



**OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER ANITA BONDS**  
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION AND LABOR  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20004

April 28, 2025

Nyasha Smith, Secretary  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Secretary Smith,

Today, along with Councilmembers Kenyan McDuffie and Matthew Frumin, I am introducing the **“Petition Administration Clarification Amendment Act of 2025.”** Please find enclosed a signed copy of the legislation amending Title 1 of the District of Columbia Official Code to prohibit any person from altering information provided by the petition signer, except in cases where the signer requests assistance in signing the petition.

In 1955, the U.S. Congress passed the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, which established the framework for the administration of elections in the District of Columbia, including original guidelines for the circulation and filing of candidate nomination petitions for ballot access in the District. The Initiative, Referendum and Recall Procedures Act of 1979 (“IRR Act”) became law six years after the adoption of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act (also Called the Home Rule Act), granting District citizens the right to place new legislation, or legislation recently passed by the city council, on the ballot for a popular vote. The bill also established the right of District residents to recall elected officers of the District of Columbia government (except the Delegate to Congress for the District of Columbia) by the registered electors from the election district from which he or she was elected.

The IRR Act also includes guidelines related to the circulation and signing of petitions for these three legislative maneuvers. The statute enumerates many requirements related to petitions, including: the form of the petition and circulator affidavit; the timeline for the release of petitions and the deadline for submission; the number of signatures required for each type of action; and, specific requirement related to signature collection. However, nothing in the law addresses the legality of alterations or changes made to information added by a petition signer to the petition form.

It is not surprising that drafters of the IRR Act did not place restrictions on a circulator's or signer's ability to alter information written on a petition because, prior to the introduction of electronically transferable petition sheets, principal campaign, initiative, referendum and recall committees needed to pick up forms printed by the Board of Elections at their offices. For this reason, campaigns naturally focused on maximizing each available line of petition. So, if a signer made a mistake while filling out their line on the petition, candidate committees would cross out or edit the information to make sure the signature counted because space on a petition sheet was a priority given the effort needed to acquire the sheets.

However, times have changed. Campaign committees can now print petitions from the comfort of their own homes. Petition sheets can be emailed directly to supporters as well for them to print and sign on their own. This convenience obviates the need for petition circulators to edit, alter or change the information of a signer after a signature is affixed to the petition.

This bill provides straightforward guidance on a very important, fundamental process of our government by clearly banning the alteration of information provided by the petition signer after they sign the form. This change will allow for consistent resolution of petition challenges adjudicated by the Board of Elections and streamline the process we use to regulate ballot access in the District. Should you have any questions about this legislation, please contact Kevin Chavous at [kchavous@dccouncil.gov](mailto:kchavous@dccouncil.gov).

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anita Bonds', with a stylized, flowing script.

Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie



Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Matthew Frumin

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to require candidate nomination petition affidavits to state that the circulator has not altered signer information on a petition after a signer has signed the petition; to prohibit anyone from altering signer information provided by the petition signer, except in cases where the signer requests assistance in signing the petition before signing the petition; to amend the Initiative, Referendum and Recall Procedures Act of 1979 to require initiative, referendum and recall petition affidavits to state that the circulator has not altered signer information on a petition after a signer has signed the petition; and, to prohibit anyone from altering signer information provided by the petition signer, except in cases where the signer requests assistance in signing the petition.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Petition Administration Clarification Amendment Act of 2025”.

Sec. 2. Section 8 of the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69 Stat. 701; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.08) is amended as follows:

(a) Subsection (b)(3) is amended as follows:

(1) Subparagraph (B) is amended by striking the phrase “; and” and inserting a semicolon in its place.

(2) Subparagraph (C) is amended by striking the period and inserting the phrase “; and” in its place.

(3) A new subparagraph (D) is added to read as follows:

“(D) Not written, altered, corrected, clarified, or obscured information on the petition about the signer of the petition after the signer affixed their signature to the petition.”.

(b) A new subsection (p-1) is added to read as follows:

“(p-1) No person other than the petition signer may write, alter, correct, or clarify on a nominating petition any information about the petition signer unless the signer requests assistance in writing, altering, correcting, or clarifying on the petition any information about the signer before the signer affixes their signature.”.

Sec. 3. The Initiative, Referendum and Recall Procedures Act of 1979, effective June 7, 1979 (D.C. Law 3-1; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.16) is amended as follows:

(a) Subsection (h)(1) is amended as follows:

(1) Subparagraph (F) is amended by striking the period and inserting the phrase “; and”.

(2) A new subparagraph (G) is added to read as follows:

“(G) Not written, altered, corrected, clarified, or obscured information on the petition about the signer of the petition after the signer affixed their signature to the petition.”.

(b) Section 2g (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.16(h) is amended as follows:

(1) A new subsection (h-1) is added to read as follows:

“(h-1) No person other than the petition signer may write, alter, correct, or clarify on a petition sheet for an initiative or referendum unless the signer requests assistance in writing,

altering, correcting, or clarifying on the petition any information about the signer before the signer affixes their signature.”.

(b) Section 17 (D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.17) is amended as follows:

(1) Subsection (f) is amended as follows:

(1) Subparagraph (6) is amended by striking the period and inserting the phrase “; and”.

(2) A new subparagraph (7) is added to read as follows:

“(7) Not written, altered, corrected, clarified, or obscured information on the petition about the signer of the petition after the signer affixed their signature to the petition.”.

(2) A new subsection (h-1) is added to read as follows:

“(h-1) No person other than the petition signer may write, alter, correct, or clarify on a petition sheet for a recall petition unless the signer requests assistance in writing, altering, correcting or clarifying on the petition any information about the signer before the signer affixes their signature.”.

Sec. 4. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

Sec. 5. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto) and a 30-day period of congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(2) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,

80 1973 (87 Stat. 788; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(2)).