

MICHIGAN ELECTION LAW (EXCERPT)
Act 116 of 1954

168.561 Official primary election ballots; offices for which name of candidate to be included; filing request for clarifying designation of same or similar surnames; notice of determination; appeal; printing occupation, date of birth, or residence of candidate; incumbency designation; guidelines.

Sec. 561. (1) The ballots prepared by the board of election commissioners in each county for use by the electors of a political party at a primary election shall include the name of each candidate of the political party for the office of governor, United States senator, and district offices; for the county, the name of each candidate of the political party for county offices; and for each township, the name of each candidate of the political party for township offices.

(2) If, in a district that is a county or entirely within 1 county, 2 or more candidates, including candidates for nonpartisan offices, for the same office have the same or similar surnames, a candidate may file a written request with the board of county election commissioners for a clarifying designation. The request shall be filed not later than 3 days after the last date for filing nominating petitions. Not later than 3 days after the filing of the request, the board of county election commissioners shall determine whether a similarity exists and whether a clarifying designation should be granted. In a district located in more than 1 county, the board of state canvassers shall make a determination whether to grant a clarifying designation upon the written request of a candidate who files nominating petitions with the secretary of state. The request shall be filed with the state board of canvassers not later than 5 days after the last date for filing nominating petitions. The board of state canvassers shall make its determination at the same time it makes a declaration of the sufficiency or insufficiency of nominating petitions in compliance with section 552.

(3) In each instance, the determining board shall immediately notify each candidate for the same office as the requester that a request for a clarifying designation has been made and of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The requester and each candidate for the same office shall be notified of the board's determination by first-class mail sent within 24 hours after the final date for the determination. A candidate who is dissatisfied with the determination of the board of county election commissioners may file an appeal in the circuit court of the county where the board is located. A candidate who is dissatisfied with the determination of the board of state canvassers may file an appeal in the Ingham county circuit court. The appeal shall be filed within 14 days after the final date for determination by the board. The court shall hear the matter de novo. Except as provided in subsection (4), in the case of the same surname or of a final determination by the board or by the court before the latest date that the board can arrange the ballot printing of the existence of similarity, the board shall print the occupation, date of birth, or residence of each of the candidates on the ballot or ballot labels under their respective names. The term "occupation" includes a currently held political office, even though it is not the candidate's principal occupation, but does not include reference to a previous position or occupation.

(4) If there are 2 candidates with the same or similar surnames and 1 of the candidates is entitled to an incumbency designation by section 24 of article VI of the state constitution of 1963, no other designation shall be provided for the other candidate with the same or similar surname. If there are more than 2 candidates with the same or similar surname and 1 of the candidates is entitled to an incumbency designation by section 24 of article VI of the state constitution of 1963, a clarifying designation may be given to the other candidates with the same or similar surname. Except for an incumbency designation under section 24 of article VI of the state constitution of 1963, if 2 or more candidates with the same or similar surnames are related, the board shall only print the residence or date of birth of each of the candidates as a clarifying designation. As used in this subsection, "related" means that the candidates with the same or similar surnames are related within the third degree of consanguinity.

(5) The board of state canvassers shall issue guidelines to ensure fairness and uniformity in the granting of designations and may issue guidelines relating to what constitutes the same or similar surnames. The board of state canvassers and the boards of county election commissioners shall follow the guidelines.

History: 1954, Act 116, Eff. June 1, 1955;—Am. 1955, Act 271, Imd. Eff. June 30, 1955;—Am. 1966, Act 328, Imd. Eff. July 19, 1966;—Am. 1967, Act 36, Eff. Nov. 2, 1967;—Am. 1976, Act 260, Imd. Eff. Aug. 12, 1976;—Am. 2002, Act 163, Imd. Eff. Apr. 9, 2002.

Popular name: Election Code