

Hunterdon County Clerk's Office

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CAN I VOTE IN A PRIMARY??? I AM AN INDEPENDENT (UNAFFILIATED)

New Jersey has "closed" primaries. This means that only Republican voters can nominate Republican candidates, and only Democratic voters can nominate Democratic candidates. Voters registered with any of the other political groups recognized by the State of New Jersey (Libertarian, Green Party, etc.) cannot vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary. A registered voter currently not affiliated with a political party (a/k/a Independent) may declare their party affiliation up to and including Primary Election day.

Unlike some other states with closed primaries, voters in New Jersey who are unaffiliated with any political party or group can declare either Republican or Democrat using a Vote by Mail, when voting early or at the polls on the day of the primary and vote in that party's primary. As of Jan. 1, 2005, New Jersey no longer formally recognizes Independent as a political group. For the purpose of voting in a primary, there are no Independent voters. A voter is either registered with one of the nine recognized political parties or groups, or they are unaffiliated. Unaffiliated voters can declare either Republican or Democrat at any time. But any voter who declares at the polling place will be affiliated with that party unless they choose to unaffiliate following the Primary by filing a Party Affiliation Form with the Board of Elections:

<https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/pdf/ElectionBd/PartyAffiliationChangeForm.pdf>

If you are currently affiliated with a party, the deadline has passed to change your party affiliation (55 days before a Primary).

Still have questions or want to know if and how you are registered- please contact me at (908)788-1214 or Hunterdon County Board of Elections at (908)788-1190.

If you are in another county- here is the link to finding your County Clerk:

<https://nj.gov/.../vote-county-election-officials.shtml>

Sometimes the Primary is the election!