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## Cohen May Face Court, Not Ballot Challenge

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By Benjamin Yount Illinois Statehouse News

SPRINGFIELD – Scott Lee Cohen may have collected a hundred thousand signatures that he didn't need.

The now independent candidate for governor filed over 133,000 voter signatures as part of his bid to unseat [Gov. Pat Quinn](#) <sup>[1]</sup>. That's more than 100,000 more than is required by state law, and may end-up being way more than needed as well.

Quinn's campaign is content to let the Democratic County Chairman's Association check and possibly challenge Cohen's paperwork.

Campaign spokeswoman Mica Matsoff said "The Democratic Party organization...is making sure the requirements to get on the ballot are met."

It's common for political rivals to challenge the others' paperwork. And it's quite common for that tactic to work and knock a candidate out of the race.

But former state elections boss, and current [University of Illinois at Springfield professor](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, Ron Michaelson said the sheer number of Cohen's signatures has rendered that tactic pointless.

["Anyone who has any 'Illinois smarts' in politics understands that the more signatures you file the less likely it is that someone will object."](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

Illinois law requires 25,000 signatures for independent and third party candidates. The law requires just 5,000 signatures from Republicans or Democrats running for governor. Cohen's filed paperwork easily surpasses both requirements.

But that doesn't mean Cohen is a lock for the fall ballot.

Michaelson says there are two court decisions that could keep the Chicago pawnbroker turned political wannabe out of the race.

["We have conflicting court cases out there, and the question is can a person run in a party primary and then for whatever reason the person {would} resign from that nomination and then run as an independent...And this is probably one reason that Gov. Quinn and others are considering going the judicial route to challenge Mr. Cohen."](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

Matsoff is silent on the potential of a court challenge. She said the campaign is letting the party organization handle any challenges right now.

Cohen's campaign is also not talking about a possible legal fight. But the candidate himself said earlier this week he thinks it will be tough for anyone to keep him off the November ballot.

Anyone hoping to challenge Cohen's paperwork has until next Monday.

But Michaelson said the key date doesn't come until September when the [Illinois State Board of](#)

[Elections](#) <sup>[5]</sup> certifies the ballot.

Before that, though, there could be a court fight which could test the intent of Illinois' election law.

But Michaelson says that intent should be clear.

["There's no question that the intent of most of Illinois' election law is to favor and encourage the two-party system to the detriment of new parties and independents."](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

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URLs in this post:

[1] Gov. Pat Quinn: [http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Pat\\_Quinn](http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Pat_Quinn)

[2] University of Illinois at Springfield professor: <http://www.uis.edu/>

[3] "Anyone who has any 'Illinois smarts' in politics understands that the more signatures you file the less likely it is that someone will object.":

<http://cdn.statehousemedia.com/illinois/June/06-23-10/062210Michealson1.avi>

[4] "We have conflicting court cases out there, and the question is can a person run in a party primary and then for whatever reason the person {would} resign from that nomination and then run as an independent...And this is probably one reason that Gov. Quinn and others are considering going the judicial route to challenge Mr. Cohen.":

<http://cdn.statehousemedia.com/illinois/June/06-23-10/062210Michealson2.avi>

[5] Illinois State Board of Elections: <http://www.elections.il.gov/>

[6] "There's no question that the intent of most of Illinois' election law is to favor and encourage the two-party system to the detriment of new parties and independents.":

<http://cdn.statehousemedia.com/illinois/June/06-23-10/062210Michealson3.wmv>

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