



CHRISTI JACOBSEN
MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE



**Information for Independent, Minor Party, and Indigent Candidates
for 2026 Federal Election**

Montana Secretary of State

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◆ **Filing Deadlines** ([MCA 13-10-503](#))

- **May 26, 2026** Deadline to submit signed petitions with affidavits of petition signature gatherers to county election administrator.
- **June 1, 2026** Deadline to file Candidate Declaration and Oath of Candidacy and pay filing fee (unless indigent) with appropriate filing officer.

Note: Candidate ballot access is dependent on filing the required campaign finance forms. Contact the Commissioner of Political Practices at <http://politicalpractices.mt.gov>, by email at cpphelp@mt.gov, or (406) 444-2942 for campaign finance information.

◆ **Links (the first link is a PDF filing form for candidates to print, complete, sign in front of a notary, and submit with the filing fee in person or via mail, fax, or email to the appropriate filing office):**

[Declaration for Nomination and Oath of Candidacy
Independent, Minor Party, or Indigent Candidate Petition for Nomination](#)

Use either of the two approved affidavits:

[Affidavit of Signature Gatherer with Notary](#)

[Affidavit of Signature Gatherer with Unsworn Declaration](#)

[County Election Administrators](#)

[2026 Candidate Calendar](#)

[Title 13 Election Laws](#)

◆ **Where to File**

- Candidates submit signed petitions with affidavits of petition signature gatherer forms to the county election administrator of the corresponding county of the petition signers. (e.g. sheets of Gallatin County signers are submitted to the Gallatin County Election Administrator) AND:
 - Candidates for federal, statewide, state district, and legislative offices file their Declaration and Oath of Candidacy and filing fee with the Secretary of State.
 - Candidates for local offices file their Declaration and Oath of Candidacy and filing fee with the county election administrator.

◆ **Signature Requirements** ([MCA 13-10-502](#))

- 4% or more of the total votes cast for the successful candidate for the same office at the last general election:

2026 Offices	Votes Cast for Successful Candidate for the Same Office at the Last General Election	Certified Petition Signatures Required (4% of Votes Cast for Last Successful Candidate)
✓ US Senator, 6-year term	333,674	13,327
✓ US Representative District #1, 2-year term	168,529	6,742
✓ US Representative District #2, 2-year term	181,832	7,274
✓ Public Service Commissioner #1, 4-year term	N/A	2,440
✓ Public Service Commissioner #5, 4-year term	N/A	2,440
✓ State Senator, 4-year term	N/A	273
✓ State Representative, 2-year term	Varies	See chart on page 4

◆ Other Important Candidate Information

- There is **no earliest date** to gather candidate petition signatures or to submit signed candidate petitions to county election administrators. However, the candidate declaration form cannot be filed with the appropriate filing officer before February 17, 2026.
- Independent Candidates:
 - ✓ Under [13-10-507](#), MCA, a person seeking office as an independent candidate may **not** be associated with a political party for 1 year prior to the submission of the person's nomination petition.
 - For the purposes of the law, "associated with a political party" means having run for office in Montana as a partisan candidate or having held a public office in Montana or a precinct committee representative office in Montana with a political party designation.
 - ✓ Individuals cannot file as independent or party candidates for nonpartisan offices.
- Qualified independent and minor party candidates appear on the **general election** ballot only.
- Under [13-10-602](#), MCA, a political party and its regularly nominated candidates, members, and officers have the sole and exclusive right to the use of the party name. A candidate for office may not use any word of the name of any other political party or organization other than that by which the candidate is nominated in a manner that indicates or implies the individual is a candidate of the non-nominating party. An independent or nonpartisan candidate may not use any word of the name of any existing political party or organization in the candidacy in a manner that indicates or implies that the individual is a candidate of that party or organization.
- An individual who files as an **indigent** candidate is not required to pay a filing fee and must submit the same total number of signatures as an independent or minor party candidate. A candidate who files as an indigent-independent candidate or as an indigent-minor party candidate is only required to file one set of petition signatures.
 - ✓ An individual who files as an **indigent major party** candidate must submit signatures to county election officials by February 25, 2026, one week before the March 4th deadline to file the major party declaration for nomination.

- ✓ An individual who files as an **indigent independent or minor party** candidate for the general election must submit signatures to county election officials by May 26, 2026, one week before the June 1st deadline to file the independent/minor party declaration for nomination.

- ✓ An individual who files as an **indigent write-in** candidate:
 - For the **primary** election, candidates must submit signatures to county election officials one week before the applicable deadline to file the write-in declaration for nomination.
 - For the **general** election, candidates must submit signatures to county election officials one week before the applicable deadline to file the write-in declaration for nomination.



Signatures Required in 2026 for Independent, Minor Party, or Indigent Candidates for State Representative

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House Dist.	Last Successful State Representative Candidate	Votes for Last Successful State Representative Candidate	Petition Signatures Required (4% of Votes Cast for Last Successful State Representative Candidate)	House Dist.	Last Successful State Representative Candidate	Votes for Last Successful State Representative Candidate	Petition Signatures Required (4% of Votes Cast for Last Successful State Representative Candidate)
1	Neil Duram	5,541	222	51	Jodee Etchart	3,124	125
2	Tom Millett	4,600	184	52	Bill Mercer	4,522	181
3	Debo Powers	3,554	142	53	Nelly Nicol	4,838	194
4	Lyn Bennett	3,171	127	54	Lee Deming	4,247	170
5	Braxton Mitchell	4,671	187	55	Brad Barker	4,931	197
6	Amy Regier	5,131	205	56	Fiona Nave	6,005	240
7	Courtenay Sprunger	3,081	123	57	Scott Rosenzweig	3,803	152
8	Lukas Schubert	4,030	161	58	Jamie L Isaly	3,690	148
9	Steven C Kelly	4,807	192	59	Ed Stafman	4,851	194
10	Terry Falk	4,350	174	60	Alanah Griffith	3,338	134
11	Ed Byrne	5,214	209	61	Becky Edwards	2,695	108
12	Tracy A Sharp	5,117	205	62	Joshua A Seckinger	2,926	117
13	Linda E Reksten	3,589	144	63	Peter Strand	3,255	130
14	Paul C Fielder	5,133	205	64	Kelly Kortum	3,177	127
15	Thedis Crowe	2,087	83	65	Brian Close	3,456	138
16	Tyson T Running Wolf	2,455	98	66	Eric Matthews	4,009	160
17	Zach Wirth	4,807	192	67	Jedediah Hinkle	3,757	150
18	Llew Jones	3,982	159	68	Caleb Hinkle	4,283	171
19	Jane Weber	1,798	72	69	Ken Walsh	6,222	249
20	Melissa Nikolakakos	2,686	107	70	Shannon Maness	5,384	215
21	Ed Buttrey	3,662	146	71	Scott P Demarois	3,375	135
22	George Nikolakakos	2,017	81	72	Donavon Hawk	3,081	123
23	Eric Tilleman	2,504	100	73	Jennifer Lynch	2,766	111
24	Steve Fitzpatrick	4,019	161	74	Marc J Lee	3,744	150
25	Steve Gist	4,088	164	75	Marta Bertoglio	5,166	207
26	Russel Miner	5,054	202	76	John Fitzpatrick	4,957	198
27	Paul Tuss	2,329	93	77	Jane Gillette	5,458	218
28	Eric Albus	4,118	165	78	Randyn Gregg	4,877	195
29	Valerie Moore	5,026	201	79	Luke Muszkiewicz	3,678	147
30	Morgan Thiel	4,281	171	80	Melissa Romano	2,937	117
31	Frank J Smith	2,182	87	81	Mary M Caferro	3,498	140
32	Mike Fox	2,240	90	82	Pete Elverum	2,990	120
33	Brandon Ler	4,576	183	83	Jill Cohenour	3,549	142
34	Jerry Schillinger	5,554	222	84	Julie Dooling	4,770	191
35	Gary W Parry	4,780	191	85	Kathy Love	5,716	229
36	Greg Kmetz	3,558	142	86	David Bedey	4,798	192
37	Shane Klakken	4,684	187	87	Ron Marshall	5,457	218
38	Greg Oblander	5,894	236	88	Greg Overstreet	5,086	203
39	Kerri Seekins-Crowe	3,151	126	89	Mark A Thane	3,590	144
40	Mike Vinton	3,679	147	90	Curtis J Cochran	5,381	215
41	Jade Sooktis	1,839	74	91	Shelly R Fyant	3,249	130
42	Sidney "Chip" Fitzpatrick	1,922	77	92	Connie Keogh	4,059	162
43	Larry Brewster	2,965	119	93	Katie Sullivan	4,024	161
44	Katie Zolnikov	4,508	180	94	Marilyn Marler	4,076	163
45	Denise Baum	2,603	104	95	ZooeY Zephyr	5,189	208
46	Emma Kerr Carpenter	2,507	100	96	Bob Carter	3,684	147
47	James Reavis	1,819	73	97	Melody Cunningham	3,651	146
48	Curtis Schomer	2,565	103	98	Jonathan Karlen	3,684	147
49	Sherry Essmann	3,063	123	99	Tom France	3,757	150
50	Anthony Nicaastro	4,019	161	100	SJ Howell	4,440	178