**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 3557**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. B. Newton, Pedalino, Taylor, Guest and Crawford

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Introduced in the House on January 14, 2025

Currently residing in the House

Summary: Candidate filing

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 12/5/2024 House Prefiled

 12/5/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary**

 1/14/2025 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 244)

 1/14/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** (House Journal‑page 244)

 2/26/2025 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Guest,
 Crawford

 3/20/2025 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Judiciary** (House Journal‑page 8)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=3557&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/05/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3557_20241205.docx)

[03/20/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3557_20250320.docx)

Indicates Matter Stricken

Indicates New Matter

Committee Report

March 20, 2025

H. 3557

Introduced by Reps. B. Newton, Pedalino, Taylor, Guest and Crawford

S. Printed 3/20/25--H.

Read the first time January 14, 2025

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The committee on House Judiciary

To whom was referred a Bill (H. 3557) to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by amending Section 7‑11‑15, relating to qualifications to run as a candidate in general elections, so as to shorten the, etc., respectfully

Report:

That they have duly and carefully considered the same, and recommend that the same do pass with amendment:

 Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 7-11-15(A) and inserting:

 (A) In order to qualify as a candidate to run in the general election, all candidates seeking nomination by political party primary or political party convention must file a statement of intention of candidacy and party pledge and submit any filing fees between noon on March sixteenth and noon on March thirtieth twenty‑fifth as provided in this section. If March sixteenth is on a Saturday or Sunday, the time for filing begins the next regular business day. If March thirtieth twenty‑fifth is on a Saturday or Sunday, the time for filing extends to the next regular business day. For purposes of this section and Section 7‑13‑45, “next regular business day” means a day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. Notwithstanding another provision of law, beginning July 1, 2026, all candidates from each political party in this State shall pay a filing fee, including candidates from parties that choose not to conduct a primary election. In addition to the filing fee required pursuant to this subsection, political parties may also charge a certification fee not to exceed the sum of one hundred dollars to all candidates seeking nomination by political party primary or political party convention.

 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, candidates seeking nomination for a statewide, congressional, or district office that includes more than one county must file their statements of intention of candidacy, and party pledge and submit any filing fees with the State Election Commission.

 (2) Candidates seeking nomination for the State Senate or House of Representatives must file their statements of intention of candidacy and party pledge and submit any filing fees with the State Election Commission or county board of voter registration and elections in the county of their residence. The state executive committees must certify candidates pursuant to Section 7‑13‑40.

 (3) Candidates seeking nomination for a countywide or less than countywide office shall file their statements of intention of candidacy and party pledge and submit any filing fees with the county board of voter registration and elections in the county of their residence.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

W. NEWTON for Committee.

statement of estimated fiscal impact

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

State Expenditure

This bill requires all candidates from each political party to pay a filing fee and allows political parties to charge a certification fee to all candidates. This bill also changes the filing period for a candidate in a general election and the filing of party pledges for a candidate in a general election from March 30th to March 25th.

The State Election Commission anticipates being able to manage any additional responsibilities due to this bill with existing staff and within existing appropriations. Therefore, this bill will have no state expenditure impact.

State Revenue

This bill may result in a change in the total amount of candidate filing fees collected by the State Election Commission. Candidate filing fees are distributed to the commission’s Other Funds for the purpose of conducing elections. This bill will require candidates from the two major parties and third-party candidates to pay a filing fee. Candidates from the two major parties currently pay a fee. Additionally, the majority of candidates are either from the two major parties or are non-partisan, who are not required to pay a filing fee. Therefore, this bill may result in a change to Other Funds revenue due to the new filing fees collected from third-party candidates by the State Election Commission.

Local Expenditure

This bill may result in a change in the total amount of candidate filing fees collected by the State Election Commission. Candidate filing fees are distributed to the department’s Other Funds for the purpose of conducing elections. This bill will require candidates from the two major parties and third-party candidates to pay a filing fee. Candidates from the two major parties currently pay a fee. Additionally, the majority of candidates are either from the two major parties or are non-partisan, who are not required to pay a filing fill under this bill. Therefore, this bill may result in a change to Other Funds revenue due to the new filing fees collected from third-parties by the State Election Commission.

RFA contacted all counties and MASC to determine the potential local expenditure impact of this bill. We received responses from Charleston County, Dorchester County, and MASC. Dorchester County anticipates this bill will have no expenditure impact. Additionally, Charleston County anticipates this bill may result in an expenditure savings of approximately $400 as the change in the filing period may reduce the need for overtime pay for county election workers. MASC also anticipates this bill will have no fiscal impact for municipalities.

Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director

Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

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A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 7‑11‑15, RELATING TO QUALIFICATIONS TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE IN GENERAL ELECTIONS, SO AS TO SHORTEN THE CANDIDATE FILING PERIOD, TO REQUIRE ALL CANDIDATES FROM EACH POLITICAL PARTY IN THIS STATE TO PAY A FILING FEE, AND TO AUTHORIZE POLITICAL PARTIES TO CHARGE A CERTIFICATION FEE TO ALL CANDIDATES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 7‑11‑210, RELATING TO THE FILING OF PARTY PLEDGES BY CANDIDATES, SO AS TO CHANGE THE DATE BY WHICH A PARTY PLEDGE MUST BE FILED.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 7‑11‑15(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) In order to qualify as a candidate to run in the general election, all candidates seeking nomination by political party primary or political party convention must file a statement of intention of candidacy and party pledge and submit any filing fees between noon on March sixteenth and noon on March thirtieth twenty‑fifth as provided in this section. If March thirtieth twenty‑fifth is on a Saturday or Sunday, the time for filing extends to the next regular business day. For purposes of this section and Section 7‑13‑45, “next regular business day” means a day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. Notwithstanding another provision of law, beginning July 1, 2026, all candidates from each political party in this State shall pay a filing fee, including candidates from parties that choose not to conduct a primary election. In addition to the filing fee required pursuant to this subsection, political parties may also charge a certification fee not to exceed the sum of one hundred dollars to all candidates seeking nomination by political party primary or political party convention.

 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, candidates seeking nomination for a statewide, congressional, or district office that includes more than one county must file their statements of intention of candidacy, and party pledge and submit any filing fees with the State Election Commission.

 (2) Candidates seeking nomination for the State Senate or House of Representatives must file their statements of intention of candidacy and party pledge and submit any filing fees with the State Election Commission or county board of voter registration and elections in the county of their residence. The state executive committees must certify candidates pursuant to Section 7‑13‑40.

 (3) Candidates seeking nomination for a countywide or less than countywide office shall file their statements of intention of candidacy and party pledge and submit any filing fees with the county board of voter registration and elections in the county of their residence.

SECTION 2. Section 7‑11‑210 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 7‑11‑210. (A) Every candidate for selection as a nominee of any political party for any state office, United States Senator, member of Congress, or solicitor, to be voted for in any party primary election or political party convention, shall file with and place in the possession of the appropriate election commission, pursuant to Section 7‑11‑15 by twelve o’clock noon on March thirtieth twenty‑fifth a party pledge in the following form, the blanks being properly filled in and the party pledge signed by the candidate: “I hereby file my notice as a candidate for the nomination as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the primary election or convention to be held on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . I affiliate with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Party, and I hereby pledge myself to abide by the results of the primary or convention. I shall not authorize my name to be placed on the general election ballot by petition and will not offer or campaign as a write‑in candidate for this office or any other office for which the party has a nominee. I authorize the issuance of an injunction upon ex parte application by the party chairman, as provided by law, should I violate this pledge by offering or campaigning in the ensuing general election for election to this office or any other office for which a nominee has been elected in the party primary election, unless the nominee for the office has become deceased or otherwise disqualified for election in the ensuing general election. I hereby affirm that I meet, or will meet by the time of the general or special election, or as otherwise required by law, the qualifications for this office”.

 (B) Every candidate for selection in a primary election as the nominee of any political party for member of the Senate, member of the House of Representatives, and all county and township offices shall file with and place in the possession of the county board of voter registration and elections of the county in which they reside by twelve o’clock noon on March thirtieth twenty‑fifth a like party pledge.

 (C) The party pledge required by this section to be filed by a candidate in a primary must be signed personally by the candidate, and the signature of the candidate must be signed in the presence of an individual authorized by the election commission director. Any party pledge of any candidate signed by an agent on behalf of a candidate shall not be valid.

 (D) In the event that a person who was defeated as a candidate for nomination to an office in a party’s primary election shall thereafter offer or campaign as a candidate against any nominee for election to any office in the ensuing general election, the state chairman of the party which held the primary (if the office involved is one voted for in the general election by the electors of more than one county), or the county chairman of the party which held the primary (in the case of all other offices), shall forthwith institute an action in a court of competent jurisdiction for an order enjoining the person from so offering or campaigning in the general election, and the court is hereby empowered upon proof of these facts to issue an order.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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