



Independence Party

Petitioning Guide & Tips

Who can circulate the petition?

- Circulators must be at least 18 and US citizens. They do not have to be registered Illinois voters or even Illinois residents. However, a circulator cannot circulate our petitions if they have already circulated a petition for the candidate of another party, or for an independent candidate, for the 2026 primary or general election. (There is a lawsuit pending that might change this rule, but for now, we should follow it.) It is permissible to circulate more than one petition for Independence Party candidates – for example, for Andrew Cottingham as well as Pierce/Cabrera. A person not able to circulate can buddy up with a circulator who witnesses the signing.

Who can sign the petition?

- Any person registered to vote in the State of Illinois can sign the petition, except persons who have signed another petition for a different “new” party candidates for the 2026 general election. For example, a person who has already signed a petition for a Libertarian Party candidate should not sign ours, even if the petition was for a candidate for a different office. If they signed another petition for the primary election, however (such as for Pritzker or Bailey, etc.), they can still sign our petition.

Printing and filling out petitions

- If you print your own petition copies, they must be on letter (8.5 x 11) paper and must be in exactly the same format as the pdf standard format that we are using. Be sure to “print actual size” and avoid any printer scaling settings to ensure the petition prints with the correct margins.
- Do not alter any of the text on the petition! The boilerplate information on the top and bottom must be identical. However, if you expect to gather a number of petitions, it is a good idea to fill out all of your information on the bottom of one clean sheet, where the form asks for the circulator’s printed name and address (except your signature, which must be done in front of a notary), and then make copies of that sheet to use when you are gathering signatures. This can save you a lot of time later.
- **DO NOT NUMBER YOUR PETITION SHEETS!** They get numbered by the coordinators later.
- You can fill out the circulator information at the bottom at any time, **BUT DO NOT SIGN THE CIRCULATOR LINE UNLESS YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF A NOTARY!**

Getting ready to go out

- Get the easiest signatures first: your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and yourself! Create a list of prospects in advance to help you get the easiest signatures. Have more pens than clipboards on hand – just in case. Have more petitions on hand than you think you need.
- If you’re circulating petitions for more than one candidate (e.g., Pierce/Cabrera and Cottingham), have at least one clipboard for each type of petition. If you are attending an event with a lot of people, it helps to have two clipboards per candidate, so that more than one person in a group can sign at the same time.

Where to circulate

- Farmer's Markets, train stops and platforms, particularly when people are waiting for the train, not leaving to get to work or home. Large outdoor festivals. Get a group together! People waiting anywhere, such as crowds outside concert venues or people standing along parade routes.
- Going door to door is usually not as productive as going to events, but if you do go door to door, 5-8 pm (but before dark) is generally the best time.

Tips on collecting signatures – what to say

- Always be courteous. Start with the simple and important question: "Are you registered to vote in Illinois, sir/ma'am?" A "Yes" allows you to ask the next question: "Will you be willing to sign a petition to help put an Independence Party candidate for governor on the ballot, so voters have another choice?" (Use your own words, but that's the essence of it.)
- Avoid discussions! If you are spending more than 2 or 3 minutes trying to convince someone to sign, you're probably wasting your time, and missing other people who will sign. If people want to know what the Independence Party is or who Gary is, give a short answer, give them the website and/or hand them a palm card. It may not always be possible to politely exit the conversation, but suggest that they visit the website for more information and politely say "thank you for your interest, but I need to speak to other people here."
- Once your potential signer shows a willingness to sign, explain what is needed is **THE ADDRESS AT WHICH THEY ARE REGISTERED**. If a person says: "I'm registered to vote but I'm not sure if I'm registered at my current address," they should put the address that matches where their registration will be at the end of May. In other words, if they are sure to register at their current address by that time, they should put their current address. If they are not sure, have them put the address where they believe they are most likely registered. Then give them the clipboard & **BE QUIET** while they sign, except when they make a mistake. When this happens, simply ask them to start over **ON THE NEXT LINE**.
- Be sure all information is complete before parting with your signer. **THANK YOUR SIGNER FOR HIS OR HER TIME.**
- When encountering hostile people: Simply back off, wish these kinds of folks a good day, and continue on to the next possible signer.
- When a location yields few if any signatures within say, 30 minutes, move on to some other area. Adapt to the circumstances.

Technical notes on circulating the petition

- All voters must sign the petition in your presence. You can't leave it on a table and have people sign it while you're not around.
- If a voter uses "ditto marks", it is legally okay for you to write in the appropriate information. If a person is disabled or having trouble writing, you can also fill in that information. **THE ONLY THING YOU CAN NOT WRITE IN FOR THEM IS THEIR SIGNATURE.**
- Voters signing the petition must sign their name the same way they did when they originally registered to vote. Common problems involve people with hyphenated last names and people who use their middle names but tend to fill out government paperwork with their first names.

- Make sure the voters sign in the signature column and print in the printed name column! If they mistakenly do the reverse, you can use an arrow to indicate the error, but the better practice is to **HAVE THEM SKIP TO THE NEXT LINE**.
- If an error of any kind is made on a line, you, or the signer, can cross out the line and have them start over on the next line.
- You have a right to circulate petitions on a public sidewalk or other public property, unless the public property has been reserved for a specific event and the people running the event ask you to leave. If you are otherwise asked to leave a public area (park, outside a library, public sidewalk, etc.) and feel uncomfortable causing a scene, politely leave, but inform the campaign of what happened.

Answering voters' questions

- People can sign the petition and go on to vote for whomever they like. They commit to nothing by signing, and signing will not affect a person's party affiliation for future elections.
- Some people will ask if their names will be "put on a list." It will not. The petitions are submitted to the State Board of Elections for verification purposes and that's all. We will not contact them based only on their signature.