

During the 2010 legislative session the random selection process to determine the order of names on the ballot changed once again. Pursuant to RSA 669:23, clerks are now required to use name order in accordance with RSA 656:5-a (as established by SB 157 of the 2010 legislative session).

656:5-a Order of Candidate Names on Ballots. – *I. Whenever there are 2 or more candidates for the same office whose names will appear together within the same column or list on a ballot, the position of such names shall be determined according to this section.*

II. Immediately following the close of the period during which a person may accept the nomination of a party committee pursuant to RSA 655:32, the secretary of state or designee shall conduct a public random selection of a whole number from one to the total number of candidates for each possible list length where a group of candidates for the same office may appear in the same list in state or local elections during the next 2 years. For example, for a possible list of 3 candidates, the number one, 2, or 3 shall be randomly selected. The seed number for each possible list length shall remain in effect for the 2 years until the next random selection of seed numbers.

III. To determine the order of names on each ballot, the candidates for each office in the same list shall be temporarily listed alphabetically by surnames and the positions in such list shall be temporarily numbered in ascending order. The candidate whose position in the initial temporary list equals the seed number selected under paragraph II for the appropriate list length shall appear first on the ballot. The order of candidates after the candidate in the first position shall follow alphabetically by surname with "a" following "z."

In simple terms, the candidates for an office are listed in alphabetical order, and then assigned a number I through the total number of candidates who have filed. The number that was randomly drawn by the secretary of state is then applied to the number of candidates in that race. The candidates whose number was drawn goes first and the other candidates follow in alphabetical sequence after that.

The numbers drawn by the secretary of state to be applied to determine ballot order are:

Number of Candidates in Race	Number Drawn to Determine First Listed Candidate
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	2
7	4
8	8
9	4
10	5

Sample for 3 candidates:	Candidate Order on Ballot
1) Josiah Bartlett	1) Thomas Jefferson
2) Ben Franklin	2) Josiah Bartlett
3) Thomas Jefferson	3) Ben Franklin

If you have any questions regarding this procedure, please do not hesitate to call or email us. 371-3242 or elections@sos.state.nh.gov