

ELECTION COMPLAINT TO THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE

Docket Number	OFFICE USE ONLY	Date Hand-delivered or Date Postmarked / /
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Please read the Important Information at the end of this document. The Secretary of State has no authority to order a new election, change an election result, or conduct a criminal investigation. A complaint filed with this form will not alter the results of an election.

This complaint form MUST BE SIGNED before it is submitted to the Secretary of State; therefore, you must print it out and sign it before mailing or faxing a copy or emailing a scanned, signed copy.

I. IDENTITY OF COMPLAINANT

1 COMPLAINANT NAME	MS / MRS / MR	FIRST	MI	NICKNAME	LAST	SUFFIX
2 COMPLAINANT PHYSICAL ADDRESS	ADDRESS (TO INCLUDE APT / SUITE # IF APPLICABLE) CITY STATE ZIP CODE <small>(Full home or business address, including street, city, state, and zip code)</small>					
3 COMPLAINANT MAILING ADDRESS	ADDRESS (TO INCLUDE APT / SUITE # IF APPLICABLE) CITY STATE ZIP CODE <small>(Full home or business address, including street, city, state, and zip code)</small>					
4 COMPLAINANT TELEPHONE NUMBER	AREA CODE	PHONE NUMBER	EXT	5 COMPLAINANT E-MAIL ADDRESS		

II. IDENTITY OF RESPONDENT

PERSON OR ENTITY COMMITTING ALLEGED VIOLATION(S)

6 RESPONDENT NAME	MS / MRS / MR	FIRST	MI	NICKNAME	LAST	SUFFIX
7 RESPONDENT POSITION OR TITLE						
8 RESPONDENT PHYSICAL ADDRESS	ADDRESS (TO INCLUDE APT / SUITE # IF APPLICABLE) CITY STATE ZIP CODE <small>(Full home or business address, including street, city, state, and zip code)</small>					
9 RESPONDENT MAILING ADDRESS	ADDRESS (TO INCLUDE APT / SUITE # IF APPLICABLE) CITY STATE ZIP CODE <small>(Full home or business address, including street, city, state, and zip code)</small>					
10 RESPONDENT TELEPHONE NUMBER	AREA CODE	PHONE NUMBER	EXT	11 RESPONDENT E-MAIL ADDRESS (IF KNOWN)		

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III. NATURE OF ALLEGED VIOLATION

If you believe that a criminal violation of the Code has occurred, please state the specific acts committed by the person or entity named in this complaint, along with a reference to the section of the Code alleged to have been violated, if known. If you need more space, please attach a separate sheet.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NEEDED

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

State the facts constituting the alleged violation(s), including the dates on which or the period of time in which the alleged violation(s) occurred. Identify allegations of fact not personally known to the complainant, but alleged on information and belief. Please use simple, concise, and direct statements.

ELECTION IN WHICH VIOLATION(S) OCCURRED

NAME OF ELECTION _____	DATE OF ELECTION MM/DD/YYYY _____
COUNTY OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION _____	PRECINCT _____

ATTACH ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NEEDED

VI. SIGNED STATEMENT**Page 5**

I, _____, the undersigned,

PRINTED NAME OF COMPLAINANT

under penalty of perjury do swear or affirm that the information contained in this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

I have read and understand the accompanying instructions, and I am aware that completion of this form cannot and will not alter the outcome of the election.

SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT

NOTICE: THIS COMPLAINT IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL; ONCE FILED WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, IT WILL BE TREATED AS A PUBLIC RECORD.

REMINDER: YOU MUST SIGN THIS FORM PRIOR TO SUBMITTING**IF MAILING, PLEASE SEND TO:**

Texas Secretary of State
Elections Division
c/o Legal Dept.
P.O. Box 12060
Austin, TX 78711

IF FAXING, PLEASE SEND TO:

512.475.2811

IF EMAILING, PLEASE SEND TO:

elections@sos.state.tx.us

VII. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Pursuant to Section 31.006 of the Texas Election Code (the "Code"), the Office of the Secretary of State (the "Secretary of State") has the ability to refer elections complaints to the Office of the Attorney General (the "Attorney General"). If, after receiving a complaint alleging criminal conduct in connection with an election, the Secretary of State determines that there is reasonable cause to suspect that the alleged criminal conduct occurred, the Secretary of State shall promptly refer the complaint to the Attorney General. The Secretary of State shall deliver to the Attorney General all pertinent documents in the Secretary of State's possession.

Any person who believes that a criminal violation of the Code has occurred may file a complaint. In order to initiate the complaint process, a written and signed complaint must be filed with the Secretary of State. The complaint must allege the violation with particularity, identify the person(s) or entity responsible for the alleged violation, and contain a reference to the section of the Code alleged to have been criminally violated, if known.

The Secretary of State has no authority to order a new election, change an election result, or conduct a criminal investigation. This form is to be used solely to document alleged election irregularities and submit allegations of criminal violations of the Code to be referred to the Attorney General. Often complaints will be Code violations that do not amount to criminal violations or acts. These violations are election irregularities which may form the basis of an election contest, but do not carry a criminal penalty. These election irregularities will not be referred to the Attorney General for possible criminal prosecution.

Challenging an election result can be done either through (1) a recount or (2) an election contest. If you are seeking to alter the outcome of the election, you will need to use one of these methods of challenging the results, described below. **A complaint filed with this form will not alter the results of an election.**

Legal Remedies That May Alter the Election Outcome

1. Recount

Recounts are used only to recount the votes in a particular race (office) or measure. A recount does not have the scope or authority of an election contest in court, i.e., the recount committee will not look at the manner in which voters were qualified to vote in person or by mail or whether voters were eligible to vote in the election. The governing body of an entity cannot conduct a recount on its own motion, e.g., at the canvass.

Please note that recount request deadlines occur soon after the canvass - a recount must be requested not later than two days following the canvass. More information on filing recounts (including form, deposit information, and who and how to file) is available on the Secretary of State's website.

2. Election Contest

If a candidate disputes the outcome of the election, regardless of whether or not a recount has been conducted, and has discovered irregularities, fraud, or mistakes in the conduct of the election that affected or could have affected the outcome, he/she can file an election contest to challenge the election results. The legal question raised by an election contest is whether the outcome of the contested election, as shown by the final canvass, is not (or cannot be conclusively determined to be) the true outcome because (1) illegal votes were counted, or because (2) an election officer or other official administering the election either (i) prevented eligible voters from voting, (ii) failed to count legal votes, (iii) engaged in fraud or illegal conduct, or (iv) erred in some material way.

Contests involving county elections are filed in the district court in the relevant county. In most circumstances, the filing deadline for an election contest is 30 days after the canvass, except in the case of a primary or an election where a runoff is necessary, in which case the deadline for filing is 10 days after the final canvass. If a recount is held and the votes are changed, the date of the canvass of the recount (i.e., final canvass) becomes the new date by which the contest deadline is calculated.

Any losing candidate may contest an election. In a contest of an officer election, the contestant files suit against the election's winner (or in the event that the election outcome is determined by majority vote rather than plurality vote, the person or persons entitled to a place on the runoff ballot). Voters at large within a political subdivision do not possess standing to intervene as parties to an election contest for public office.

In an election contest, the court has the authority to: (1) examine ballots and equipment; (2) compel voters to reveal how they voted; (3) declare an election void if illegal votes are greater than or equal to the number of votes necessary to change the outcome or cannot ascertain the true outcome of the election; (4) order a new election (or new runoff election), if unable to ascertain true outcome; (5) subtract illegal votes, if able to determine the side for which an illegal vote was cast; or (6) declare outcome of election, if able to ascertain true outcome.

If you think either a recount or an election contest is the proper procedure for the remedy you seek, you may wish to consult private legal counsel regarding your legal options. The Secretary of State staff can provide general guidance on these procedures as well.