



Portland City Auditor

Elections



April 4, 2025

Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court St NE, HR C
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland Elections Division within the City Auditor's Office does not have a formal position on SB580 but appreciates the proposal's intentions to further transparency and public responsiveness. The City receives and processes the largest amount of local candidate filings in the state in a complex and multi-step process. Our procedures protect candidate privacy, security, and ensure only complete and accurate information is published following the City Elections Officer's determinations about ballot eligibility.

With the timeframes proposed in the -1 amendment of SB570, the City may not be able to comply in all circumstances. Due to the potential complexity of candidate filing and multiple elections offices involved in the process, the City may be forced to publish candidate filing paperwork that is unverified and without required redactions. As a result, the as-written SB580 requirements may exacerbate rather than clarify information about qualified candidates running in any particular race.

Unreviewed public postings of candidate filings may also put candidate security at risk and delay critical elections work. To help prevent these unintended consequences, the City proposes the below amendments for consideration:

- **Protecting candidate security:** exempt candidate filing paperwork in the process of residence address redaction and approval (see 2023's HB3073 requirements). This would allow the City to fulfil state mandates that protect candidate safety and privacy.
- **Protecting low-income candidates:** exempt candidates that request a fee waiver specific to that jurisdiction (see [City of Portland Auditor's Office Rules](#))

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[16.01](#)). The City of Portland provides an option to make running for office more accessible to a wide range of candidates by allowing for limited income verification and waiver of a fee. Completing this process fully would allow for a full and considered review with the candidate, ensure the integrity of the process, and result in more accurate and complete information to the public. This process can take up to 15 business days, but sometimes longer depending on the timing and circumstances.

- **Allowing time for signature verification:** exempt public postings until a thorough review of nominating petitions has been completed for any candidate. It is imperative that qualified voters of a district are the only voters nominating a representative to office. Verifying thousands of signatures simultaneously (according to state law and rules) for multiple candidates will often result in more than 5 business days, including requesting follow ups, additional signatures, and voter registration information from county elections offices. Rather than exempting only the submitted signature sheets, consider the time to conduct signature verification and public postings following any signature verification process a city or county may be required to conduct for candidates filing by nominating petition.

Despite the high volume of candidates that run for local office in Portland, we are a small office with only a few people to conduct candidate filing and reviews at any given time. During the busiest time of the year for our office, we prioritize accuracy and thorough reviews and conversations with candidates to ensure they understand the process.

We look forward to working with you on these issues and appreciate the consideration of the impacts on Portland candidates and voters.

Sincerely,

Deborah Scroggin

Deborah Scroggin
Elections Division Manager