

# *How do you get a President elected?*

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This summer of 2016 is a national political convention season, whereby each of the primarily major parties (Democrats and Republicans) determine who will be their candidates in the November national general elections for the office of President and Vice President. Many people may not realize in how many different ways such a nomination process can happen.

Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and a small handful of U.S. Territories, all send a quota of delegates (mainly based on population) to the respective National Conventions of a Political Party. Republicans have five Territories, and the Democratic Party has five slightly different Territories. These delegates are determined when YOU participate in the Primary Election process of your state. This is done in several different ways among these states, territories and in DC (jurisdictions).

Primaries among these jurisdictions have two basic methods to vote: Registered Voters cast votes at a public election polling place, or Registered Voters attend a county caucus (convention) to vote. There are 22 states out of the 56 jurisdictions that hold primary caucuses. All Primary Elections take place anywhere from February to May, as determined by state law.

Primaries among these jurisdictions have three different criteria to determine WHO can vote in the election poll or in a county caucus. Here are the three kinds of ways:

1. **An open primary** jurisdiction means any registered voter may choose in whichever political party primary election he or she wishes. When you register to vote in those jurisdictions, you are not asked with which political party do you identify (Democrat, Republican or Independent). That's the way it is in Texas. The only way you ever reveal your political party identity is at the voter poll. After your voter registration is validated, you tell the election clerks which party ballot you wish to use. You can vote for candidates only on one party's ballot. You can't vote for President on one party's ballot, and for other offices on another party's ballot.

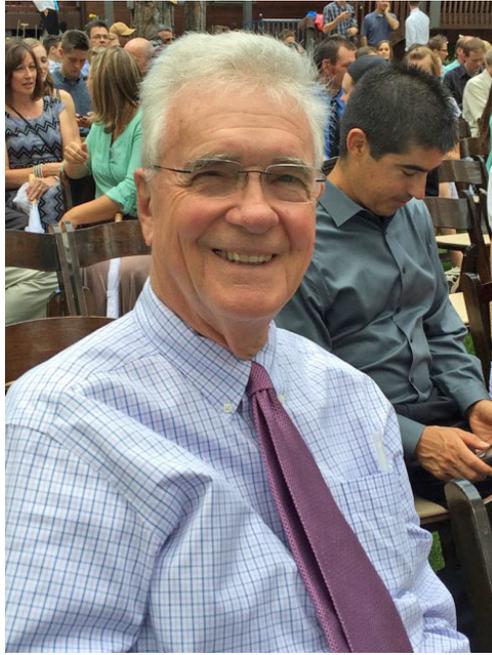
2. **A semi-open primary** jurisdiction is a situation where in that jurisdiction, you must declare a party identification (Democrat or Republican) or be independent when you register to vote. In most states, you must be a registered voter a month or more before a primary election. Semi-open means only the registered voters for that party may vote using that party's ballot, AND any independent registered voters may choose one party's ballot in a particular primary election. The Independent voter may not vote in more than one party's primary election. This is true both for election poll voting or county caucus voting.

3. **A closed primary** jurisdiction is one in which only the previously registered voters of that political party may vote in that party's ballot or in that party's caucus. No other registered voters may participate in that party's primary.

The respective jurisdictions tally votes when they conduct State Political Conventions in the early summer. At the State Convention, various delegates at those conventions run for election to determine WHO gets to represent the state's qualified delegate count at the national convention. In Texas, we have 3 delegates and 3 alternate delegates elected for each of the 31 state senatorial districts, plus a handful of uncommitted Republican elected officials. The Democratic party in Texas has more uncommitted delegates. Each National Party has its own rules about the numbers of delegates needed.

It didn't happen this year, but it's possible when a multiple number of candidates exist for the Presidency, and no one candidate acquires the needed majority before the National Convention of that Political Party, several rounds of votes will take place until one candidate achieves a majority of the delegate vote. In the Republican Party, for example, that majority threshold is 1,237 delegates. For the Democratic Party, it's 2,381 Delegate votes. It is unusual for multiple rounds of votes to be needed at a national convention. The rules say that all the delegates must cast the vote for the presidential candidate who earned delegate votes in their state's primary in the first round of voting. In the second round of voting, if no majority is reached the first time, most delegates are freed from having to vote what they did the first time. In a handful of states, its delegates are also bound to vote the same way in each of the first two rounds, then they are free to change their votes, if subsequent votes take place.





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