

DIRECTIVE 2026-18

February 24, 2026

To: All County Boards of Elections
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Form of the Official Ballot May 5, 2026 Primary/Special Election

SUMMARY

This Directive provides the certified forms of the official ballots to be used in the May 5, 2026 Primary/Special Election.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please note that, in lieu of issuing a separate Directive with specific details covering ballot layout, proofing, and quantities, the Secretary of State's office is issuing only this Directive, which must be used in conjunction with [Chapter 5 \(Ballots\)](#) of the Election Official Manual (EOM) when preparing ballots for this election. [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM provides specific instructions on the following subjects:

- ballot format;
- voter instructions;
- ballot stubs;
- partisan primary elections;
- seventeen-year-old voters;
- candidate ballots (names, restrictions, political party, rotation, etc.);
- questions and issues ballots;
- ballot proofs;
- overlaps;
- bid requirements;
- ballot quantities;
- logic and accuracy testing; and
- public testing.

I. VERIFYING DISTRICT RELATIONSHIPS

Before programming any aspect of the central tabulating system for the May 5, 2026 Primary/Special Election, boards of elections must verify the accuracy of district relationships in the central tabulating system against the county's voter registration system. This is to ensure that each voter receives the correct ballot style (that is, the correct combination of candidate contests and ballot questions and issues) based upon that voter's residential address.

As a part of the review for accuracy of district relationships between the county's voter registration system and its tabulating system, the board must ensure the following by March 13, 2026:

- A.** The Secretary of State's precinct codes (three alphabet letters) are accurate in the tabulating system and, if appropriate, the county's voter registration system; and
- B.** The precinct names correspond between the two systems.

Note: It is imperative that a board of elections upload to the statewide voter registration database (SWVRD) any changes to district relationships (including wards and precincts) that have been made locally in the county's voter registration system (VRS). Using the report provided by Allison Scott on Wednesday, March 4, 2026 each board must review the report to ensure that all Secretary of State Precinct ID Codes provided on the report match the board's voter registration system. Boards will have until March 13, 2026 to return the reviewed report, noting any changes.

In addition, the board must verify at least one voter record for each precinct in the SWVRD against the county's VRS to ensure accuracy.

II. OFFICIAL BALLOT FORMS

Each board of elections must provide a separate ballot for each political party listing candidates for nomination or election in a primary election.¹ Accordingly, accompanying this Directive are the following ballot forms:

- Official Democratic Primary Ballot;
- Official Libertarian Primary Ballot;
- Official Republican Primary Ballot; and

¹ [R.C. 3513.13](#).

- Official Questions and Issues Ballot.

The names of all candidates, who have not withdrawn pursuant to R.C. 3513.30, must be arranged, rotated, and printed upon the ballot in accordance with the provisions of Ohio Revised Code Chapters 3505, 3506, and 3513 and [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM.

III. **ORDER OF OFFICES FOR ALL PRIMARY BALLOTS²**

A. The order of offices for **Democratic Party** ballots shall be as follows:

- Governor and Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General
- Auditor of State
- Secretary of State
- Treasurer of State
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-1-2027)
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-2-2027)
- U.S. Senator (Unexpired term ending 1-3-2029)
- Representative to Congress
- State Senator
- State Representative
- Member of State Central Committee, Man
- Member of State Central Committee, Woman
- Judge of the Court of Appeals
- Judge of the Court of Common Pleas
- County Court Judge
- County Commissioner
- County Auditor
- Member of County Central Committee

B. The order of offices for **Republican Party** ballots shall be as follows:

- Governor and Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General
- Auditor of State
- Secretary of State
- Treasurer of State
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-1-2027)
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-2-2027)

² [R.C. 3513.13](#); [R.C. 3505.03](#)

- U.S. Senator (Unexpired term ending 1-3-2029)
- Representative to Congress
- State Senator
- State Representative
- Member of State Central Committee, Man
- Member of State Central Committee, Woman
- Judge of the Court of Appeals
- Judge of the Court of Common Pleas
- County Court Judge
- County Commissioner
- County Auditor
- Member of County Central Committee

C. The order of offices for **Libertarian Party ballots shall be as follows:**

- Governor and Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General
- Auditor of State
- Secretary of State
- Treasurer of State
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-1-2027)
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-2-2027)
- U.S. Senator (Unexpired term ending 1-3-2029)
- Representative to Congress
- State Senator
- State Representative
- Member of State Central Committee
- Judge of the Court of Appeals
- Judge of the Court of Common Pleas
- County Court Judge
- County Commissioner
- County Auditor
- Member of County Central Committee

D. Write-In Vote Blank Spaces³

³ [R.C. 3513.041](#); [R.C. 3513.14](#).

A write-in space must be provided on the ballot for every office for which the board of elections or Secretary of State received a valid declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate. If there is both a full and an unexpired term for the same office, place the full term first followed by the unexpired term.

- For **County Central Committee**: The board may accept valid declarations of intent to be a write-in candidate and provide a write-in space on the ballot for county central committee, even if no declarations of candidacy were filed for the positions.⁴
- For **State Central Committee**: The board may not accept declarations of intent to be a write-in candidate for state central committee. If no valid declarations of candidacy were filed for the positions, the office does not appear on the ballot.⁵

Below is the list of valid write-in candidates for the May 5, 2026 Primary/Special Election.

**i. Governor and Lieutenant Governor
Libertarian Party**

- Travis Jon Vought and Christy Jo Orr

**ii. Auditor of State
Libertarian Party**

- Aidan Michael Jeffery

IV. OFFICIAL QUESTIONS AND ISSUES BALLOT

Offices for which candidates may be nominated or elected are presented on the ballot first, followed by the questions and issues. The Official Questions and Issues Ballot must be used for all voting systems. The attached ballot form contains examples of some of the local questions and issues that may appear on the ballot in your county. Not every category or type of question/issue will appear on every ballot in every county, so please apply as much of the form as is appropriate to the ballots in your county.

Additional instructions on headings, ballot language, and percentage of votes can be found in [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM.

⁴ [O.A.G. 70-011](#).

⁵ [R.C. 3513.14](#).

Questions and issues must be grouped together in the following political subdivision order for elections held in 2026:⁶

- A.** School and Other Districts
- B.** County
- C.** Municipal
- D.** Township

No statewide issue will appear on the May 5, 2026 Primary/Special Election ballot.

Each board of elections may determine the specific order in which the questions/issues within each group are placed on the ballot in that county, however, a board should adopt a method for doing so (for example, ordered alphabetically or by date filed, etc.). Absentee ballots must contain identical ordering of issues within groups to regular ballots.

Please review the appropriate sections of the Ohio Revised Code, local charter (if applicable), and the [Questions and Issues Handbook](#) for ballot language and formats that are not on the attached Official Questions and Issues Ballot.

V. ABSENTEE BALLOTS⁷

Each board of elections must have absentee ballots printed and ready for use by Friday, March 20, 2026 (46 days before the May 5, 2026 Primary/Special Election) for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters, and by April 7, 2026 for regular (non-UOCAVA) absentee voters.

A copy of each absentee ballot (candidates and questions and issues) must be sent to the Secretary of State's office at least 47 days before the election, by Thursday, March 19, 2026. Absentee ballots must be uploaded to the SharePoint site.

VI. CANDIDATES CERTIFIED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

A. Governor and Lieutenant Governor

Democratic Party

- Amy Acton and David Pepper

Republican Party

- Heather Hill and Stuart Moats

⁶ [Question and Issues Handbook, P. 9, "Rotation of Questions/Issues on the Ballot"; R.C. 3505.06\(B\).](#)

⁷ [R.C. 3509.01; R.C. 3511.04.](#)

- Casey Putsch and Kimberly C. Georgetown
- Vivek Ramaswamy and Robert A. McColley

Libertarian Party

- Don Kissick and James L. Mills

B. Attorney General

Democratic Party

- Elliot Forhan
- John J. Kulewicz

Republican Party

- Keith Faber

C. Auditor of State

Democratic Party

- Annette Blackwell

Republican Party

- Frank LaRose

D. Secretary of State

Democratic Party

- Bryan Hambley
- Allison Russo

Republican Party

- Robert Sprague
- Marcell Strbich

Libertarian Party

- Tom Pruss

E. Treasurer of State

Democratic Party

- Seth Walsh

Republican Party

- Jay Edwards
- Kristina D. Roegner

F. Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1/1/2027)

Democratic Party

- Marilyn Zayas

Republican Party

- Daniel R. Hawkins

G. Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1/2/2027)

Democratic Party

- Jennifer Brunner

Republican Party

- Andrew King
- Jill Lanzinger
- Ronald Lewis
- Colleen O'Donnell

H. U.S. Senator (Unexpired term ending 1-3-2029)

Democratic Party

- Sherrod Brown
- Ron Kincaid

Republican Party

- Jon Husted

Libertarian Party

- Jeffrey M. Kanter

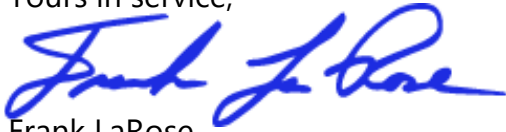
- William B. Redpath

VII. CANDIDATES FOR OTHER DISTRICT OFFICE (for example, Congress, Court of Appeals Judge, State Central Committee, State Senate, and State Representative)

Candidates for other district offices must be certified to the appropriate board(s) of elections by the most populous county board of elections of the district. If a less-populous county of a district has not received a list of candidates, it must contact the most populous county before programming ballots.

If you have any questions regarding this Directive or [Chapter 5](#) of the EOM, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose

Ohio Secretary of State