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Ohio Ballot Proofing

WHAT IS BALLOT PROOFING AND WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

The process of producing a ballot is complex. County election officials do their best to make sure they have listed every contest and every candidate correctly. But **mistakes happen.** Ballot proofing helps catch mistakes before official ballots are printed. And that's important because mistakes caught after ballots are printed often cannot be fixed. Ballot proofing is therefore one of many tools to ensure that election results accurately reflect voter intent.

So who does this proofing? County officials will proof each ballot before sending it to the printer, but **you have a role to play too.** The more eyes on the near-final version of the ballot, the better. You should feel free to invite staff, voter protection volunteers, and others to participate.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PROOF A BALLOT?

Not long. It will take one person a few minutes per ballot to perform a complete review. Because mistakes are usually noticed by a fresh set of eyes, consider bringing in a second person to review.

HOW DO WE PARTICIPATE IN THE PROOFING PROCESS?

In Ohio, every candidate and every local party **has a right to participate** in the proofing process. But **you must complete your proofing quickly.** Each County Board of Elections is required to (1) notify the Chairperson of the local executive committee of each political party that is represented on the ballot and (2) post for 24 hours the ballot proofs in a publicly accessible place in the board office with instructions for notifying the board of any needed or requested corrections. Corrections must be submitted **within 24**

hours.[1] (Note that this process begins anew if any changes are made.[2])

Keep in mind that each county handles the proofing process differently and so you should reach out to any target counties now to confirm their process, including the date you should expect to receive a ballot to review.

WHEN DOES THE PROCESS START?

Ballot proofs are usually sent to candidates and/or local party chairs **between late August and early September.** Reach out to any relevant counties now to ask them to confirm when they will be sending you a ballot.

HOW SHOULD WE REPORT ERRORS OR OMISSIONS?

Notify the county immediately, and no later than **24 hours** after receipt of the ballot proof, of any errors or omissions. Candidates should send an email with the error and proposed correction. Candidates are encouraged to follow up via phone.

OTHER THAN ITEMS ON THE PROOFING CHECKLIST, IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC TO OHIO THAT WE SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR?

In Ohio in 2020, the offices should appear in the following order: President, U.S. Representative, State Senator, State Representative, and other county and local offices.[3]

Candidate names are rotated.[4]

CONNECT WITH US!

Have questions? Need help? Please reach out to us at:

ballotquestions@digidems.com

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1   R.C. 3505.14; *see also* Elections Manual (4-11).
2   "If a local correction is required at any stage of the proofing process prior to finalization and printing, the board must repeat the above notification and posting requirements and ensure that, in correcting the error, another part of the ballot was not inadvertently changed." Elections Manual (4-12).
3   R.C. 3505.03.
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