



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE RELATED TO FUNDING OF SCHOOL LUNCHES APPROVED FOR NOVEMBER 3, 2026 BALLOT**

**BISMARCK, ND** – North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe has reviewed petitions submitted to his office on April 9, 2026, by proponents to initiate a constitutional measure on the ballot related to funding of school lunches. A total of 49,338 signatures were accepted, 18,174 signatures over the required threshold of 31,164 signatures, which qualifies the initiated measure for inclusion on the November 3, 2026 General Election ballot.

Below is a breakdown of the signatures accepted and rejected (petition review summary attached):

- **Required Signatures:** 31,164 signatures (4% of state population in the last census for an initiated constitutional measure)
- **Submitted Signatures:** 57,419 signatures
- **Rejected Signatures:** 8,081 signatures (due to incorrect or insufficient information)
  - Insufficient information breakout:
    - 1,837 inadequate signature
    - 1,950 out-of-state address or missing both city and zip code
    - 243 no date
    - 0 notary error
    - 553 circulator error
    - 3,603 address omission

The constitutional measure related to funding of school lunches will appear on the November 3, 2026, General Election ballot and be assigned as Measure 3 according to the provisions of N.D.C.C. § 16.1-06-09. The Office of the Secretary of State had 35 days to review petitions and determine the adequacy of signatures to place the measure on ballot according to N.D.C.C. § 16.1-01-10.

The 2026 General Election ballot will also contain two additional ballot measures. Constitutional Measure 1 related to term limits in the legislative assembly was placed on the ballot through the passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 4008. Constitutional Measure 2 related to the threshold for approving a constitutional amendment was placed on the ballot through the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 3003.

The constitutional initiative title related to funding of school lunches is as follows:

This initiated measure amendment would add a new section to article VIII of the North Dakota Constitution. Under this section, all public school districts, public schools, and public charter schools are mandated to provide one free breakfast and one free lunch each school day to enrolled students; nonpublic schools, the Bureau of Indian Education schools, and other tribal schools have the option to provide the same. This section does not apply to schools of higher education. School districts and schools that provide these meals are eligible for reimbursement by the state if they maximize federal reimbursement, participate in applicable federal programs for school breakfast and lunch funding, and encourage parents and guardians to apply for free and reduced-price meals. The state shall reimburse eligible school districts and schools at one hundred percent of the current rates used by the state for free meals. This reimbursement is mandatory and shall be adjusted annually for inflation. If the legislative assembly is unable to identify a source of funds for the reimbursement, funds will be appropriated from the legacy earnings fund. Laws may be enacted to facilitate, safeguard, expand, or implement this section but not to hamper, restrict, or impair it. In the case of any conflict between provisions of this section and North Dakota law, the provisions of this section shall control.

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*The Office of Secretary of State oversees a variety of functions, including elections, business registrations, licensing for certain occupations, Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) lien filings, and combative sports, as well as serving as the custodian of the Great Seal, and attesting official documents and acts of the Governor.*