

## Chapter 332

**(Senate Bill 204)**

AN ACT concerning

**Election Law – Primary Election Dates in the Presidential Election Year**

FOR the purpose of altering the date of the statewide primary election in the year in which the President of the United States is elected; altering the date of the primary election for municipal offices in Baltimore City in the year in which the President of the United States is elected; making certain conforming changes; *altering the deadline for filing a certain petition to challenge a candidate's residency*; clarifying certain provisions of law concerning the filling of certain vacancies in nomination; repealing an obsolete provision of law concerning the printing of certain ballots; and generally relating to primary election dates in the presidential election year and the nomination of candidates.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Election Law

Section 5–303(c), ~~5–305~~, 5–703(c), 5–703.1(c), 5–801(b), 5–1002(b), 5–1003(b), 5–1004(b), 6–210(e), 8–201, 8–502(c), 9–207(a), 9–215(a), and 13–309(a)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2010 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Election Law**

5–303.

(c) The certificate of candidacy for the election of a write-in candidate shall be filed by the earlier of:

(1) 7 days after a total expenditure of at least \$51 is made to promote the candidacy by a campaign finance entity of the candidate; or

(2) 5 p.m. on the [Wednesday preceding the day of the election] **7TH DAY PRECEDING THE START OF EARLY VOTING** for which the certificate is filed.

5–305.

*(a) This section applies only to a petition that will affect the right of a candidate to have the candidate's name appear on the ballot in a primary or general election.*

*(b) A registered voter who is a resident of the district or other geographic area in which a candidate is seeking office may file a petition with the circuit court for that district or geographic area to challenge the candidate's residency as provided in § 5-202 of this title.*

*(c) (1) The petition must be filed [6] 9 days after the filing dates provided in § 5-303 of this subtitle and [§ 5-703(c)] §§ 5-703(C) AND 5-703.1(C) of this title.*

*(2) Judicial review of any petition that is filed under subsection (b) of this section shall be expedited by the circuit court that hears the cause to the extent necessary in consideration of the deadlines established by law, and in no case, longer than 7 days from the date the petition is filed.*

5-703.

(c) (1) A candidate for public office who seeks nomination by petition shall file a declaration of intent to seek nomination by petition.

(2) The declaration of intent shall be filed with the board at which the candidate files a certificate of candidacy under Subtitle 3 of this title.

(3) The declaration of intent shall be filed as follows:

(i) in a year in which the Governor is elected ~~or the Baltimore City municipal election is held~~, by the date and time specified for a candidate to file a certificate of candidacy;

(ii) in a year in which the President ~~is~~ **AND MAYOR OF BALTIMORE CITY ARE** elected, by **[July 1] THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED FOR A CANDIDATE TO FILE A CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY**; and

(iii) for a special election to fill a vacancy for Representative in Congress, by the date and time specified for a candidate to file a certificate of candidacy in the Governor's proclamation.

(4) A candidate who seeks nomination by petition may not be charged a fee for filing the declaration of intent.

5-703.1.

(c) (1) A candidate for public office who seeks political party nomination under this section shall file a declaration of intent to seek political party nomination.

(2) The declaration of intent shall be filed with the board at which the candidate files a certificate of candidacy under Subtitle 3 of this title.

(3) The declaration of intent shall be filed as follows:

(i) in a year in which the Governor is elected, by the date and time specified for a candidate to file a certificate of candidacy;

(ii) in the year in which the President and Mayor of Baltimore City are elected, by **[July 1] THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED FOR A CANDIDATE TO FILE A CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY;** and

(iii) for a special election to fill a vacancy:

1. for Representative in Congress, by the date and time specified in the Governor's proclamation for a candidate to file a certificate of candidacy; or

2. for a local public office, by the date and time specified in the county proclamation for a candidate to file a certificate of candidacy.

(4) A candidate who seeks nomination by political party may not be charged a fee for filing the declaration of intent.

5-801.

(b) The certificate of declination shall be under oath and filed:

(1) with the board at which the certificate of candidacy was filed; and

(2) (i) in the year of a gubernatorial election ~~for the year of an election for the Mayor of the City of Baltimore], within 2 days after the election results are certified,~~ **BY THE 70TH DAY PRECEDING THE GENERAL ELECTION;** or

(ii) in the year of a presidential election, by the 70th day preceding the general election.

5-1002.

(b) (1) A vacancy in nomination that occurs because a nominee dies, declines the nomination, or is disqualified for any cause shall be filled by the State central committee of the political party to which the nominee belongs **BY THE 60TH DAY BEFORE THE GENERAL ELECTION.**

(2) **[By the later of the 40th day before the general election or the fifth day following the death, declination, or disqualification of the former nominee:]**

(i) **[the] THE** State central committee shall file a certificate of designation for the nominee with the State Board**]; and].**

(ii) [the] **THE** successor nominee designated by the State central committee under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph shall file a certificate of candidacy with the State Board.

5–1003.

(b) (1) A vacancy in nomination under this section that occurs because the nominee dies, withdraws the candidacy, or is disqualified for any reason shall be filled by:

(i) a vote of the central committees of the political party in each of the counties included in the district of that nominee; or

(ii) a State central committee for a nonprincipal political party that does not have local central committees.

(2) The central committee of each county shall cast a vote that is proportionate to its share of the population in that district as reported in the most recent decennial census of the United States and promptly notify its State central committee of the results of its vote.

(3) (i) If no person receives a majority of the votes cast under paragraph (2) of this subsection, or if there is a tie vote by the central committees, the vacancy in nomination shall be filled by the State central committee.

(ii) In the event of a tie vote, the nominee selected by the State central committee shall be one of the candidates involved in the tie.

(4) [By the later of the 40th day before the general election or the fifth day following] **FOLLOWING** the death, declination, or disqualification of the nominee, **BY THE 60TH DAY BEFORE THE GENERAL ELECTION:**

(i) the State central committee shall file a certificate of designation for the nominee with the State Board; and

(ii) the successor nominee designated by the State central committee under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph shall file a certificate of candidacy with the State Board.

5–1004.

(b) If a nominee for an office that is entirely in one county dies, declines the nomination, becomes disqualified, or gains a tie vote with another candidate in a primary election, the vacancy in nomination shall be filled by [the later of:

(1) the 40th day before the general election; or

(2) the fifth day following the death, declination, or disqualification of the nominee] **THE 60TH DAY BEFORE THE GENERAL ELECTION.**

6-210.

(e) (1) Except as provided in ~~paragraph (2)~~ ~~PARAGRAPHS (2) AND (3)~~ **PARAGRAPH (2)** of this subsection, any judicial review of a determination, as provided in § 6-209 of this subtitle, shall be sought by the ~~[10th]~~ ~~2ND~~ day following the determination to which ~~it~~ **THE JUDICIAL REVIEW** relates.

(2) **(I)** ~~IF EXCEPT FOR A PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, IF~~ **IF** the petition seeks to place the name of an individual or a question on the ballot at any election, **EXCEPT A PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION**, judicial review shall be sought by the day specified in paragraph (1) of this subsection or the 63rd day preceding that election, whichever day is earlier.

~~**(3)** IF THE PETITION SEEKS TO PLACE THE NAME OF AN INDIVIDUAL ON THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY BALLOT, JUDICIAL REVIEW SHALL BE SOUGHT BY THE FIFTH DAY FOLLOWING THE DETERMINATION TO WHICH THE PETITION RELATES.~~

**(II) IF THE PETITION SEEKS TO PLACE THE NAME OF AN INDIVIDUAL ON THE BALLOT FOR A PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 8-502 OF THIS ARTICLE, JUDICIAL REVIEW OF A DETERMINATION MADE UNDER § 6-208(A)(2) OF THIS TITLE SHALL BE SOUGHT BY THE 5TH DAY FOLLOWING THE DETERMINATION TO WHICH THE JUDICIAL REVIEW RELATES.**

8-201.

(a) (1) There shall be a statewide primary election in every even-numbered year.

(2) A primary election shall be held:

(i) in the year in which the Governor is elected, on the last Tuesday in June; and

(ii) in the year in which the President of the United States is elected, on the [first] ~~SECOND~~ **FOURTH** Tuesday in April.

(b) In Baltimore City, there shall be a primary election for municipal offices on the [first] ~~SECOND~~ **FOURTH** Tuesday in April in the year in which the President of the United States is elected.

8–502.

(c) (1) The Secretary of State shall certify to the State Board the names of candidates for nomination by a principal political party [during the period beginning 90 days before the primary election and ending 80] **NO LATER THAN 90** days before the primary election.

(2) The Secretary of State shall certify the name of a presidential candidate on the ballot when the Secretary has determined, in the Secretary's sole discretion and consistent with party rules, that the candidate's candidacy is generally advocated or recognized in the news media throughout the United States or in Maryland, unless the candidate executes and files with the Secretary of State an affidavit stating without qualification that the candidate is not and does not intend to become a candidate for the office in the Maryland primary election.

9–207.

(a) The State Board shall certify the content and arrangement of each ballot:

(1) for a primary election, [no more than 11 days after the filing date provided in § 5–303 of this article] **AT LEAST 55 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION**;

(2) for a general election, at least 55 days before the election;

(3) for a special primary election, at least 18 days before the election; and

(4) for a special general election, not later than a date specified in the Governor's proclamation.

9–215.

(a) Each ballot shall be printed:

(1) in plain, clear type in black ink; **AND**

(2) on material of the size and arrangement that is required to fit the needs of the voting system[; and

(3) (i) in a general election, on clear white material; or

(ii) in a primary election, on material of a different color for voters of each political party and for voters not affiliated with a political party that nominates its candidates by primary election].

13–309.

(a) Subject to other provisions of this subtitle and except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, a campaign finance entity shall file campaign finance reports as follows:

(1) **IN THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION YEAR ONLY**, except for a ballot issue committee, on or before the third Tuesday in April, if the campaign finance entity did not file the annual campaign finance report specified under subsection (b)(2) of this section on the immediately preceding third Wednesday in January;

(2) except for a ballot issue committee, on or before the fifth Tuesday immediately preceding each primary election;

(3) except for a ballot issue committee, on or before the second Friday immediately preceding a primary election;

(4) on or before the last Tuesday in August immediately preceding a general election;

(5) for a ballot issue committee only, on or before the fourth Friday immediately preceding a general election;

(6) on or before the second Friday immediately preceding a general election; and

(7) on or before the second Tuesday after a general election.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2015.

**Approved by the Governor, May 12, 2015.**