**South Carolina General Assembly**

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**H. 3557**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Rep. B. Newton

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Summary: Candidate filing

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 12/5/2024 House Prefiled

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

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

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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