FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

CORD BYRD
Secretary of State

MEMORANDUM

TO: Candidates and Supervisors of Elections

FROM: Cord Byrd
Florida Secretary of State

DATE: April 22, 2026

SUBJECT: Directive 2026-02 – Implementation of § 99.021, Fla. Stat.

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1. I issue this directive in my capacity as the "chief election officer" of the State of Florida with the responsibility to "[o]btain and maintain uniformity in the interpretation and implementation of election laws," section 97.012(1), Fla. Stat., and "[p]rovide written direction . . . to the supervisors of elections on the performance of their official duties with respect to the Florida Election Code." *Id*. Section 97.012(16).

2. Specifically, I issue this directive to clarify the interpretation and implementation of section 99.021, Florida Statutes (2026), which HB 991 recently amended. Specifically, subparagraphs (1)(b)4. and (1)(c)2. were amended to provide in pertinent part that a candidate must swear or affirm that they have not

   > *legally changed his or her name through a petition pursuant to s. 68.07 during the 365-day period preceding the beginning of qualifying. This subparagraph does not apply to any change of name in proceedings for dissolution of marriage or adoption of children or based on a change of name conducted with a marriage certificate.*

3. Pursuant to 99.061(1)-(3), Florida Statutes, the Department of State is the qualifying officer for federal, state, and multicounty district offices and the Supervisors of Elections serve as the qualifying officers for county and certain district offices.

4. The Department of State became aware that certain candidates who seek to qualify have legally changed their name in a way that is now prohibited but are otherwise qualified.

5. Accordingly, I issue the following Directive:

   Any candidate who legally changed his or her name through a petition pursuant to s. 68.07 (not including any change of name in proceedings for dissolution of marriage or adoption of children or based on a change of name conducted with a marriage certificate) during the 365-day period preceding the beginning of qualifying but before HB 991 became effective on April 1, 2026, may qualify with the name they had immediately preceding the legal name change.

6. As always, my staff stands ready to assist you and answer questions you may have about candidates' compliance with section 99.021(1)(b)4., and (c)2., Florida Statutes.

7. This directive remains in effect until such time as it is superseded or revoked by subsequent directive, law, or final court order.