



March 12, 2025

Write-In Candidates

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: CTAS-864

Any person trying to receive a party nomination or be elected by write-in ballot must complete a notice to the county election commission of each county of the district requesting that his or her ballots be counted no later than 50 days before the primary or 50 days before a general election. T.C.A.

§§ 2-7-133 and 2-8-113. The county election commission is required to promptly notify the state coordinator of elections and the registry of election finance as well as other candidates participating in the affected primary or election of the write-in notice. A write-in candidate will only have votes counted in counties where the notice was completed and timely filed. Write-in candidates for the offices of governor, United States Senator, and members of the United States House of Representatives are required to file their notice with the state coordinator of elections. In a primary election, a write-in candidate for that office must receive a vote equal to at least 5 percent of the total number of registered voters of the district, and receive more votes than any other candidate, to receive the party's nomination. T.C.A.

§ 2-8-113. Furthermore, a write-in candidate for county or municipal office must receive a minimum of 25 votes in the primary before being placed on the ballot for the general election, a requirement that cannot be modified by private act or charter. T.C.A. § 2-5-219. In an election where voting machines are used, a voter may write-in a name not listed on the ballot if the voter requests a paper ballot from the ballot judge before operating a voting machine. After receiving a paper ballot, a voter may not enter a voting machine. T.C.A. § 2-7-117.

A candidate defeated in a primary election shall not complete a notice requesting write-in ballots to be counted in the general election, and any write-in votes cast for the candidate in the general election must not be counted. T.C.A. § 2-7-133.

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/eli/write-candidates>