

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY QUESTION & ANSWER

CITY OF SOUTHFIELD
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

2020 Election Dates

Presidential Primary

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Primary

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

General

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

CONTACT

PHONE:

248-796-5150

WEBSITE:

www.cityofsouthfield.com

Why do I have to select a party ballot?

Michigan Election Law (MCL 168.615c) guides the conduct of the Presidential Primary. The law requires that voters indicate in writing which political party ballot he or she wishes to vote.

This requirement only applies to Presidential Primary elections, and voters will not be required to select a political party ballot type at other types of elections.

Do I have to be a registered Republican or Democrat to participate in Michigan's Presidential Primary?

No. Michigan's Presidential Primary has been designated a closed primary. There is no political party registration requirement in Michigan Election Law. Any Michigan registered voter can participate in the primary. By law, you must make your ballot selection in writing by completing the Application to Vote/Ballot Selection Form on Election Day; or on the Absent Voter Ballot Application form if voting absentee.

What is the difference between an Open Primary and a Closed Primary?

Voters in an open primary are given a ballot with a column listing each qualified party's candidates. Voters then decide which party primary they wish to participate in by voting only in the column of their party choice while in the privacy of the voting station. Voting for candidates in more than a single party's column will void the entire partisan ballot. Voters in closed primaries must state the party primary they wish to participate in before being issued a ballot. The ballot given to voters only has candidates of the party that corresponds to the voter's choice.

Will Michigan's closed Presidential Primary procedures affect the August State Primary in anyway?

No. The August primary is an open primary. Voters will not be asked to select a party before voting in the August primary. Voters will be issued ballots containing all political parties and their candidates, and will select one of the parties in the privacy of the voting station.

When I select a party ballot for the Presidential Primary, does that mean I have to vote in the same party primary in August?

No. The written selection made by a voter at the Presidential Primary has no bearing on how a person votes in the State Primary election.

Will my ballot selection be made public?

Yes. By law a public list must be made available that includes the Presidential Primary ballot type chosen by each voter in the Presidential Primary. This list must be made available within 71 days after the Presidential Primary election. This ballot selection information is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The public list of voters' Presidential Primary ballot selections must be destroyed after the 22-month retention period expires.

To be clear, only the political party ballot selection will be made public; the candidate you vote for will not be made public. Closed primaries also have secret ballots so that the candidate you vote for is never disclosed.

I already voted and returned my absentee ballot; the candidate I voted for has since suspended his or her campaign. Can I change my vote?

You may request and vote a replacement ballot, if you do so before Election Day. In this situation, your city or township clerk will void your original ballot and issue you a new ballot. Contact (or visit) your local clerk immediately if you are interested in doing so. Use the Michigan Voter Information Center www.michigan.gov/vote to find contact and location information for your local clerk.