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## **Board of Elections Says Petition Drive Doomed by Basic Errors**

**(Columbus)** The Franklin County Board of Elections is urging circulators to become familiar with petition law and to explain the basics to everyone they ask for a signature. The latest petition drive in Franklin County-an attempt to amend the Columbus city charter - fell well short of the valid signatures needed to make the November ballot.

Of 26,870 signatures submitted, the board of elections found 8,471 or 31.5 percent to be valid. The Columbus charter required 19,164 signatures- 10 percent of those voting in the most recent municipal election- to place the issue on the ballot.

There were 650 signatures rejected as “not genuine” when they didn’t match the signature on a voter registration form or because it appeared signatures for multiple voters were submitted in one handwriting style. Many signatures were ruled illegible and not counted because it was impossible for board of elections staff to discern the name and address of the person who signed. Other petitions contained nothing but printed names-most of which could not be counted because they could not be compared to signatures on file written in longhand.

“We were surprised at the number of invalid signatures submitted,” said Board of Elections Director Bill Anthony. “Some petitions had no valid signatures out of 25 possible on a single document.” Anthony said circulators should have asked individuals to sign only if they were registered vote and to list the address at which they are registered.

Deputy Director Dana Walch said circulators made other mistakes. “They should have known that only voters registered in Columbus precincts were eligible to sign a Columbus charter petition and explained that to anyone signing, but they accepted signatures from voters who listed addresses outside the city including at least one from Cleveland.”

Statewide petition guidelines are available under the [Ohio Revised Code](#). Petitioners are invited to call the board of elections at (614) 525-5351 for information as well, but should contact local officials for petitions involving a city or village charter.

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