



**WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE**

**MAC WARNER**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

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5/8/2024 4:48:36 PM

Office of West Virginia  
Secretary Of State

**NOTICE OF FINAL FILING AND ADOPTION OF A LEGISLATIVE RULE AUTHORIZED  
BY THE WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

AGENCY: Secretary Of State TITLE-SERIES: 153-14  
RULE TYPE: Legislative Amendment to Existing Rule: Yes Repeal of existing rule: No  
RULE NAME: GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF NICKNAMES  
AND OTHER DESIGNATIONS ON THE BALLOT  
CITE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: W. Va. Code § 3-1A-6

The above rule has been authorized by the West Virginia Legislature.

Authorization is cited in (house or senate bill number) HB 4110

Section §64-9-23 Passed On 3/9/2024 12:00:00 AM

This rule is filed with the Secretary of State. This rule becomes effective on the following date:

May 8, 2024

This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect from the following date:

August 01, 2029

**BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.**

**Yes**  
**Donald Kersey -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.**

TITLE 153  
LEGISLATIVE RULE  
SECRETARY OF STATE

SERIES 14  
GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF NICKNAMES AND OTHER  
DESIGNATIONS ON THE BALLOT

**§153-14-1. General.**

1.1. Scope. -- This rule clarifies the guidelines to be used by the secretary of state and the county board of ballot commissioners in determining how a name is to be printed on the ballot. See W. Va. Code § 3-1-21.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code § 3-1A-6.

1.3. Filing Date. -- May 8, 2024.

1.4. Effective Date. -- May 8, 2024.

1.5. Sunset Provision. -- This Rules shall terminate and have no further force of effect on August 1, 2029.

**§153-14-2. Allowable Additions or Alterations to Legal Names.**

2.1. A nickname by which a person is commonly known, provided it does not violate the restrictions described herein, may be used on the ballot in lieu of the candidate's first name or may be placed within the name, either in quotation marks or parentheses.

Examples: Bill Trees, William "Bill" Trees, Elizabeth (Betsy) Bond, Liz Bond, Carl "Junior" Rivers, Ester "Lilly" Smith.

2.2. A candidate may use a gender honorific or contraction as a prefix to their name, or a generational suffix that is included in the candidate's legal name.

Examples: Ms. Taylor Brown, Mr. Lamont Smith, Miss Devon Williams, Mister John "Swiftly" Walters, or Missus Sophia Powell.

Examples: Ed Roe, Jr.; Thomas Orr, Sr.; Lloyd Wilson, III.

**§153-14-3. Unallowable Additions or Alterations to Legal Names.**

3.1. No title, position name or other designation which is not a part of an individual's legal name shall be placed before the name on the ballot.

Examples: Dr., Rev., Capt., Col., Maj., Supt., Pres., Coach, Brother, Father, Rabbi, Chief, Auctioneer, Sen., Cong., Del., Sheriff.

3.2. No degree, rank or other designation which is not a part of an individual's legal name shall be placed before or after a name on the ballot.

Examples: Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M., CPA, R.N., Lt., Sgt. 1st Class.

3.3. No nickname which carries a common meaning which denotes status or membership in a class of persons, or which is commonly used as or suggests a title, position designation, or other similar designation shall be placed before, after, or within a name on the ballot, whether or not the candidate has or has not held the position represented by the title.

Examples: Howard "Sarge" Jones, Earl "Chief" Weber, Lydia (Doc) Miller, "General" Lee Upton, Lou (Coach) Jones, John "Congressman" Adkins.

3.4. No nickname which suggests specific action by the voter shall be placed on the ballot.

Examples: Sam "Single Shot" Roberts, Joe "Vote Straight" Jones.

3.5. No variation in the typography of a name which calls attention to that name on the ballot shall be allowed. The standard for whether the name will be used is one based on the personal common use of the name by the candidate over a period of time. The candidate's signature, legal name status pursuant to W. Va. Code §48-5-1, driver's license, phone book spelling, etc., can be used. If a clear preponderance of such evidence reflects the requested spelling, then it should be printed.

Examples: OTIS Slevptvacowicz, SteVen WilSon, mmm GOODman.

3.6. No slogan may be used under the guise of a nickname.

Examples: Franklin "New Deal" Roosevelt, Jimmy "Why Not The Best" Carter.

3.7. No addition to a legal name may be used to indicate associations with particular individuals or causes.

Examples: Joseph "Reagan" Johnson, Charles "Chuck Yeager" Browning, Mamie "ERA" Monroe, Alice "Gun Control" Anderson.

**§153-14-4. Maximum Length of Name.**

4.1. Because space and typographical limitations affect ballot printing, the length of names on the ballot are hereby limited.

4.2. When a candidate specifies a name for the ballot which incorporates names other than his or her legal name, and which includes more than twenty-five (25) letters, the secretary of state or county clerk may require the candidate to designate a name for the ballot including no more than twenty-five (25) letters. If the candidate fails to comply, the secretary of state or county clerk shall use only the candidate's legal name.