

Don't just stand there...



Drawing by Ruth Meyers Laidler

A Candidate's Guide to the 2012 State Election

Published by

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Elections Division, One Ashburton Place, Rm. 1705, Boston, MA 02108

(617) 727-2828 or 1-800-462-VOTE

www.sec.state.ma.us/ele

Revised Edition, January 2012

Candidate's Resources

Massachusetts General Laws,
Chapters 50 - 56 are available
in local libraries and on the internet at
www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/index.htm.

Regulations for certifying signatures:
950 CMR §55.00*

State Ethics Commission
One Ashburton Place, Room 619
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 371-9500

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance
One Ashburton Place, Room 411
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 979-8300 or 1-800-462-OCPF

“Election Day Legal Summary”*

“Residence for Voting Purposes”*

“Objections Before the State
Ballot Law Commission”*

Voter Registration and
Absentee Voting Information*

* These materials are available from the
Elections Division or the State Bookstore,
State House, Boston, MA 02133
(617) 727-2834



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Definitions

<i>Congress</i>	A term used to describe the United States Senate and House of Representatives.
<i>County Office</i>	A public office that is filled by a vote of the registered voters in all or part of one or more counties. County offices include Register of Probate, County Treasurer and County Commissioner.
<i>District Office</i>	A public office filled by a vote of the registered voters within a particular district of the state. District offices include Governor’s Councillors, State Senators and State Representatives.
<i>Election</i>	An event during which registered voters choose people to fill public offices and vote on ballot questions, where applicable.
<i>Federal Office</i>	A public office filled at state elections, held in November of even numbered years, by a vote of the registered voters throughout the state or within a particular district of the state. Federal offices include President, United States Senator and United States Representative.
<i>Nomination Paper</i>	An official document which must be circulated for the signatures of registered voters and thereafter be properly filed before a candidate’s name may be printed on the ballot.
<i>Non-party Candidate</i>	A candidate who is not enrolled in any political party and who files nomination papers to appear directly on the November general election ballot. Such a candidate is sometimes referred to as an “unenrolled,” “independent,” “minor party,” or “political designation” candidate.
<i>Party Candidate</i>	A candidate who is an enrolled member of a recognized political party. Currently there are three recognized political parties in Massachusetts—Democratic, Republican and Green-Rainbow.
<i>Primary</i>	An election in which registered voters nominate party candidates: Democratic, Republican and Green-Rainbow. The names of the winning Democratic, Republican and Green-Rainbow candidates will appear on the November general election ballot.
<i>Statewide Office</i>	A public office filled by a vote of the registered voters throughout the state. Statewide offices includes Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Treasurer and Receiver General, and Auditor.
<i>Unenrolled</i>	A term used to describe a registered voter who is not enrolled in any political party and who is often referred to as “independent.” An unenrolled voter must run for office as a “non-party candidate” (see above).

Offices on the Ballot, November 6, 2012

FEDERAL OFFICES

Electors of President and Vice-President,
United States Senator, United States Representative (all 9 districts)

STATE OFFICES

Governor's Council (all 8 districts)
State Senator (all 40 districts)
State Representative (all 160 districts)

COUNTY OFFICES

County Commissioner or Franklin Council of Government Committee
(except Berkshire, Essex, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Suffolk, Worcester counties),
Clerk of Courts, Register of Deeds, Vacancies (which may occur)

2012 State Election Dates

The *state primaries will be held on September 6, 2012.*

The *state election will be held on November 6, 2012.*

2012 Massachusetts Election Calendar

Calendar of Events

Deadline Dates

	Party and Non-Party Candidates for District and County Offices	Party Candidates For Federal and Statewide Offices	Non-Party Candidates for Federal and Statewide Offices
<i>Nomination papers available*</i>	<i>February 14</i>	<i>February 14</i>	<i>February 14</i>
Last day for a person running in a state primary to enroll in a party or for a person running only in a state election to unenroll from a party except for newly registered voters.	February 28	March 6	March 6
<i>5 p.m. Last day and hour for submitting nomination papers to local election officials for certification of signatures.</i>	May 1	May 8	July 31
5 p.m. Last day and hour for local election officials to complete certification of signatures.	May 22	May 29	August 21
5 p.m. Last day and hour for candidates to apply for review of non-certified signatures.	May 24	May 31	August 23
5 p.m. Last day and hour for local election officials to complete review of non-certified signatures.	May 25	June 4	August 27
<i>5 p.m. Last day and hour for filing nomination papers (including party enrollment or voter registration certificate and Ethics Commission receipt) with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.</i>	<i>May 29</i>	<i>June 5</i>	<i>August 28</i>

*Nomination papers may be released earlier; check with the Elections Division.

Calendar of Events

Deadline Dates

	Party and Non-Party Candidates for District and County Offices	Party Candidates For Federal and Statewide Offices	Non-Party Candidates for Federal and Statewide Offices
5 p.m. Last day and hour for filing withdrawals of or objections to nomination papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.	June 1	June 8	August 31
5 p.m. Last day and hour for filling vacancies caused by withdrawals.	June 6	June 13	September 6

ALL DATES and DEADLINES are the SAME FOR ALL CANDIDATES FROM THIS POINT

Last day to register voters and to change party enrollment for the state primaries: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. except in towns under 1500 voters – at least 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

August 17

STATE PRIMARIES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2012*

5 p.m. Last day and hour for filing withdrawals of or objections to nominations at the state primaries.

September 12

5 p.m. Last day and hour for filling vacancies caused by withdrawals at the state primaries.

September 17

5 p.m. Last day and hour for filing a written acceptance by write-in or sticker candidates who won a state primary.

September 19

Last day to register voters for the state election: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. except in towns under 1500 voters – at least 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

October 17

STATE ELECTION

NOVEMBER 6

* The date of the 2012 state primary was changed pursuant to Section 8A of Chapter 171 of the Acts of 2011. This date and any other date contained herein may be changed by laws passed by the General Court after the publication of this booklet. Please contact the Elections Division to inquire of any further changes.

Age, Residence and Signature Requirements to Run for Office

- ★ You must be at least 18 years old (*exceptions: U.S. Senator – 30 years old; U.S. Representative – 25 years old*).
- ★ You must be a registered voter in Massachusetts.
- ★ You must fulfill the residence and signature requirements below.

Office	Residence Requirements Prior to Date of Election	Signatures Required for Nomination Papers ¹
FOR FEDERAL OFFICE*		
U.S. Senator <i>(30 years old)</i>	United States citizen for 9 years, inhabitant of Massachusetts when elected	10,000
U.S. Representative <i>(25 years old)</i>	United States citizen for 7 years, inhabitant of Massachusetts when elected	2,000
FOR STATE DISTRICT OFFICE		
Governor's Councillor	5 years in Massachusetts	1,000
State Senator	5 years in Massachusetts inhabitant of district when elected	300
State Representative	one year in district	150

*ELECTORS OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT FOR NON-PARTY CANDIDATES (including Unenrolled, Minor Party, or Political Designation) need 10,000 signatures. For information about running for President, see *How to Run for President in Massachusetts 2012*.

Office	Residence Requirements Prior to Date of Election	Signatures Required for Nomination Papers
FOR COUNTY OFFICE		
District Attorney ⁵ <i>(must be member of Massachusetts Bar)</i>	resident in district	1,000
County Commissioner, ² or Franklin Council of Government Committee <i>(except Berkshire, Essex, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Suffolk and Worcester Cty.s.)</i>	(no requirement)	1,000 ^{3,4}
County Treasurer ⁵ <i>(except Barnstable, Berkshire, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Suffolk and Worcester Cty.s.)</i>	resident in district	1,000 ^{3,4}
Register of Deeds	resident in district	1,000 ^{3,4}
Clerk of Courts	(no requirement)	1,000 ^{3,4}
Register of Probate ⁵	(no requirement)	1,000 ^{3,4}
Sheriff ⁵	(no requirement)	1,000 ^{3,4}

1. State party rules may impose additional requirements on party candidates.

For more information, contact:

Massachusetts Democratic Party
77 Summer Street, 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 939-0800

Massachusetts Green-Rainbow Party
P.O. Box 87
North Hatfield, MA 01066
(617) 418-3756

Massachusetts Republican Party
85 Merrimac Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 523-5005

2. Not more than one commissioner may be elected from the same city or town in the county.

3. Dukes and Nantucket candidates for county office need only 25 signatures.

4. Barnstable, Berkshire, Franklin and Hampshire candidates for county office, except District Attorney, need only 500 signatures.

5. To fill vacancies only.

Getting on the Ballot

All candidates for election in November 2012, whether party candidates or non-party or minor party candidates, must file nomination papers in order to have their name printed on the ballot.

A candidate may gain access to the general election ballot in one of two ways:

1. A candidate who is a member of a party and who was nominated in the state primary; **OR**
2. A non-party candidate who may run in the general state election only.

Caution

Please be aware that you may only qualify in one of the above ways. A candidate must fulfill specific enrollment requirements when running for office.

The filing dates for submitting nomination papers are the same whether a candidate plans to run in the state primary as a party candidate or in the state election as an unenrolled candidate (except for statewide and federal offices).

Nomination Papers

Availability

Nomination papers are available from the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Boston, Fall River and Springfield and may be picked up or requested by telephone or mail. Candidates may also make **exact** copies of the official nomination papers for gathering signatures.

Time of filing

All candidates for election in November 2012, whether party candidates or non-party or minor party candidates, must file their nomination papers according to the following schedule.

Nomination papers for party and non-party candidates for district and county offices must be submitted to local election officials for certification of names no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, May 1, 2012. The papers must then be picked up and filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, May 29, 2012.

Party candidates for federal offices have one additional week to circulate papers. Their papers must be submitted to local election officials for certification no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, 2012. The papers must then be picked up and filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth no later than 5 p.m. Tuesday, June 5, 2012.

Non-party candidates for federal offices must submit their papers to local election officials for certification no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012. The papers must then be picked up and filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, August 28, 2012.

File Early

If possible, file nomination papers earlier than the deadline. This allows identification of any errors in time to collect additional signatures if necessary.

At least three of the local election officials must complete certification of names on each nomination paper. Papers must be submitted to local election officials for certification of signatures twenty-eight days before the deadline for filing with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. See the election calendar on pages 4 and 5 for specific dates.

Fill in all required information on front of nomination paper.

The name of the candidate, his/her residence,* the office for which he/she is running, political party or political designation and the district name or number must be placed on the nomination paper **BEFORE** any signatures are gathered (gray areas on nomination papers). **Nomination papers without this information cannot be counted!**

* Residence must include the candidate's street name and number, if any, and the city or town or some clearly identifiable reference to the city or town. To avoid confusion, this Office recommends using the full name of the city or town.

How to Run in a Party Primary

Enrollment requirements

Party candidates for nomination in state primaries must be enrolled members of the party whose nomination they seek and, except for newly registered voters, must be enrolled members of the party throughout the 90 days before the deadline for filing nomination papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. In addition, no person shall be printed on the ballot as a candidate for nomination by one party if that person was enrolled in any other party during the one year period preceding the filing date for this election.

Certificate of Enrollment

Party candidates must PROVE party affiliation by filing with the Secretary of the Commonwealth a certificate of party enrollment signed or stamped by at least three local election officials of the city or town where the candidate is a registered voter. At least one such certificate, which is printed on the nomination papers, must be completed and filed no later than the last day for filing nomination papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. No candidate's name may appear on a primary ballot without this certificate of enrollment.

Primary Nomination Papers

Primary nomination papers will place a party candidate's name on the Democratic, Republican or Green-Rainbow primary ballot. These papers are white in color.

Name on Ballot Once

Party candidates may not have their name printed on a state primary ballot for nomination for more than one office. They may circulate and file nomination papers for more than one office, but if they do not withdraw from all but one office by the deadline date for withdrawals, that party candidate's name will not be printed on the ballot at all.

Fill in Heading

The proper title of the office, district name, name and residence* of the candidate and political party affiliation must be printed or typed, correctly spelled and in the proper place on the front of each nomination paper BEFORE signatures are solicited. Any nomination paper filed without all this information will not be counted (gray areas on nomination papers).

Statement on Primary Nomination Papers

There is space on the nomination paper where a party candidate may make a statement in not more than eight words listing public offices** they hold or previously held. If they are a former incumbent, the word "former" must be used. If the candidate is now an elected incumbent seeking the same nomination, they may include the phrase "candidate for re-nomination." The word "veteran" may be used if the candidate is a veteran as defined in section 1 of chapter 31 of the General Laws.

*Residence must include the candidate's street name and number, if any, and the city or town or some clearly identifiable reference to the city or town. To avoid confusion, this Office recommends using the full name of the city or town.

**Not every government employee holds a "public office." Holders of public office must have entrusted to them in some degree the exercise of the power and authority of government. The duties must not be merely clerical, but must involve the exercise of some significant discretion or judgment. The position must not be merely advisory or a political party position. The position must be one which is established by law. A political party position is not a "public office."

<i>Statement on Ballot</i>	The statement submitted on the primary nomination papers will appear only on the primary ballot. <i>The only statement which may appear on the state election ballot is “candidate for re-election,”</i> which will appear after a candidate's name who is an elected incumbent.
<i>Written Acceptance</i>	Before filing the papers, the candidate should ensure that at least one of the certified nomination papers contains a written acceptance of nomination personally signed by either the candidate or an attorney authorized by the candidate in writing. Although the candidate does not have to sign the acceptance space on all nomination papers, the candidate should sign several certified papers to be sure that ONE of the papers which is ultimately filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth will have the written acceptance on it.
<i>Receipt from State Ethics Commission</i>	For the papers to be valid, the candidate must also file a receipt from the State Ethics Commission showing that they have filed a statement of financial interest with them, unless they are a candidate for federal office. The receipt must be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth by the filing deadline. Forms and instructions for the statement of financial interest may be obtained from the State Ethics Commission, One Ashburton Place, Room 619, Boston, MA 02108, or call (617) 371-9500.
<i>Number of Signatures</i>	A candidate's name will appear on the ballot only if they file nomination papers with the number of certified signatures as required on page 6 or 7.
<i>Who May Sign</i>	Primary nomination papers may be signed only by registered voters who are enrolled in the SAME political party as the candidate or who are not enrolled in any party (unenrolled). Other signatures will be disallowed.
<i>On to the State Election</i>	Winners of the party primaries will be the party candidates in the election.

How to Run as a Non-Party Candidate in the Election

Non-Party Candidates

Candidates who are not enrolled in any political party (sometimes referred to as unenrolled, independent, minor-party candidates or political designation) must also circulate nomination papers. These papers will put candidates' names directly on the state election ballot in November. These candidates do not run in the state primaries. Nomination papers are either yellow or beige depending on the office sought.

Must be Unenrolled

Non-party candidates cannot be enrolled in any political party in order to qualify to have their name printed directly on the general election ballot. Furthermore, non-party candidates seeking to have their name printed on the ballot for the state election cannot have been enrolled in a political party between **February 28, 2012** (if they are a candidate for district or county office) or **March 6, 2012** (if they are a candidate for federal office) **and the deadline for filing nomination papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.**

Certificate of Registration

Non-party candidates seeking to have their name printed on the ballot must file a certificate proving that they are a registered voter and have not been enrolled in a political party during the proper period before the deadline for filing nomination papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth (see section above). At least one of these certificates of registration, which are printed on the nomination papers, must be signed or stamped by at least three local election officials of the city or town where the candidate is a registered voter and filed no later than the last day for filing nomination papers. No non-party candidate's name may be printed on the general election ballot without this voter registration certificate.

Fill in Heading

The proper title of the office, district name, residence* of the candidate and political designation must be printed or typed, correctly spelled and in the proper place on each nomination paper, BEFORE signatures are solicited. Any nomination paper filed without all this information will not be counted (gray areas on nomination papers).

*Residence must include the candidate's street name and number, if any, and the city or town or some clearly identifiable reference to the city or town. To avoid confusion, this Office recommends using the full name of the city or town.

<i>Designation</i>	Non-party candidates may state their political designation in no more than three words. Non-party candidates may NOT use the words “Democratic,” “Republican,” or “Green-Rainbow” as part of their designation on the nomination papers. If a non-party candidate places no political designation on their papers, the designation “unenrolled” will appear on the ballot. If a non-party candidate circulates and files papers with different political designations, those papers will be counted separately.
<i>Written Acceptance</i>	Before filing the papers, candidates should be sure that at least one of the certified nomination papers contains a written acceptance of nomination personally signed by either the candidate or an attorney authorized by the candidate in writing. Although the candidate does not have to sign the acceptance space on all nomination papers, the candidate should sign several certified papers to be sure that ONE of the papers which is ultimately filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth will have the written acceptance on it.
<i>Receipt from State Ethics Commission</i>	For non-party papers to be valid, a candidate must also file a receipt from the State Ethics Commission showing that they have filed a statement of financial interest with them, unless they are a candidate for federal office. The receipt must be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth by the filing deadline. Forms and instructions for the statement of financial interest may be obtained from the State Ethics Commission, One Ashburton Place, Room 619, Boston, MA 02108, or call (617) 371-9500.
<i>Number of Signatures</i>	A non-party candidate's name will appear on the ballot only if they file nomination papers with the number of certified signatures as required on page 6 or 7.
<i>Who May Sign</i>	Nomination papers for non-party candidates may be signed by any registered voter.

Signatures on Nomination Papers

Procedures

The procedures described below are essentially the same for papers for both party and non-party candidates. To be certified, all signatures on nomination papers must be legible and signed in person with the name substantially as registered, with the address at which they are registered. Signers must use street addresses, and not mailing addresses such as post office box numbers.

How Voter's Name Should Be Written

The law allows a voter to insert or omit a middle name or initial. A married woman should sign "Helen Smith" not "Mrs. John Smith." Do not use nicknames or initials in place of given names. To avoid legal objections it is wise to consult a voting list if available and sign as registered. Voters who are unsure of the way they are registered may sign in different ways on consecutive lines (with addresses each time) and the registrar will then certify only the valid name. The law directs registrars to certify the signature if they can reasonably determine the identity of the voter from the form of the signature.

Voter Must Sign for Self

Persons who are prevented from signing by physical disability may authorize another individual to sign for them in the voter's presence.

No person may sign for another unless the voter is physically disabled as above. One spouse may not sign for another.

Count How Many Signed

A voter may sign once for each candidate for an office. If a voter signs more than once for the same candidate, that voter's name will be certified only once. Additional signatures will be disallowed. Voters may sign for as many different candidates as they wish, even for the same office.

Another Municipality, Another Paper

Each nomination paper should contain signatures of registered voters from only ONE city or town. At least three of the registrars of the city or town where the signers are registered voters may certify that each signature is that of a registered voter in their jurisdiction. Names from other communities on that sheet will be disallowed. If a candidate is running for an office in a district that crosses city or town lines, separate nomination papers should be circulated and submitted to each community.

Collect Extra Signatures

Candidates should collect more signatures than required because many may be disallowed either in the certification process or through challenges. Registrars are required by law to certify two-fifths more than the number of signatures required.

Review Procedures for Signatures Not Certified

Local registrars must complete certification of nomination papers seven days before the deadline for filing with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

If the total number of signatures certified by the registrar is less than 10% in excess of the number required for the office that the candidate seeks, the candidate may request a review by the registrars of signatures not certified. The request for review must be submitted to the registrars no later than 48 hours after their deadline for certifying your papers. A list of those signatures must be presented to the registrars, who must complete their review no later than 24 hours before the filing deadline with the Secretary of the Commonwealth (see calendar).

Objections

Challenges

A candidate's nomination may be challenged by a registered voter of the district within three days following the date for filing nomination papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Written objections to nominations are filed with the State Ballot Law Commission at the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division. For details see "Objections Before the State Ballot Law Commission," a publication available from the Elections Division or The State Bookstore.

Reasons for Challenge

There are many reasons for a challenge. Past challenges have included: forged signatures, candidate does not meet legal requirements, signers not registered voters.

Hearing

When an objection is filed, the candidate receives notice in writing that a hearing will be held before the State Ballot Law Commission. It is advisable to have a lawyer present since the hearing often involves technical requirements. The Elections Division can provide further information about the procedure.

Penalties

Penalties

The law provides for a penalty of not more than \$50 for subscribing falsely to a statement on a primary nomination paper. The act of falsely or willfully altering the designation of the district after signatures have been certified, or for falsely making or willfully altering, defacing, mutilating, destroying, suppressing or unlawfully signing, or filing a nomination paper is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1000 or imprisonment for not more than one year.

Campaign Finance Activity

Reporting Contributions and Expenditures

The law requires that campaign expenses and contributions be reported by candidates seeking election at every level of government. The Director of Campaign and Political Finance is responsible for receiving and maintaining records for all candidates in the primaries and election, except candidates for federal office. Candidates for state office may obtain detailed information on reporting procedures and dates from the:

Director of Campaign and Political Finance
One Ashburton Place, Room 411
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 979-8300 or 1-800-462-OCPF
www.mass.gov/ocpf

Candidates for federal office file with the:

Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20463
1-800-424-9530
www.fec.gov

Keep Complete Records

All candidates and political committees must record money or other things of value received from all sources, and all expenditures and disbursements must be reported and detailed records kept. Laws relating to campaign contributions and expenses are quite detailed and explicit and must be followed carefully.

Signature Check List

- Get signatures from ONE city or town ONLY on each nomination paper. Make certain that signers can vote for the candidate. Signatures from another city or town or across district lines will not be counted. District boundaries may be checked on the list of districts available from the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- All signatures must be legible and written substantially as registered. The law allows a voter to insert or omit a middle name or initial and still have the signature deemed valid. Do not use nicknames or initials in place of full names. Married women should sign "Helen Smith" not "Mrs. John Smith." It is wise to have a list of registered voters or a street listing with you to verify the exact form of registration. City and town clerks are required by law to make one copy of these available free to candidates. The law provides, that if the registrars can determine the identity of the voter from the form of the signature, the signature must be certified.
- Nominating petitions require the voter's present address. Signers must use street addresses, not mailing addresses such as post office box numbers.
- If a voter signs incorrectly or makes any error, do not erase or make changes. Leave the incorrect line intact and ask the voter to sign again on the next line. An altered or illegible signature may be disallowed or challenged.
- To be certified on primary nomination papers, signers must be members of the candidate's party or not enrolled in any party.
- Be sure to collect and submit more signatures than the required number because many may be disqualified.
- Don't miss the deadline date for submitting nomination papers to local election officials for certification. The deadlines for candidates for federal office are later than those for candidates for other offices; check both sets of deadline dates carefully. Try to get papers to local registrars earlier than the deadline if possible.
- Submit more than the required number of signatures to your local election officials for certification. If many signatures are challenged or disallowed, you may fall short of the required number. Be sure the signatures are from the proper district and party, with the name and address properly filled in.
- If you have fewer than 10% above the number of signatures required for the office you seek, you may consider requesting a review by local registrars of signatures not certified.

Candidate's Check List

- Be certain you are a registered voter in the district from which you plan to run and meet qualifications for that office which you seek (see pages 6 and 7).
- Check the deadline for filing nomination papers for the office you seek in the calendar on page 4 and in the special section "Nomination Papers" (see page 9).
- Review the election calendar on pages 4 and 5. Note the days and dates carefully; consider holidays.
- Obtain white nomination papers to run in the primary, or yellow, or beige to run as a non-party candidate in the election. **Fill in the top portion of nomination papers carefully with name and address (including street name and number and city or town), office, district, party or political designation, etc., BEFORE** you circulate the papers. Any nomination paper filed without this information will not be counted (gray areas on nomination papers).
- Be sure to sign the written acceptance line on a number of your nomination papers. For primary papers, fill in your statement of public offices you hold or have held if you wish to do so.
- Pick up the certified papers from the local election officials. Check to make sure the local election officials have signed/stamped each sheet. The signatures of at least three registrars or commissioners are required for the paper to be valid.
- Don't miss the deadline for filing with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- Be sure to file at least one paper with your certificate of enrollment or certificate of voter registration. Check to make sure the certificate is signed/stamped by at least three registrars or commissioners.
- Be sure to file the receipt from the State Ethics Commission (except candidates for federal office).
- After the papers are filed you may wish to check the papers of other candidates to see if there is any reason for challenge.