



**DIRECTIVE 2023-07**

May 10, 2023

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: August 8, 2023 Special Election for Statewide Ballot Issue

**BACKGROUND**

On May 10, 2023, the General Assembly filed Amended Substitute Senate Joint Resolution 2 with the Secretary of State's Office, which proposes an amendment to the state constitution. The resolution declares that the proposed constitutional amendment shall be submitted to voters at a special election on August 8, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY**

The August 8, 2023 special election will be statewide. Boards must begin preparations immediately, including but not limited to recruiting poll workers and securing polling locations. The board's website must be updated with notice of the special election for those who use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).<sup>2</sup>

Ballot language and an explanation of the proposed amendment will be prescribed by the Ohio Ballot Board.<sup>3</sup> A directive will be issued with the form of the ballot, including ballot language for the statewide issue, no later than May 30, 2023 (70 days before the election). Separately, boards will receive instructions and a schedule for Election Night Reporting. In addition, the timing of statewide list maintenance will be adjusted in later directives.

The proposed amendment requires any future constitutional amendment to be approved by at least 60% of the voters. The amendment also makes two changes to the initiative petition process for proposing amendments to the state constitution: (1) eliminate the ten-day cure period to gather additional signatures; and (2) require petition signatures from at least 5% of the electors of each county in the state, instead of half of the counties. If the proposed constitutional amendment is approved by a majority vote of the electors, it takes effect immediately. However, the new requirements for initiative petitions proposing constitutional amendments would first apply to petitions filed on or after January 1, 2024.

While the General Assembly's order will require the state to provide additional resources to the counties, I have been assured by legislative leaders that those funding needs will be met. According to Ohio law, if a precinct is open during a special election solely for the purpose of a

<sup>1</sup> See [Am. Sub. S.J.R. 2](#) (135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly) and [Article XVI, Section 1](#) of the Ohio Constitution.

<sup>2</sup> [R.C. 3511.16](#).

<sup>3</sup> [R.C. 3505.062](#).

statewide ballot issue, the state bears the entire cost of the election.<sup>4</sup> My Office will continue to work with the General Assembly to obtain funding and reimburse counties for expenses incurred.

If you have any questions regarding this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State

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<sup>4</sup> [R.C. 3501.17\(F\)](#).