

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article 33 - Election Code

4B-1.

(a) Any group of voters wishing to form a new political party shall do so by filing with the State Administrative Board of Election Laws a petition for formation of a political party which shall declare their intention of organizing a State political party, the name of which shall be stated in the petition together with the name [and], address, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND SIGNATURE of the State chairman thereof and the names and addresses of at least twenty-five persons who shall be designated as constituting the governing body of the party. A PETITION SHALL BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN AFFIDAVIT SIGNED BY THE STATE CHAIRMAN WHICH STATES THAT THE LISTED NAMES CONSTITUTE THOSE PERSONS ON THE GOVERNING BODY. Appended to the petition in the manner hereinafter provided shall be papers bearing the signatures of at least ten thousand [qualified] REGISTERED voters of the State. If, after verification as required by this section, the total required number of signatures of [qualified] REGISTERED voters is not properly appended to the petition, additional signatures may be filed. However, all of the signatures, including any added after the initial filing, must have been affixed to the appended papers not more than two years prior to the filing date of the last qualifying signature, and no voter's signature may be counted more than once.

(A-1) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A PETITION FOR FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY, OR ANY ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES TO A PETITION, MAY BE FILED AT ANY TIME.

(2) A PETITION FOR FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY, OR ANY ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES TO A PETITION, MAY NOT BE FILED:

(I) AFTER THE 5TH MONDAY PRECEDING OR DURING THE 10 DAYS FOLLOWING A PRIMARY OR SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION;

(II) AFTER THE 1ST MONDAY IN AUGUST PRECEDING OR DURING THE 15 DAYS FOLLOWING A GENERAL ELECTION; OR

(III) AFTER THE 5TH MONDAY PRECEDING OR DURING THE 15 DAYS FOLLOWING A SPECIAL ELECTION.

(b) The State Administrative Board of Election Laws shall prescribe the form of petitions filed under the provisions of this subtitle. The signatures shall be on separate papers, bearing one or more signatures, and being no more than 8 1/2 inches in width and 14 inches in length. Each paper shall