



Common Questions on Party Affiliation



Primary 2026



Topics

- 1 Voter Party Affiliation
- 2 Candidate Party Affiliation



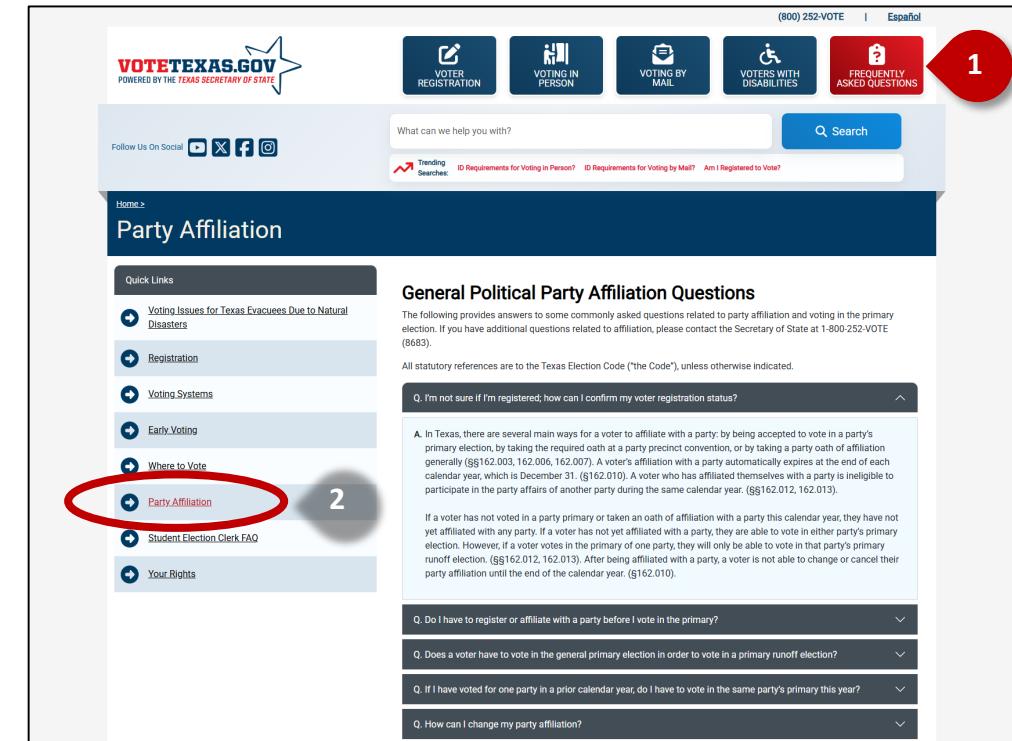
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Resources

- **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)



The screenshot shows the VOTE TEXAS.GOV website. At the top, there are links for VOTER REGISTRATION, VOTING IN PERSON, VOTING BY MAIL, VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES, and FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. A red circle with the number 1 is on the 'FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS' button. The main content area is titled 'Party Affiliation' and includes a 'Quick Links' sidebar with links to Voting Issues for Texas Evacuees Due to Natural Disasters, Registration, Voting Systems, Early Voting, Where to Vote, Party Affiliation (which is circled with number 2), Student Election Clerk FAQ, and Your Rights. The 'Party Affiliation' section contains a list of frequently asked questions. A red circle with the number 3 is on the top right corner of the page.



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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?

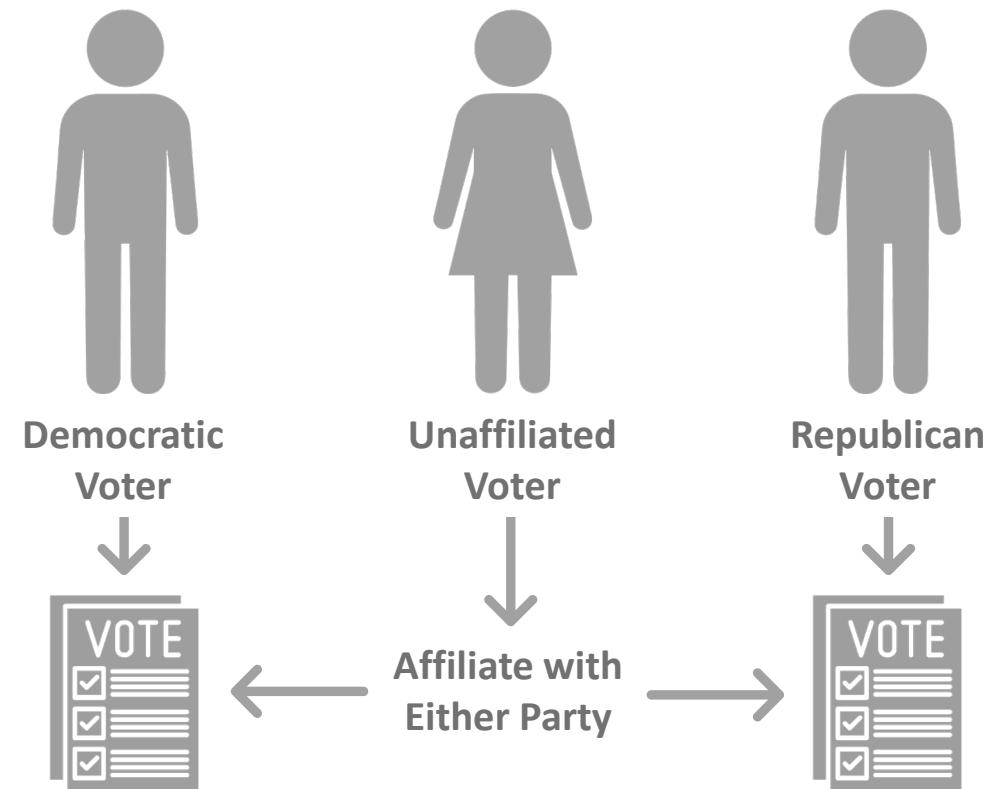
- **No**, a voter's party affiliation ends at the end of each calendar year. Affiliation with a party in a prior year does not affect what primary an unaffiliated voter can vote in this year.
- **EXAMPLE:** If a voter participated in party X's primary in 2024, the voter is not required to vote in that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

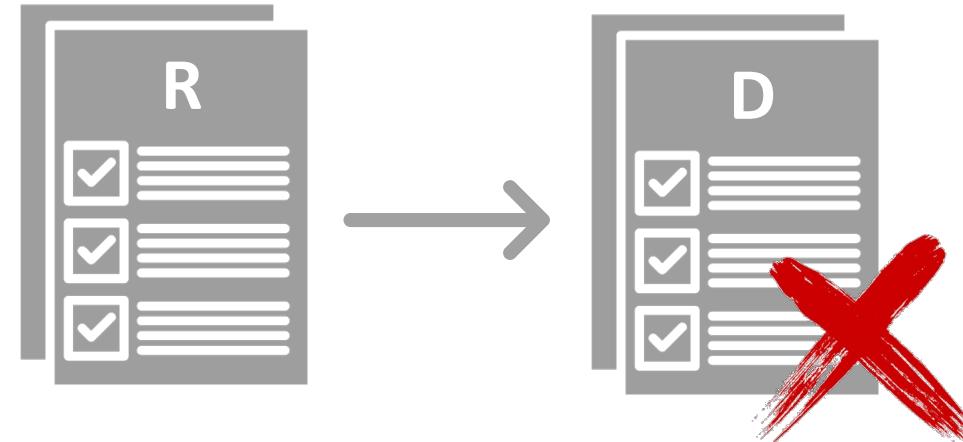
- **No**, by voting in a party's primary election, a voter has affiliated themselves with that party and is ineligible to participate in the convention or primary runoff election of another party during that calendar year.





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.



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.





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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).



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.



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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.



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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

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

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