

# Presidential Primary Election

## San Bernardino County Rules Governing Candidate Statements

March 3, 2020



**Registrar of Voters**

## **A. Candidate Statement**

A candidate statement is a written statement provided by the candidate that is printed in either the state or county *Voter Information Guide*.

Candidates who elect to have a statement printed in the Voter Information Guide are required to pay the estimated costs of including their candidate statement in the Voter Information Guide at the time of filing. The actual costs of inclusion will be determined after the election, and participating candidates will either receive a refund or be responsible for paying additional costs at that time.

Estimated costs for candidate statements are calculated by district per registered voter. Payments are accepted in the form of cash, personal check, cashier's check and money order, or credit card. Listed in Appendix Q are the estimated costs for candidate statements by district for this election.

## **B. Composing / Submitting a Candidate Statement**

All candidates, regardless of whether or not they choose to publish a Candidate Statement, are required to complete and file a *Candidate Statement Form*. On this form, candidates will indicate whether or not they elect to file a candidate statement, and will submit the printed text of the statement if they choose to file one.

- Prior to composing their candidate statement, candidates should review the candidate statement rules and regulations below.
- Candidates may fill out the Candidate Statement Form prior to filing and then bring the statement with them when they file. The form can be accessed on the Registrar of Voters website at <http://www.sbcountyelections.com>.

Prior to publication, candidate statements are available for public examination for 10 days beginning immediately following the filing deadline. During the public examination period, the Registrar of Voters or any voter of the jurisdiction may seek a writ of mandate or an injunction requiring that any or all material in the candidate statement be amended or deleted (Cal. Elec. Code §13313(b)).

In addition to seeking a writ of mandate or an injunction, the Registrar of Voters may strike any language not in compliance with California Elections Code.

## **C. Candidate Statement Composition**

California Elections Code §13307, §13307.5 and §13307 dictate the rules relating to the composition of candidate statements.

### **Candidate Statements for County, City, School District and Special District Offices**

California Elections Code §13307 dictates that candidate statements shall be a brief description of no more than two-hundred words, shall be printed in type of uniform size and

darkness, and with uniform spacing. Jurisdictions may increase the maximum number of words allowed, up to four-hundred.

The Registrar of Voters interprets this to mean that candidate statements shall be typed in upper and lower case letters when appropriate, and not all capital letters. Additionally, candidate statements shall be free from non-standard or atypical spacing, and shall not contain any *italicized* or **bolded** letters.

California Elections Code §13307 dictates that candidate statements shall be a brief description that expresses the candidate's education and qualifications, and shall not include party affiliation of the candidate, nor membership or activity in partisan political organizations. Nothing in the candidate's statement shall be deemed to make any such statement or the authors thereof free or exempt from any civil or criminal action or penalty because of any false, slanderous or libelous statements.

California Elections Code §13308 requires that statements shall be limited to a recitation of the candidate's own personal background and qualifications. Statements shall not in any way make reference to other candidates for that office or to another candidate's qualifications, character, or activities. The election official shall not cause to be printed or circulated any statement that the election official determines is not so limited, or that includes any reference prohibited by this section.

It is the policy of the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters that a candidate's background may include details regarding the candidate's platform. A candidate's platform describes what they stand for and what they intend to do if they are elected.

It is the policy of the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters that if a candidate statement is determined to not be in compliance with the Elections Code, the Registrar of Voters may:

1. Strike any language not in compliance;
2. May not print or circulate the statement; or
3. May seek a writ of mandate or an injunction, requiring that the candidate statement be amended or deleted.

It is the policy of the Registrar of Voters that the candidate be fully responsible for ensuring that all spelling, punctuation, and grammar in a Candidate Statement is correct and free from errors. The Registrar of Voters is not responsible for proofreading for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Only a cursory review of the candidate's statement will be done at the time of filing to ensure that the statement is acceptable.

It is the policy of the Registrar of Voters that, in order for a candidate statement to be printed in the *Voter Information Guide*, candidate statements must fit inside a half page square that measures 4.79" wide by 3.14" tall, and must be printed in size 8 Arial font.

In computing the word count of a candidate statement, it is important for candidates to keep in mind that only the text of the statement is included in the calculation of the word count. The title of the candidate statement, which includes the candidate's name, age, and

occupation, does not affect the word count for a statement. Examples for counting words within a candidate statement are provided :

Category	Example	Word Count
Acronyms	SBSU, PTA, U.S.M.C., S.B.P.D.	One
Date	01/01/2010	One
Date	January 1, 2000	One
Email	jdoe@rov.sbcounty.gov	One
Geographical name- (Specific City, County, or State)	San Bernardino, or County of San Bernardino	One
Geographical area- (Not a Specific City, County, or State)	Victor Valley, or Inland Empire	Two
Hyphenated words (Published in U.S dictionary within the past 10 years)	mother-in-law	One
Hyphenated words (Not published in U.S dictionary within the past 10 years)	Taxpayer-advocate	Two
Internet address	www.sbcountyelections.com	One
Numbers	1, 10, or 100	One
Numerical Computations	50%, ½, etc.	One
Telephone numbers	(909) 387-8300	One
Symbols	& or #	One

#### D. Policy on Endorsements

It is the policy of the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters that any named individual or specific organization listed as an endorsement in a candidate statement (see Example A below) must be verified as endorsing the candidate prior to printing in the *Voter Information Guide and Sample Ballot*. Verification of the endorsement must be in the form of a copy of a letter of endorsement, or in a direct communication from the endorser to the Registrar of Voters in the form of an email or facsimile correspondence. All endorsements or verification of endorsements from an individual or organization of a candidate must be submitted no later than five days after the end of the filing period.

Example A: "...I am endorsed by County Supervisor John Doe, Senator Jane Smith and the San Bernardino League of Women Voters."

In Example A, the Registrar of Voters would require an email, facsimile or copy of the letter of endorsement from Supervisor Doe, Senator Smith and the San Bernardino League of Women Voters to allow these endorsements to be printed.

Example B: "...I am endorsed by police, firefighters, nurses and teachers throughout San Bernardino County."

In Example B, the Registrar of Voters would not require verification of the endorsement because the statement does not identify a specific individual or organization.

## E. Candidate Statement Examples

The following examples are provided to demonstrate the difference between an acceptable and unacceptable candidate statement:

### Example of an Acceptable Candidate Statement

I believe all residents deserve a high quality of water, and excellent service at an affordable cost.

As your next elected member of the Board of Directors of the High Plains Water District, my legal education will enable me to advocate effectively on your behalf. My years of experience of having served on several boards has prepared me for working well with other board members – by supporting good policy and ensuring all important issues are discussed when tough decisions need to be made.

My family has lived in this community for over thirty years and we've been blessed to be able to give back to our community through many years of community volunteerism – my wife volunteers at our local senior center and boy's and girl's club, and our daughters have been known to sing and dance at or participate at various local community events.

Qualifications – Community Volunteer

- Board of Directors – Neighborhood Housing Services: 1985 – 2000.
- Commissioner – Community Action Commission: 2005 – Present
- Board of Directors – Douglasville Hospital: 2004-2006
- President – Occupational Health Committee 2010 – Present

Thank you for your support!

Vote for Thomas Garrison! Thank you for your support!

### Example of an Unacceptable Candidate Statement

The highlighted portions are examples of what is not allowed in the candidate statement, including making reference to another candidate and improper formatting, such as using italics, bolding, improper capitalization, non-uniform spacing, and using various sized fonts.

I believe all residents deserve a high quality of water, and excellent service at an affordable cost. The current director, Tom Smith, hasn't been doing his job and is cheating the taxpayers.

As your next elected member of the Board of Directors of the High Plains Water District, *my legal education* will enable me to advocate effectively on your behalf. My years of experience of having served on several boards has prepared me for working well with other board members – by supporting good policy and ensuring all important issues are discussed when **tough decisions** need to be made.

My family has lived in this community for over Thirty Years and we've been blessed to be able to give back to our community through many years of **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM**. My wife volunteers at our local senior center and boy's and girl's club, and our daughters have been known to sing and dance at or participate at various local community events.

Qualifications – Community Volunteer

- Board of Directors – Neighborhood Housing Services: 1985 – 2000.
- Commissioner – Community Action Commission: 2005 – Present
- Board of Directors – Douglasville Hospital: 2004-2006
- President – Occupational Health Committee 2010 – Present

Thank you for your support!

\* \* \* \* \* Vote for Thomas Garrison! \* \* \* \* \*

## Candidate Statement Checklist

The following checklist is provided to assist candidates with identifying errors that may prevent a statement from being printed as intended in the *Voter Information Guide*:

1. Is your statement prepared on the form provided by the Registrar of Voters?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. (a) Federal & State Offices - Does your statement contain 250 words or less?		
OR	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. (b) Local Offices - Does your statement contain 200 words or less?		
3. Is your statement free of extra spaces?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. With the exception of acronyms, is your statement free of words spelled in all CAPITAL letters?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is your statement free of bold letters or characters?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is your statement free of italicized words?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is your statement free of references, direct or implied, to any other candidate or officeholder?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is your statement free of any references, direct or implied, to any other candidate or officeholder's qualifications, character, or activities?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is your statement free of any reference to your political party affiliation or partisan political activity?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Is your statement free of any false information, or information that may be deemed as slanderous or libelous?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Is your statement limited to your own personal background, education, qualifications, and platform upon which you will run?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
12. If your statement contains endorsements, do you have documentation to present from the individual(s) or specific organization(s) endorsing you?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered "No" to any of the questions above, your statement may contain content that is prohibited by California Elections Code or Registrar of Voters policy.