



What is a Primary?



- A primary election is an election in which people in a political party can choose their party's candidate for a future general election.
- New Jersey State Law requires the two most populous political parties of the State to conduct Primary Elections. In New Jersey the two political parties with the most members are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.
- On the date of the Primary Election, the Democratic Primary and Republican Primary, while being conducted simultaneously, are actually two separate elections.

How are Primary and General Elections Different?

- Unless otherwise ordered by the Governor, New Jersey Primaries are held in the beginning of June each year; the General Election is held in the beginning of November each year.
- In the Republican Primary, Republican voters choose from a ballot listing Republican Candidates *only*. The Republican Primary winners will run against candidates of other political parties in the General Election.
- In the Democratic Primary, Democratic voters choose from a ballot listing Democratic Candidates *only*. The Democratic Primary winners will run against candidates of other political parties in the General Election.
- In the General Election, ALL REGISTERED VOTERS choose from a ballot listing the Primary Election winners as well as candidates from other parties and independent candidates not affiliated with a party. The candidate for each contest who receives the most votes in the General Election is the official winner for that office.

Can I Vote in the Primary Election?

- There is a 21-day new voter registration deadline in New Jersey for all elections. If you would like to check your registration status you can do so by using the New Jersey State Voter Registration Public Access Site. Or you can call the Board of Elections directly.
- New Jersey has “closed” Primaries. This means that only voters registered with the Democratic Party may vote in the Democratic Primary, and only voters registered with the Republican Party may vote in the Republican Primary.
- Voters registered with any of the other political groups recognized by the State of New Jersey (Libertarian, Green Party, etc.) may not vote in either the Republican or Democratic Primary.
- **Unlike some other states with closed primaries, voters in New Jersey who are unaffiliated with any political party or group may declare either Democrat or Republican at the polls on the day of the Primary.** It is important to note that Unaffiliated voters who declare a party to vote in the Primary Election will remain a member of that party until they file a Party Declaration Form to change their party designation.
 - Many voters who do not vote faithfully for one party or the other consider themselves to be independent voters. However, as of January 1, 2005 the State of 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.



This is very important!!!!



- Unaffiliated voters may declare either Democrat or Republican at any time up to and including the day of the Primary Election, however if you belong to a party there is a **55-day deadline to change your party affiliation before a Primary Election.**
- **Per NEW JERSEY STATE LAW, any voter who CHANGES their party affiliation or UN-AFFILIATES after the party declaration deadline is DISQUALIFIED from voting in that Primary Election and their name will be automatically removed from the poll book!**
- **This means that any registered voter who files a party declaration changing FROM: Democrat or Republican TO: any other political party or to Unaffiliated after the 55-day deadline MAY NOT VOTE in that Primary Election.**