

## Electronic and Online Voter Registration: Signature Capture

Across the country, dozens of states have begun modernizing their voter registration systems by implementing online registration and electronic voter registration at motor vehicle authorities (also known as DMVs) and other public assistance agencies. Electronic and online voter registration systems make it easier to participate in our democracy, save time and resources for election officials, and improve voter roll accuracy — all while boosting the security of the voting system.

States that have transitioned to electronic and online voter registration systems utilize various methods to capture the prospective voter's signature, as described below.

1. **Share Existing Electronic Signatures:** States may obtain a prospective voter's signature by using an existing digital signature already on file with another state government agency, most often the DMV. Under this model, the DMV would enter into an agreement with election officials to share signatures it already has in its systems after the registrant affirms eligibility and consent. If a registrant does not have an existing signature on file, states can utilize one of the other signature collection methods described below.
2. **Use an Electronic Signature Device:** States may capture a prospective voter's signature by allowing the registrant to sign their name on an electronic signature pad with a stylus or via another technological device. The signature is then transmitted seamlessly to election officials. This seamless, fully electronic solution creates a file that can be shared with election and other government officials for use in future transactions.
3. **Provide an Election Day Fail-Safe Option:** States may allow a prospective voter who has registered via an online registration system to provide his or her signature at their polling place on Election Day. This option, which should be available as a backstop in addition to other methods, ensures that a prospective voter's registration is still effective if election administrators cannot timely process a signature provided by the voter through another method. This signature can be later scanned into the election database to ensure it is permanently linked to the voter's file.
4. **Collecting Signatures on Paper:** States may capture a prospective voter's signature using an ink-and-paper form, which can be done in person, or through the mail. In either case, such paper signatures can be later scanned into the election database to ensure it is permanently linked to the voter's file.

While states with modernized registration systems use a variety of mechanisms to collect a voter's signature, the Brennan Center recommends administrators use electronic means to obtain signatures as such methods are less prone to errors, are cost-efficient and can be implemented securely. When an electronic option is unavailable, the Brennan Center recommends that there should always be a fail-safe option that enables a prospective voter to complete an electronic registration by providing a signature at the polls on Election Day.

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