Guidelines to Guarantee Your Petition Efforts - Are Not - Invalidated!

Facts you should be aware of before you get signatures on the petition – taken from
MD State Board of Elections
SBE_Petition_Signature_Gathering_FAQ_Revised_3-2-2012

1) All Petition Circulators must be 18 years of age or older. Election Law, Section 6-204(c).

2) As a Petition Circulator, you can also act as a voter registration volunteer. However getting someone to fill out a voter registration form will not allow him or her to sign the petition. The signer would have to be recognized by the election board as a registered voter. You can follow up with them later or have them contact you at a later date to sign the petition, once they receive their voter ID card. This will guarantee they are a recognized registered voter.

3) If someone has moved within MD, is a registered voter elsewhere, but who as yet has not changed their address, they may still sign the petition. As long as they sign using their current residential address. If they are registered to vote within Maryland, the board of elections will verify their signature and make the address change at that level.

4) If signer is registered to vote and under 18 they may sign the petition as long as they will be 18 on or before the next general election date. They must meet their 18th birthday by the next general election. MD Law recently allowed voters to register who are age 16. However, they can not vote until they reach 18 by the next general election.

5) Please use non-smudge free ink for all signatures. Pencils and felt tip can smudge which can invalidate a signatures. So it’s best to use a non-smudge free pen to gather all signatures.

6) After receiving a signature and while the signer is still there make sure to review their signature to make sure it’s accurately filed in. All signers must provide the full month, day and year of signing. The circulator should NOT fill in any part of the date signing. Ditto marks can’t be used. If the full date of signing is not provided by the signer, the signature will be invalidated. Officials will not consider the date of the circulator’s signature as evidence of the date of the signers signature.

7) The signers name has to match the registration list or include all parts of their name required in the statute. Section 6-203 for the Election Law Article which states: To sign a petition, an individual shall:

   (1) sign the individual’s name as it appears on the statewide voter registration list or the individual’s surname of registration and at least one full given name and the initials of any other names.”

For example, if a voter is registered as Margaret Hall Smith, it is permissible for her to sign as Margaret H. Smith or M. Hall Smith. But M.H. Smith or Margaret Smith is not permissible and will be invalidated. Additionally, the use of her nickname, Peggy Smith or her married name Mrs. John Smith will be invalidated. If a voters’ registered name has a suffix (i.e. Jr., Sr., III, etc.) the signature will not be invalidated if the signer fails to include it on the petition.

If the signer is unsure of how their name appears on the registration list they may call the BOE or look at their voter ID Card to see how it appears.

8) You can make as many copies of the petition and the attachments as you like or need. Either by photo copying the petition and its accompanying map and boundaries, or from the download of an electronic copy. Just be sure set your printer to print double sided, so you only have two pages. The petition and map on one page. The boundaries and map on the second page.
9) **DO NOT ALTER THE FORM**, if you need copies just contact your block captain or a member of the organizing committee and either an electronic form for printing will be sent to you or if you can’t print them more copies will be provided. **IF YOU ALTER ANY OF INFORMATION ON THE FORM OR STAPLE ANY ATTACHMENTS TO THE FORM, THE PETITION WILL BE INVALIDATED.**

10) You will need to have copies of the boundaries and map page as a handout should anyone ask to see the boundaries. So it is required to have those with you. If someone asks to keep a copy of the map and boundaries let them. Most people may not even ask to see it, but should they, you will have to provide it to them. If you can’t print more copies contact your block captain or a member of the organizing committee and either an electronic form for printing will be sent to you, or more copies will be provided.

11) You should self-identify, by writing your name on the form prior to collecting any signature. You can fill in your address, city, state, zip and telephone number either before or after the form has been completed. If you do not include your personal information (address, city, state, zip and phone) the PETITION IS INVALIDATED. And by all means **DON’T FORGET TO SIGN THE VERY FIRST PETITION YOU USE FOR YOURSELF. IF YOU ARE A REGISTERED VOTER WHO RESIDES WITHIN PROPOSED BOUNDARY AREA!**

12) All completed petitions should be returned to the organizing committee, or can be mailed to Lusby Muni PO Box 856 Lusby MD 20657. If you have any questions or would like an electronic copy or additional paper copies call them at: (240) 466-1499 and leave a message one of our volunteers will make sure you get what you need ASAP.

**Election LAWS Title 16 subtitle 4 Regarding Petitions §16-401 Offenses Relating to Petitions**

MD election laws state the following:

(a) In general. -- A person may not willfully and knowingly:
- (1) give, transfer, promise, or offer anything of value for the purpose of inducing another person to sign or not sign any petition;
- (2) request, receive, or agree to receive, anything of value as an inducement to sign or not to sign any petition;
- (3) misrepresent any fact for the purpose of inducing another person to sign or not to sign any petition;
- (4) sign the name of any other person to a petition;
- (5) falsify any signature or purported signature to a petition;
- (6) obtain, or attempt to obtain, any signature to a petition by fraud, duress, or force;
- (7) circulate, cause to be circulated, or file with an election authority a petition that contains any false, forged, or fictitious signatures;
- (8) sign a petition that the person is not legally qualified to sign;
- (9) sign a petition more than once; or
- (10) alter any petition after it is filed with the election authority.

(b) Each violation a separate offense. -- Each violation of this section shall be considered a separate offense.

(c) Penalty. -- A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to the penalties provided in Subtitle 10 of this title.