Petition Verification Procedure

1. If you have not run the process to produce voter identification cards within seven days prior to receipt of the petition, do so before beginning the verification process. Continue normal processing of voter registration applications during the course of petition verification.

2. Look at the signature appearing on the petition. According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, a signature is the name of a person written with his own hand. Therefore, a signature for petition purposes may be either written or printed. Disregard insubstantial errors, such as the signature appearing in the wrong column (i.e. written name in the column requesting a printed name). Enter the name on the Voter Registration Information screen in OEMS. A signature is considered valid if the name appears in OEMS. Both active and inactive voters may sign petitions.

3. Assume that each name is valid. The "benefit of the doubt" goes to the signer. Unless it can be proved beyond any doubt that the person who signed the petition is not a registered voter, then the signature shall be counted as valid.

Example: If the name on the petition is "C.P. Jones," and a registration is on file for "Charles Paul Jones," the signature should be counted as valid unless it can be proved absolutely that they are not the same person.

4. Draw a single line **IN RED INK** through any name that is determined to be invalid. The line must be drawn in such a manner as to leave the name legible. Write "NR" (not registered) on the line drawn through the person's name. Mark any mistake in elimination with an "OK."

5. Do not search for duplicate signatures, but if you do notice one, mark through the name and write "Dup" above the line. Be sure the names are an exact match before eliminating one in this manner.

6. If there is no signature, either printed or written, or if neither the printed nor written signature appearing on the form is legible, do not consider the signature valid. However, if a legible printed or written signature that matches a registration record in OEMS appears on the petition, count it as valid even if all the columns on the petition form are not complete.

Example: **Do count** the signature if
    A. There is a printed name, but no written signature
    B. There is a written signature, but no printed name
    C. There is a printed or written name, and the signature column is initialed
    D. All the requested information is included, but is in the wrong columns
    E. There is no date
    F. There is not an address or only a partial address

7. Personal knowledge that a voter who signed the petition is registered under a different name may be used only if the address matches exactly.

Example 1: If you have personal knowledge that Sunny Smith, as the name appears on the petition form, is registered as Alexander Smith, you may count that as a valid signature only if the address listed on the petition exactly matches the address provided for Alexander Smith in OEMS.

Example 2: If you have personal knowledge that Mary Jones, 222 Elm Street, is the person formerly known as Mary Hicks (maiden name) with an OEMS registration address of 807 Woods Street (former address) you **may not** count the signature because the address on the petition and the address in OEMS do not match the information in OEMS.

8. Prepare the Verification of Petition form, enclosed, reporting the total number of invalid and valid signatures.

9. Duplicate the marked petition pages and the Verification of Petition form. Return the original petition pages and the original Verification of Petition form to the State Election Board. Retain the photocopies in your office for 60 days.