



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 27, 2011

Gingrich Misses Virginia Ballot Deadline

The state of Virginia requires that a candidate submit 10,000 signatures from voters registered in the state of Virginia, and those signatures must include at least 400 from each of the state's 11 congressional districts. The deadline to gather the required number of signatures was Thursday December 22 at 5 p.m.



ABC News [reports](#):

After [a scramble to gather the requisite number of signatures](#) ...

Newt Gingrich failed to make it on the ballot in the state of Virginia.

Texas Governor Rick Perry also failed to submit enough signatures to qualify for the Virginia ballot. Perry's spokesman Ray Sullivan released a statement indicating that the campaign plans to review Virginia state law and decide whether or not to challenge the Virginia GOP's ruling.

The ordeal is particularly embarrassing for Newt Gingrich, as Virginia is his home state. As Mitt Romney was boasting that he had acquired the necessary Virginia signatures early, Gingrich was struggling to meet the deadline, even staying in Virginia on Wednesday for more signature-gathering events.

By the deadline, however, the Gingrich camp believed it not only had the requisite 10,000 votes, but a few additional thousand to be safe.

The Virginia Republican Party had been verifying the signatures since the deadline on Thursday, but by Christmas Eve announced through a tweet: "@VA_GOP: after verification, RPV has determined that Newt Gingrich did not submit required 10k signatures and has not qualified for the VA primary."

Gingrich's campaign director Michael Krull responded by releasing a statement on Saturday morning that assured they would run an "aggressive" write-in campaign if that's what it took. It continued,

Voters deserve the right to vote for any top contender. We will work with the Republican Party of Virginia to pursue an aggressive write-in campaign to make sure that all of the voters of Virginia are able to vote for the candidate of their choice.

However the campaign later learned that write-in campaigns are not permitted for presidential primaries in the state of Virginia. Krull responded to this news by assuring Gingrich's supporters that the campaign "will make all other deadlines," adding that it "will continue to learn and grow."

Krull went on to compare Gingrich's situation to the attack on Pearl Harbor, asserting, "We have experienced an unexpected setback, but we will regroup and refocus with increased determination, commitment and positive action."

Additionally, Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, and former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman missed the deadline for the Virginia ballot. Of the seven Republican primary candidates, only Mitt Romney and Ron Paul acquired the necessary signatures to



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appear on the Virginia ballot, highlighting just how “foolish and disorganized” the other campaigns are, noted University of Richmond law Professor Carl Tobias. “It speaks volumes to me about the particular organizational skills of the candidates,” Tobias told the [Los Angeles Times](#) Saturday. “It’s hard for me to understand how they could miss this opportunity.”

“It’s a disaster for [Gingrich],” declared Larry Sabato, a political scientist at the University of Virginia. “This sends yet another signal to Republicans that Gingrich is not able to organize.” He added that Gingrich’s inability to acquire the proper amount of signatures “suggest[s] you’re not a serious candidate.”

Similarly, the *New York Times* [notes](#) that the most recent blunder for the Gingrich campaign highlights “the organizational challenges to his campaign and rais[es] questions about his prospects in a drawn-out nominating fight.”

More importantly, Gingrich’s failure to reach the requisite number of signatures could have an impact on voters’ confidence. The *New York Times* writes:

The failure to get on the ballot in Virginia could also shake the confidence of voters in states that go to the polls before Virginia does. Why, his supporters in those states might ask, should I throw my vote away on someone who might not be competing in other critical states?

Virginia is not a state where candidates should scoff at missing the ballot. It has the 12th largest population in the country, and therefore a significant number of delegates to offer a candidate on March 6; additionally, Gingrich had been doing well in Virginia’s polls. It is one of 10 states which will be hosting primary votes on March 6 — Super Tuesday.

The fight for delegates becomes particularly convoluted when one considers that this year’s primaries will operate on a largely proportional system, where there are going to be few “winner-takes-all” states. Most of the state’s delegates will be split on a proportional basis. At stake in Virginia are 46 delegates, which may seem minute in a race for 1,144 delegates to secure a nomination, but could prove to be the catalyst for one of the candidates.

But without making it on the Virginia ballot, Gingrich is finding himself in an even direr position. The *New York Times* notes, “This failure to qualify for the ballot comes at a bad time for Mr. Gingrich as he faces headwinds in Iowa, where the caucuses start the nominating contest on Jan. 3, and it comes as he remains behind in the polls in New Hampshire.”

He has already missed the deadline for the Missouri primary, set to take place on February 7, though Gingrich has asserted that the primary does not matter so much as the Republican caucus held in March.

Gingrich has admitted that his campaign is struggling to keep up with his recent surge in popularity at a rally in Arlington, Virginia. “We weren’t ready for it yet because we don’t have the structure and we don’t have the money to compete at that level, so we had to scramble a little bit,” Gingrich said.

And Gingrich’s opponents have seized the opportunity to take jabs at Gingrich’s campaign. Mitt Romney’s campaign has called the failure to get on the Virginia ballot “cringe-worthy.”

“It’s a gut-check moment for Republicans,” said Eric Fehrstrom, senior adviser to Mitt Romney. “Winning campaigns have to be able to execute on the fundamentals. This is like watching a hitter in the World Series failing to lay down a bunt.”

Still, Gingrich is currently enjoying frontrunner status in national polls. According to a recent survey by



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Quinnipiac University, Gingrich currently has 30 percent of the Republican vote, followed by 25 percent for Romney, and 9 percent for Ron Paul.



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