in the form as certified by either the Secretary of State or the county board of election commissioners.

(B) However, the county board of election commissioners may substitute an abbreviated title if the ballot lacks space for the title requested by a candidate.

(C) The county board of election commissioners shall immediately notify a candidate whose requested title is abbreviated by the county board of election commissioners.

(5) A candidate shall not be permitted to change the form in which his or her name will be printed on the ballot after the deadline for filing the political practices pledge."

### **Definition of "name" as referenced in Black's Law Dictionary:**

"A person's 'name' consists of one or more Christian or given names and one surname or family name. It is the distinctive characterization in words by which one is known and distinguished from others, and description, or abbreviation, is not the equivalent of a 'name'."

**A candidate is permitted to use:**

- **A maximum of three (3) "given" names**
  - 1) One name may be a nickname, but not a professional or honorary title
  - 2) A "middle" name shall be considered a "given" name
- **Initials**

Initials are not considered "given" names and, therefore, **not** counted in the maximum of three (3) "given" names
- **Surname or Last name**

Surnames or last names are not considered "given" names and, therefore, **not** counted in the maximum of three (3) "given" names
- **A Suffix**

Suffixes (Jr., Sr., I, II, III) are not considered "given" names and, therefore, **not** counted in the maximum of three (3) "given" names
- **A Prefix**

The title or an abbreviation of the title of an elective public office **currently held**, for instance

  - 1) County Judge or Co. Judge

**A candidate is not permitted to use:**

- **Professional or honorary titles**

Professional or honorary titles (Ph.D., CPA, MD., Doctor, Dr., Reverend, Rev., Chief of Police, General, Lieutenant, Sergeant) are **not** acceptable

The county election commission must review the names and titles proposed to be used by each county, township, school, and municipal candidate for compliance with the statutory requirements of Arkansas Code Annotated § 7-7-305. The election commission must make a final determination on the form in which the candidate's name will appear on the ballot no later than one business day after the filing deadline.

For those candidates whose proposed name and title on the political practices pledge do **not** comply with the statutory requirements, the candidate should be contacted and offered the option to file a revised political practices pledge form.

A candidate is not permitted to change the form in which his or her name will be printed on the ballot after the deadline for filing the political practices pledge.