PLEJ | PARTNERSHIP FOR LARGE ELECTION JURISDICTIONS

ISSUE GUIDE

Candidate Replacement

As an election official, reassuring voters, media, and other community stakeholders when a candidate change occurs is important. This document includes generic responses and tips based on best practices to help guide your discussions with key audiences. We encourage you to customize the material below based on the particulars of your jurisdiction.

IN THIS RESOURCE

Sample Statement for Candidate Changes

Sample Responses to Potential FAQs

OVERVIEW

When discussing the topic with your community, remember to:

- Be proactive when engaging with media
- Stay focused on key facts and clear narrative, and avoid tangents
- Clarify any parameters at the beginning of the conversation
- Consider reviewing these 10 tips about what to do when the media comes calling

In general, both the Sample Statement and the Sample Responses to Potential FAQs below focus on reassuring voters that there is a legal process, that you are aware of the legal process, and that you plan to keep folks informed at every step of the way.

Nothing in this document is intended to serve as legal advice or analysis. Every state is different and has different laws governing candidate changes and ballot creation. Be sure to check with your county or state attorney about the process in your jurisdiction.

SAMPLE STATEMENT FOR CANDIDATE CHANGES

"Our office is committed to ensuring that every voter can safely and securely cast a ballot for their candidate of choice in every election. When there is a candidate change, we follow the processes set out in state and federal law for removing and/or replacing that individual's name on the ballot.

[*Let voters know the status of the ballot in your jurisdiction. For example, "Our office has not yet finalized the ballot for this year's general election."]*

We will continue to work closely with the appropriate officials to make sure the ballots voters receive accurately list the candidates who have qualified to run for office in the *[Insert Election Date/Name]*." [See sample post]

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO POTENTIAL FAQS

1 WILL CHANGING THE NAME OF A CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE IMPACT VOTING?

We know that when unexpected changes happen, disruptions to voting are a top concern. The process for listing a candidate on the ballot is governed by state and federal law. Our office will follow those laws, and work diligently to ensure that the *[Insert Election Date/Name]* runs smoothly. We adapt to changing circumstances, whether it is natural disasters, changes in laws, and even changes in candidates. *[Feel free to insert local examples that voters in your area might know].*

Local election administrators are tracking and will be ready to respond as needed. We will keep you updated and informed throughout the process.

Candidate Replacement

ISSUE GUIDE

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO POTENTIAL FAQS

2

WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE OF MY CHOICE?

Ballots will reflect the candidates certified to be listed on the ballot for each race.

3

DO ELECTION ADMINISTRATORS DECIDE WHO RUNS?

Individuals decide whether to run for office, a party has rules to determine its candidates, states have a process for approving a candidate for the ballot, and election administrators ensure that candidates who have completed all of the state and/or federal legal requirements are listed on the election ballot in accordance with state and federal law.

The process for replacing a candidate in this jurisdiction is *[Insert discussion of local process]*.

4

HOW/WHEN WILL BALLOTS BE FINALIZED?

State and federal law govern when and how ballots must be finalized. For the *[DATE/NAME OF ELECTION]*, *[add your jurisdiction, and explain by which date ballots must be finalized and the procedure for doing that as set out in state law]*.

Our office will follow those requirements, laws, and court decisions and continue to work every day to ensure that elections run smoothly and that elections are free and fair.

5

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING FOR POTENTIAL CHANGES?

My office is staying nimble, staying prepared, and serving as a source of accurate information for our community. We are training staff on all relevant laws and guidelines regarding changes to the ballot. We are continuing the good work we do every day, like educating voters and ensuring that everyone eligible to vote can cast their ballot.

[If applicable - add what you are doing to educate the community. Mention ways that your office generally responds to changes or add specific examples of how an election office is nimble every election.]

We will navigate any changes that come our way, and we are confidently administering fair elections where folks can vote for the candidate of their choice.