

## Precinct Committee Officer Elections

Elections Clearinghouse Notice

Issue #24-03

March 5, 2024

Precinct Committee Officers appear on the Primary ballot in even-numbered years. This clearinghouse replaces Clearinghouse #22-02 issued on March 22, 2022.

### PCO Candidate Filing

The filing form for Precinct Committee Officers is available on the [Office of the Secretary of State's website](#).

Candidates who file for PCO may also file for one other position on the same ballot. (RCWs [29A.24.075\(2\)](#), [29A.36.201](#))

### Filing Deadlines

Candidates for Precinct Committee Officer must file during Candidate Filing Week. The form can be submitted in person, by mail, or electronically. (RCWs [29A.24.031](#), [29A.24.040](#), [29A.24.050](#), [29A.24.081](#); WACs [434-215-021](#), [434-215-070](#))

If a PCO position is void at the close of Candidate Filing Week, that office is lapsed and not placed on the ballot. Special three-day filing periods will not be held for PCO positions. The political party may fill the position by appointment. ([RCW 29A.80.031](#); [WAC 434-230-100\(2\)\(c\)](#))

If, after the last day to withdraw, only one candidate has filed for a party position, that candidate is considered elected immediately and the County Auditor must issue a certificate of election. ([RCW 29A.52.171\(1\)](#); [WAC 434-230-100\(2\)\(a\)](#))

A candidate may not file as a declared write-in candidate for a PCO position. ([RCW 29A.60.021\(1\)](#); [WAC 434-230-100\(2\)\(d\)](#))

### Age

The candidate must be a registered voter in the precinct and at least 18 years of age by the date of the Primary. If a Future Voter who will be 18 years of age by the date of the primary election files a declaration of candidacy for PCO, their filing information is publicly disclosable. (RCWs [29A.24.075](#), [29A.80.041](#))

### Filing Fee

There is no filing fee for PCO. ([RCW 29A.24.091\(1\)](#))

### Public Information

Once submitted, the declaration of candidacy is a public record in its entirety. ([RCW 29A.24.072](#))

## Party Affiliation

One position per major political party may appear on the ballot. Two positions are currently open in each precinct: one for the Democratic Party and one for the Republican Party. PCO candidates affiliate with a major political party when filing for office. ([RCW 29A.80.041](#))

## Term Length

The term of office for PCO is two years. There are no short term or unexpired term elections conducted for this office. ([RCW 29A.80.051](#))

If an elected or appointed PCO position is vacated, the political party is responsible to fill the position by appointment. ([RCW 29A.80.031](#))

## Creating the Ballot

### Primary-only Voter (POV) Ballots

PCO races appear only on the even-year Primary ballot. Primary-only Voters are not eligible to vote for PCO races; PCOs must not appear on POV ballots. ([WAC 434-232-010\(2\)\(b\)](#))

### Ballot Appearance

Only contested races appear on the ballot. For example, if two candidates file for a precinct's Democratic Party position, but only one candidate files for the Republican Party position, only the Democratic PCO race will appear on the ballot. ([RCW 29A.52.171\(1\)](#))

### Position on Ballots

When major political party positions qualify to appear on the ballot, the order is determined by the statewide results of the last Presidential election. For example, in 2024, the Democratic PCO race will be listed first and the Republican PCO race will be listed second. ([WAC 434-230-100\(3\)](#))

Candidate order within each party is determined by lot. ([RCW 29A.36.131](#); [WAC 434-230-100\(3\)](#))

PCOs appear at the end of a regular ballot (a consolidated ballot) or on a physically separate ballot. The office must be clearly delineated from other offices on a consolidated ballot. ([RCW 29A.52.171\(2\)](#))

### Write-in Lines

A write-in line is not printed on the ballot. ([RCW 29A.60.021\(1\)](#); [WAC 434-230-100\(2\)\(d\)](#))

### Instructions on Ballots

The following instructions must be included immediately above all PCO races ([RCW 29A.52.171\(3\)](#)):

"In order to vote for precinct committee officer, a partisan office, you must affirm that you are a Democrat or a Republican and may vote only for one candidate from the party you select. Your vote for a candidate affirms your affiliation with the same party as the candidate. This preference is private and will not be matched to your name or shared."

The term of office and precinct name are not required to be listed.

A candidate's applicable party abbreviation is to be printed next to each candidate's name (see examples). Below each candidate, the following statement must be printed: "I affirm I am a Democrat" if the candidate is a Democrat, or "I affirm I am a Republican" if the candidate is a Republican. By voting for the candidate, this statement is an affirmation of the voter's party affiliation. ([RCW 29A.52.171\(4\)](#))

### **Sample Ballots**

Sample ballots must include the office of PCO but need not list the precinct positions separately or the candidates' names.

## **Counting Votes**

### **Write-in Votes**

No write-in votes are permitted for the office of precinct committee officer. ([RCW 29A.24.311\(3\)\(d\)](#))

If the voter did not vote for any PCO candidates printed on the ballot and tries to write a candidate's name not printed on the ballot, it is tabulated as an undervote. ([RCW 29A.60.021\(1\)](#))

If the voter marked the target area for a PCO candidate printed on the ballot and also apparently tried to write a candidate's name for PCO, the vote for the printed candidate will count. This is not considered an overvote. ([RCW 29A.60.021\(3\)](#))

Corrections made by the voter regarding PCO candidates already printed on the ballot are permitted. If the voter attempts to correct a vote in a contested PCO race, rules for voter intent must be followed. ([WAC 434-261-086](#))

### **Vote Minimums**

There is no minimum requirement for the number of votes cast for a PCO candidate.

The voter may cast a vote for only one candidate. If votes are cast for more than one candidate, the race is overvoted and neither vote counts. ([RCW 29A.52.171\(5\)](#))

The candidate receiving the most votes in the Primary is elected. PCOs do not appear on the General Election ballot. ([RCW 29A.80.051](#))

### **Recounts**

Contested PCO races are subject to recount laws. ([Chapter 29A.64 RCW](#))

### **Certificate of Election**

Results for PCO races certify at the same time as other offices – 14 days after the Primary. ([RCW 29A.60.190](#))

A certificate of election must be issued to anyone elected to a PCO position; procedures are determined by each county's policy. ([RCW 29A.52.360](#))

## Ballot Examples

**For this office only:** In order to vote for precinct committee officer, a partisan office, you must affirm that you are a Democrat or a Republican and may vote only for one candidate from the party you select. Your vote for a candidate affirms your affiliation with the same party as the candidate. This preference is private and will not be matched to your name or shared.

Vote for one

- Jimmy Smith            Dem  
I affirm I am a Democrat
- Sue Thomas            Dem  
I affirm I am a Democrat
- Charlie Miller        Rep  
I affirm I am a Republican
- Jane Doe                Rep  
I affirm I am a Republican

**For this office only:** In order to vote for precinct committee officer, a partisan office, you must affirm that you are a Democrat or a Republican and may vote only for one candidate from the party you select. Your vote for a candidate affirms your affiliation with the same party as the candidate. This preference is private and will not be matched to your name or shared.

Vote for one

- Jimmy Smith - Dem  
I affirm I am a Democrat
- Sue Thomas - Dem  
I affirm I am a Democrat
- Charlie Miller - Rep  
I affirm I am a Republican
- Jane Doe - Rep  
I affirm I am a Republican