

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 12-14-074, filed 7/2/12, effective 8/2/12)

WAC 434-379-012 Acceptance of signatures. (1) The secretary of state must determine if the person who signed a petition is registered to vote. The information may be researched in voter registration records using first name, last name, address, or any combination thereof. A signature may not be rejected merely because:

(a) The person signed with a middle name, nickname, or initials instead of the first name in the voter registration records, as long as the handwriting is clearly the same;

(b) The last name on the petition differs from the last name in the voter registration records, as long as the addresses and the handwriting on the first name are clearly the same;

(c) The last name on the petition or in the voter registration records is hyphenated while the last name in the other source is not;

(d) The first name and last name on the petition are reversed in the voter registration records;

(e) The address on the petition does not match the address in the voter registration records;

(f) The handwriting on the printed name or address does not match the handwriting on the signature; or

(g) The voter is on inactive status.

(2) If the secretary of state is unable to locate the person in the voter registration records, the signature shall be rejected as not registered to vote.

(3) If the person is registered to vote, the signature on the petition sheet must be matched to the signature in the person's voter registration record using the standards in WAC 434-379-020. If the signature on the petition:

(a) Is handwritten and matches the signature in the voter registration record according to the standards in WAC 434-379-020, the signature must be accepted.

(b) Does not match the signature in the voter registration record, the signature must be rejected.

(c) Matches the signature in the voter registration record but another signature on the petition has already been accepted for that voter, the subsequent signature must be rejected as a duplicate.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 06-02-028, filed 12/28/05, effective 1/28/06)

WAC 434-379-020 Signature verification standard. A signature on a petition sheet must be matched to the signature on file in the voter registration records. The following characteristics must be utilized to evaluate signatures to determine whether they are by the same writer:

(1) The signature is handwritten.

(2) Agreement in style and general appearance, including basic construction, skill, alignment, fluency, and a general uniformity and consistency between signatures;

~~((2))~~ (3) Agreement in the proportions of individual letters, height to width, and heights of the upper to lower case letters;

~~((3))~~ (4) Irregular spacing, slants, or sizes of letters that are duplicated in both signatures;

~~((4))~~ (5) After considering the general traits, agreement of the most distinctive, unusual traits of the signatures.

A single distinctive trait is insufficient to conclude that the signatures are by the same writer. There must be a combination or cluster of shared characteristics. Likewise, there must be a cluster of differences to conclude that the signatures are by different writers.