



Texas Secretary of State  
ELECTIONS DIVISION



# Common Questions on Party Affiliation

Primary 2026




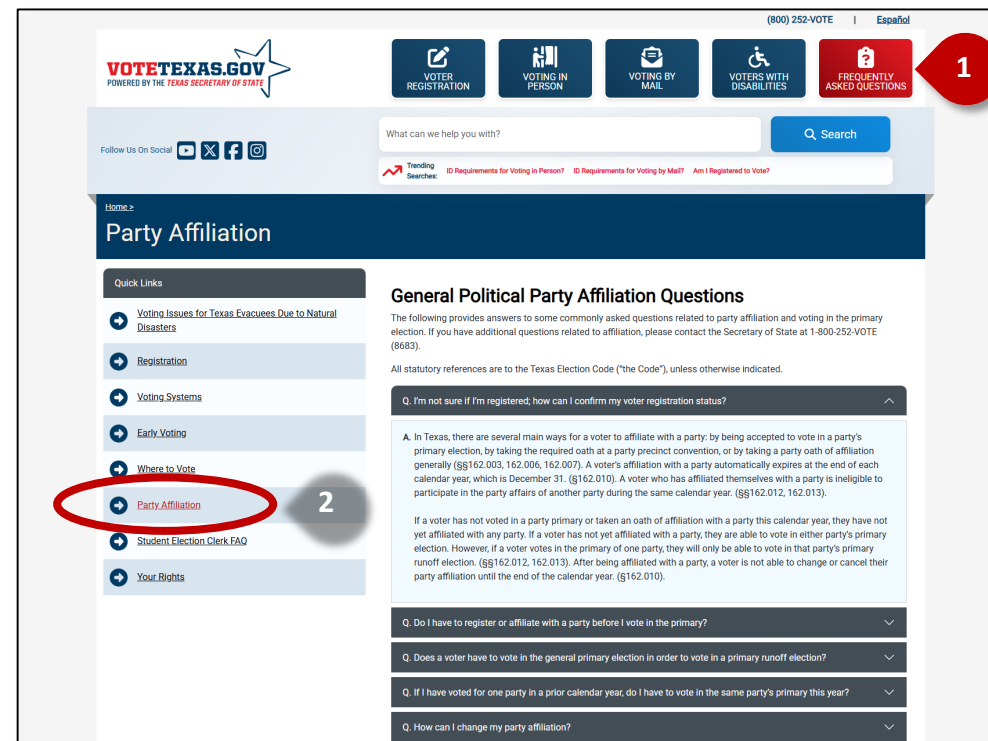
## Topics

- 1 Voter Party Affiliation
- 2 Candidate Party Affiliation



## Resources

- **Relevant Sections of the Elections Code**
  - [Chapter 162](#) – Regulating Participation in Party Affairs
  - [Chapter 172](#) – Primary Elections
- **Voter Resources**
  - [Advisory No. 2022-11](#) – Party Affiliation Questions and Answers
  - [Party Affiliation Questions](#) on 
- **Candidate Resources**
  - [Frequently Asked Questions on Candidacy and Party Affiliation](#) (2026 Candidate's Guide)





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# Voter Party Affiliation



# How Does Party Affiliation Work in Texas?

- There are a few ways a voter may affiliate with a party in Texas:
  1. By being accepted to vote in a party's primary election;
  2. By taking the required oath at a party's precinct convention; or
  3. By taking a party oath of affiliation generally.
- A voter who has affiliated themselves with a party is **INELIGIBLE** to participate in the party affairs of another party during the same calendar year.
- A voter's affiliation with a party automatically expires at the end of each calendar year (i.e., December 31).



# Does a Voter Have to Register or Affiliate With a Party Before They Vote in the Primary?

- **No**, a registered voter is not required to pre-register or take any steps towards affiliating themselves with a party before voting in a party's primary election. Additionally, when a person registers to vote in Texas, they do not register with any kind of party affiliation.

**PRE-REGISTER**





# Does a Voter Have to Vote in the General Primary Election in Order to Vote in a Primary Runoff Election?

- **No**, there is no requirement to have previously voted in the general primary election in order to participate in the subsequent primary runoff election.
- Section 11.001 of the Texas Election Code prescribes the specific qualifications necessary in order to vote in a Texas election. Therefore, if a qualified voter did not vote in the general primary election, they are still eligible to vote in the primary runoff election.



# I Voted in a Party's Primary in the Past. Do I Have to Vote in the Same Party's Primary This Year?

- **No**, a voter's party affiliation ends at the end of each calendar year. Affiliation with a party in a prior year does not affect what primary an unaffiliated voter can vote in this year.
- **EXAMPLE:** If a voter participated in party X's primary in 2024, the voter is not required to vote in that party's primary again in 2026 because the voter's affiliation with that party expired on Dec. 31, 2024.

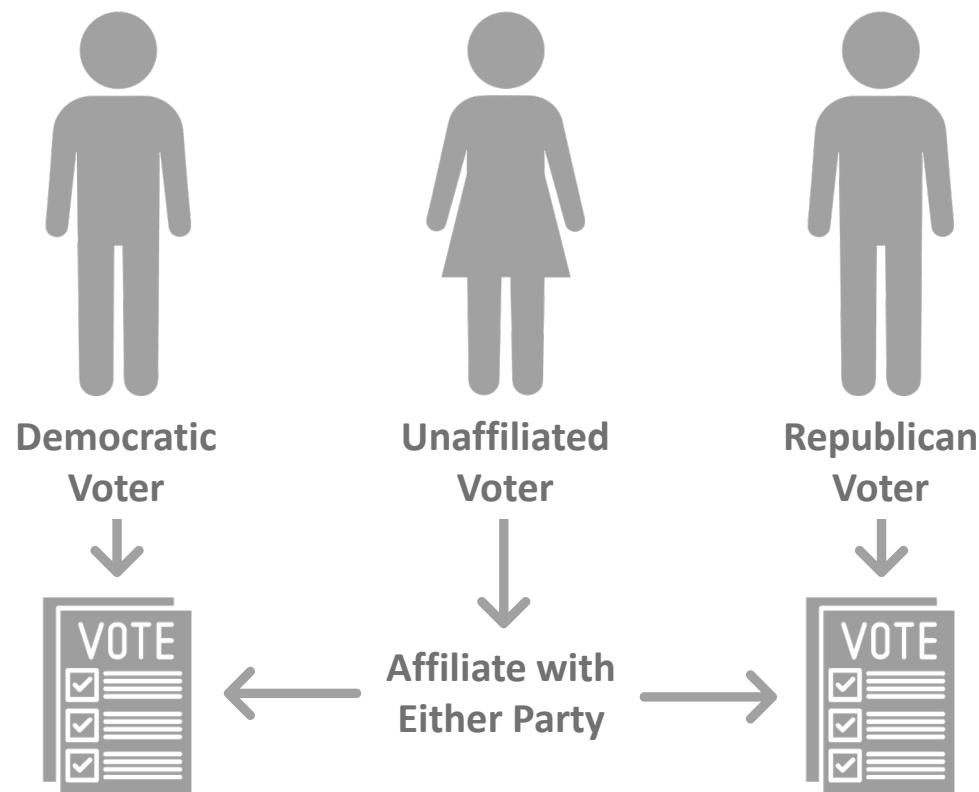






# Can a Person Vote in One Party's Primary Election and Another Party's Primary Runoff Election?

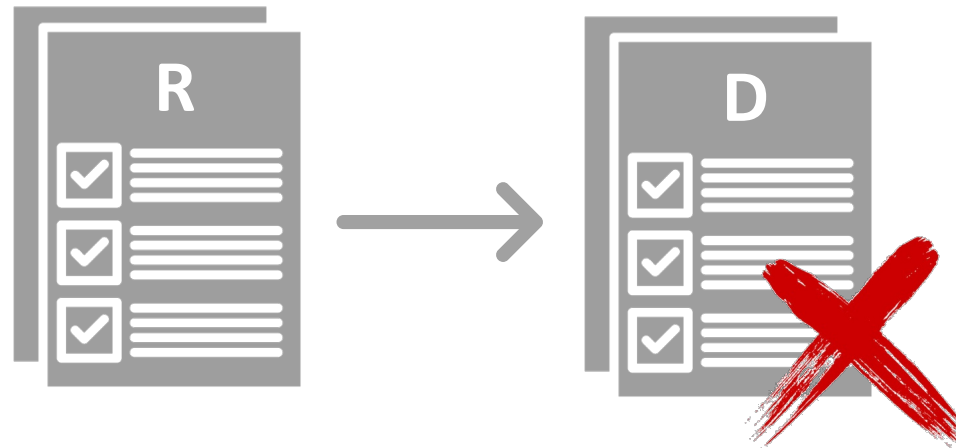
- **No**, by voting in a party's primary election, a voter has affiliated themselves with that party and is ineligible to participate in the convention or primary runoff election of another party during that calendar year.





## Can a Voter Change Their Party Affiliation?

- After affiliating with a party by voting in a party's primary or by taking an oath of affiliation with a party, a voter **CANNOT** change their party affiliation during the calendar year. However, affiliation will automatically expire at the end of the calendar year.



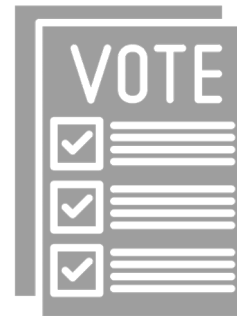


## What if a Voter Signed a Petition for a Candidate for the Primary Election?

- If a voter signed a candidate's petition for a place on the primary ballot, that voter is only able to vote in the primary, or participate in the convention, of that candidate's party during the voting year in which the primary election is held.
- **EXAMPLE:** If a voter signed a Democratic candidate's petition, that voter is ineligible to vote in the Republican primary or participate in another party's convention.

The image shows a "PETITION FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE FOR A PRIMARY ELECTION" form. It includes fields for the candidate's name, party, and district. Below these fields is a table with columns for "Name of Voter", "Address", "City", "County", and "Signature". The form is marked with a large green checkmark, indicating it is a valid Democratic candidate petition.

Democratic Candidate Petition



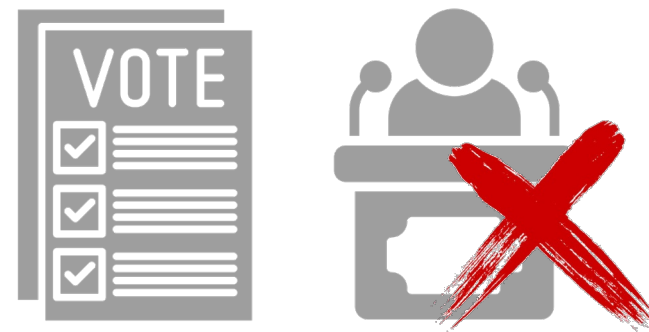
Republican Primary or Convention Party



## If a Voter Signed a Petition for a Candidate for Nomination in the Libertarian or Green Party, Can They Still Vote in a Primary Election?

- **No**, if a voter signed a candidate's petition for nomination for the Libertarian Party or Green Party, that voter is ineligible to vote in a primary election or participate in the convention of a different party during the voting year in which the primary election is held.

Libertarian/Green Candidate Petition



Another Party Primary or Convention



# What if a Person Considers Themselves an Independent, but Wishes to Vote in a Primary Election?

- The act of voting in a primary election affiliates a voter with a political party. However, if a voter has not otherwise affiliated themselves with a political party, they are able to vote in the primary of either party.





## Does Requesting a Ballot by Mail Affiliate a Voter With That Party?

- Not immediately. A voter does not become affiliated with a particular party until the early voting clerk receives their voted primary ballot.
- If a voter requests a certain primary ballot but does not return a voted ballot for that primary election, they will not be affiliated with a party (unless they take other steps to affiliate with a party).

PRINT ALL INFORMATION CLEARLY AND LEGIBLY. THEN, FOLD AND MOISTEN SHUT TO SEAL.

TEXAS APPLICATION FOR BALLOT BY MAIL			
<b>Voter Information</b> <small>Failure to provide your voter registration number, voter registration precinct number, or telephone number does not invalidate this application</small>	Last Name First Name Middle Name (if any) Suffix (Jr., Sr., III)		<b>!</b> You must provide one of the following numbers: Texas Driver's License (TX DL), Texas Identification (TX ID) Card, or Election Identification Certificate (EIC) number: _____ I have not been issued a TX DL, TX ID, or EIC number, and the last four digits of my Social Security Number are: XXX - XX - _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I have not been issued a TX DL, TX ID, EIC, or Social Security Number
	Residence Address (Number and Street) Apt/Unit		
	City State Zip Code		
	1 Optional Information: Providing this information is helpful to the Early Voting Clerk if needed to clarify any information on this application and/or your voted mail ballot. VUID Number Voter Registration Precinct Number Telephone Number Email Address Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) ____/____/____		
<b>Where to mail my ballot</b> <small>Select one option</small>	2 An address from my voter registration certificate <input type="checkbox"/> My residence address <input type="checkbox"/> My mailing address		OR Another address that fits one of the categories below Number and Street Apt/Unit City State Zip Code <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital, nursing home, long-term care facility, retirement center, assisted living facility, or a close relative (state your relationship) <input type="checkbox"/> Jail, civil commitment facility, or a close relative (state your relationship) <input type="checkbox"/> Other address outside the county
	<b>Reason for applying and ballots requested</b> <small>*Primary elections take place in even-numbered years only</small> My reason for voting by mail <input type="checkbox"/> 65 years of age or older <input type="checkbox"/> Disability—I affirm that, "I have a sickness or physical condition that prevents me from appearing at the polling place on Election Day without a likelihood of needing personal assistance or injuring my health," as defined in Texas Election Code §2.002(a). Send me a ballot for the following elections 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Application—I want to receive a ballot for all elections in this voting year. I qualify because I am 65 years of age or older, or have a disability. I would like to vote in a primary election* for the following party and any resulting runoff: <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Do not send me a ballot for a primary election		
<b>My reason for voting by mail</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Expected to give birth within three weeks before or after Election Day <input type="checkbox"/> Confined in jail or involuntarily civilly committed <input type="checkbox"/> Expected absence from the county—The dates during which I can receive mail at the address outside of the county are: ____/____/____ to ____/____/____ Send me a ballot for the following elections OR <input type="checkbox"/> May Election <input type="checkbox"/> Special Election (name or date, if known) <input type="checkbox"/> November Election <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff I would like to vote in a primary election* for the following party and any resulting runoff: <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff			
<b>!</b> I certify that the information given in this application is true, and I understand that giving false information in this application is a crime. The box below requires your original signature signed in ink. A witness must complete Section 5 if you are unable to sign and you make a mark instead of a signature, or you			
<b>Applicant sign here</b>		<b>Witness or assistant sign here</b> <small>For definition of witness assistant, see the application instructions</small>	
<b>!</b> I would like to vote in a primary election* for the following party and any resulting runoff: <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any resulting runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Do not send me a ballot for a primary election		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant—Check this box and complete this section if you assisted the applicant in filling out this application in his or her presence or submitted on his or her behalf (by mail, email, or fax). X	



# Why Do Election Workers Ask if a Voter Wants a Republican or Democratic Ballot?

- The primary elections are **TWO SEPARATE ELECTIONS** that occur on the same day.
- When a voter votes in a primary election or primary runoff election, they are affiliating with the party whose primary they are voting in and become ineligible to affiliate with another party during the same voting year.
  - This means a voter cannot vote in both primary elections, or the primary election of one party and the runoff election of another party.
- In a county where the Republican and Democratic parties are sharing polling places, the voter must identify the primary in which they would like to vote in order to ensure they receive the correct ballot and are marked as voting in the correct primary election.





# Is the Fact That a Voter Voted in a Primary Election Confidential?

- **No**, the offices and candidates that a voter voted for are confidential and secret, but the fact that a voter voted in a particular party's primary is public information and the voter's name will be listed in that party's early voting and election day rosters.

[illegible]





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ELECTIONS DIVISION



# Candidate Party Affiliation



# Does Filing an Application for a Place on the Primary Election Ballot Affiliate the Candidate With That Party?

- Filing an application **DOES NOT** affiliate a person with a party.
- However, a person who voted in a primary election or who was a candidate for a nomination in a primary is not eligible for a place on the ballot for the succeeding general election for state and county officers as:
  - An independent candidate for an office for which a candidate was nominated in the primary; or
  - The nominee of a political party other than the party in which the person was a primary candidate.



# If Someone Was a Candidate in the Primary Election and Lost the Race, Can They Run as an Independent Candidate in November?

- **No**, a person who was a candidate for nomination in a primary election is **NOT ELIGIBLE** for a place on the ballot for the next general election for state and county officers as an independent candidate for any office in which a candidate was nominated in the primary.





# Who Can Sign an Independent Candidate's Petition for a Place on the Ballot?

- After the primary election, or the primary runoff if the office is involved in a primary runoff election, independent candidates may begin collecting signatures.
- The signers must be registered voters who have not voted in the general primary election or the runoff primary election of a political party that has nominated, at either election, a candidate for the office the independent candidate seeks.



# Who Can Sign an Independent Candidate's Petition for a Place on the Ballot?

- **EXAMPLE #1**

- Party A has a primary candidate
- Party B has a primary candidate
  - Voter voted in Party B's primary runoff—**cannot sign** an independent candidate petition

- **EXAMPLE #2**

- Party A has a primary candidate
- Party B **DOES NOT** have a primary candidate
  - Voter voted in Party B's primary runoff—**can sign** an independent candidate petition



# If Someone Was a Candidate in the Primary Election and Lost the Race, Can They Run as a Write-in Candidate in November?

- It depends on the office for which the candidate seeks to run:
  - A person who was a candidate for nomination for the primary election cannot run as a write-in candidate for the **SAME** office in the general election in November.
  - However, the candidate could run as a write-in candidate for a **DIFFERENT** office in the general election in November.



## Can a Candidate File an Application for a Place on the Ballot with More than One Party?

- **No**, a candidate cannot file applications for two or more offices that will be voted on at one or more elections held on the same day.
- **NEW LAW:** Pursuant to SB 901 (89th Leg., R.S.), effective Sept. 1, 2025, a person who files an application with more than one political party (primary or convention) is ineligible for a place on the ballot for a general primary election, nomination by convention, and the succeeding general election as an independent candidate or as a write-in candidate.



## Available Support



**WEBINARS**



**TRAINING**



**RESOURCES**

[elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov)

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

[sos.texas.gov](http://sos.texas.gov)