



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, First Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR H.B. 2322

early ballots; signatures; guidelines; challenges

Purpose

Designates the Secretary of State's (SOS) July 2020 Signature Verification Guide (Signature Verification Guide) as the minimum requirements for signature verification of a voter's early ballot affidavit.

Background

On receipt of an envelope containing an early ballot and ballot affidavit, a county recorder or other officer in charge of elections must compare the signature on the ballot affidavit with the signature on the elector's registration record. If the signatures are inconsistent, the county recorder or other officer in charge of elections must attempt to contact the voter, advise the voter of the inconsistency and allow the voter to correct the inconsistent signature. If satisfied that the signatures correspond, the county recorder or other officer in charge of elections must hold the envelope containing the early ballot and completed affidavit unopened and may deliver them for tallying ([A.R.S. § 16-550](#)).

Signature verification is the process of comparing the signature on a voter's affidavit envelope or ballot affidavit with the voter's signature in the voter registration database. The Signature Verification Guide is used as a reference for the purposes of signature verification during early ballot processing. The Signature Verification Guide includes information on: 1) signature analysis; 2) broad characteristics of signatures; 3) local characteristics of signatures; 4) electronic signatures; 5) assisted voters; and 6) practice exercises. Additionally, the signature verification guide provides images of genuine and questioned signatures as examples for comparing and analyzing signatures. The Signature Verification Guide prescribes additional guidelines stating that: 1) if a name is misspelled, the signature should not be accepted; 2) the broad characteristics of a signature should be evaluated first when analyzing signatures; 3) if the signature on the ballot affidavit is consistent with the broad characteristics in the voter registration database, then the signature should be accepted; and 4) a signature's slant may show evidence of a forgery. If there are inconsistencies between the signatures on the early ballot affidavit and the voter registration database, the local characteristics of the signature should be evaluated next. The local characteristics of a signature include internal spacing, pen lifts and the beginning and ending strokes of a signature ([SOS](#)).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Designates the Signature Verification Guide as the minimum requirements for comparing the signatures on a voter's early ballot envelope with the signature on the voter's registration record.
2. Requires signatures that cannot be verified in accordance with the Signature Verification Guide to be rejected.
3. Exempts early ballots tabulated on-site at a voting center or polling place from the requirements relating to signature verification.
4. Makes technical changes.
5. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

House Action

MOE	1/25/23	DP	6-4-0-0
3 rd Read	2/22/23		47-13-0

Prepared by Senate Research

March 1, 2023

AN/CS/slp