

**Office of the Secretary of State
Elections Division**



HOW A CANDIDATE'S NAME SHALL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT

The rules regarding how a candidate's name shall appear on the ballot are set out in Georgia State Election Board (SEB) Rule 183-1-11-.02.

The SEB rule specifies that:

1. The candidate's name on the ballot must contain the last name as it appears on their voter registration record and at least one of the following:
 - a. The first name (or initial with period) as it appears on their voter registration record;
 - i. **EXAMPLE: JONATHAN DOE or J. DOE**
 - b. The middle name (or initial with period) as it appears on their voter registration record;
 - i. **EXAMPLE: WILLIAM DOE or W. DOE**
 - c. An abbreviated first name by which the candidate is commonly known; or
 - i. **EXAMPLE: JOHN DOE**
 - d. A nickname by which the candidate is commonly known.
 - i. **EXAMPLE: BUDDY DOE**
 - ii. **EXAMPLE: JONATHAN "BUDDY" DOE**
2. As mentioned above, a candidate's name on the ballot may include a nickname by which the candidate is commonly known, but cannot contain any titles referring to the business, fraternal, religious, or professional affiliation of the candidate, or political slogan or message. A title or degree includes, but is not limited to, military or professional title or rank, or references such as "Dr.", "Rev.", "Judge", "Mr.", "Ms.", "Mrs.", or "Miss."
 - i. **EXAMPLES:**
 1. **Acceptable: BUDDY DOE**
 2. **Acceptable: JOHN "BUDDY" DOE**
 3. **Unacceptable: DR. JOHN DOE; MR. JOHN DOE**
 4. **Unacceptable: JOHN "VOTE FOR ME" DOE**
 5. **Unacceptable: JONATHAN DOE ESQ.**
 6. **Unacceptable: CAPT. JONATHAN DOE**
3. The candidate's name **cannot** be longer than 25 characters, **including spaces and punctuation**.
 - i. **EXAMPLES:**
 1. **Acceptable: JONATHAN WILLIAM DOE (20 characters)**
 2. **Unacceptable: JONATHAN "BUDDY" WILLIAM DOE (28 characters)**
4. A determination as to whether the candidate's requested name on the ballot complies with all of the rules discussed above is at the discretion of the Secretary of State or election superintendent, as appropriate.
5. The candidate name as it appears on the voter registration record can be checked by using the Secretary of State's "My Voter Page" tool at <https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do>