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Suspending a Campaign vs. Withdrawing

When a candidate decides to end a presidential bid, they often say the campaign has been "suspended," rather than they've dropped out. Under election law, the phrase "suspending a campaign" has no formal meaning. So why "suspend a campaign" instead of "exiting a race"? There are two important reasons - delegates and money.

Candidates who suspend their campaigns usually get to keep any delegates they've won and can continue to raise money beyond what's needed to retire their campaign debts. In contrast, candidates who actually drop out of a race, usually have to forfeit certain delegates and are limited in how they can raise future funds. If a candidate "ended" their campaign instead of merely "suspending" it, then they might lose eligibility for federal matching funds that would help pay off their debts.

The Federal Election Commission, in fact, doesn't consider a campaign completely over until its debts are paid off, loans are settled, and its cash has been transferred into other accounts. One more reason to suspend a campaign? In theory, if the political climate changes dramatically, a suspended campaign could spring back to life. The phrase has been employed at least as far back as the 1970s and continues to serve as the most popular way for candidates to end their primary bids without closing down their campaign committees.

Though several presidential candidates have announced the suspension of their campaigns, none have submitted a formal withdrawal before the December 12, 2023 deadline, in accordance with section 103.101(3), Florida Statute, the candidate nominee's name must remain on the Presidential Preference Primary (PPP) ballot for his or her respective party. A vote cast for any candidate nominee appearing on the ballot will count as a vote for that candidate.

If you have questions, or need more information, call our office at (800) 851-8754 or visit PascoVotes.gov your source for verified election information.



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