

2016 Presidential Primary FAQs

Q. What is a Presidential Preference Primary (PPP)?

A. A PPP, commonly referred to simply as a “Presidential Primary,” is a publicly held election in which voters vote for their choice to be a particular party’s nominee for President. State political parties use the results of the PPP to assign state delegates to the national party convention. At the national convention, delegates from all participating states choose the party’s nominee. The party’s nominee goes on the General Election ballot in November. For more on party nomination of Presidential candidates, contact the appropriate political party.

Q. Do I have to be a registered member of a party to participate in a Presidential Primary?

A. No, S.C. does not have registration by party. The Presidential Primaries are open to all registered S.C. voters.

Q. Why are the Presidential Primaries on two separate dates? Why are they being held on Saturdays?

A. State law allows the political parties to set the dates of their Presidential Primaries. The Republican Party chose Saturday, February 20. The Democratic Party chose Saturday, February 27.

Q. Can I vote in both the Republican and Democratic Presidential Primaries?

A. No. You can vote in either primary, but you can’t vote in both.

Q. If I vote in one party’s Presidential Primary, do I have to vote in that party’s State Primary in June?

A. No, voting in a Presidential Primary has no affect on your participation in the State Primaries. Voters will still have the choice of voting in either the Republican or Democratic State Primaries in June.

Q. Why does my ballot have a district number beside the office of President?

A. Political parties require reporting of Presidential Primary results by Congressional District. The parties use these results as part of a formula for assigning delegates. Putting the district number beside the office title of President helps election officials report results by Congressional District. For example, voters in Congressional District 1 will see the office title “President District 1” on their ballot.

Q. What candidates and/or offices are on the ballot today?

A. The only candidates on a Presidential Primary ballot are those candidates seeking that party’s nomination for President. No other offices, candidates or questions will appear on the ballot.

[Click here for a list of candidates.](#)

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

Q. Where do I vote?

A. Some polling places are combined for Presidential Primaries, and sometimes polling places change or are unavailable for a particular election. It's very important that you check your polling place prior to election day. To find your polling place, visit www.scVOTES.org and click "Find My Polling Place" in the top right corner of the page. [You can also click here to find your polling place.](#)

Q. Why does my ballot still show candidates that have "suspended" their campaigns? And, what happens to votes cast for those candidates?

A. Candidates who "suspend" their campaigns nationally may also withdraw from contention in the S.C. Presidential Primary. If so, the state political party notifies the SEC. Candidates who withdraw early in the ballot creation process can be removed from the ballot, but those who withdraw after absentee voting is underway cannot be removed from ballots. Therefore, ballots will show some candidates that have "suspended" their campaigns. The SEC provides information to voters about candidates who have withdrawn from contention in the S.C. Presidential Primary through the agency website, social media, flyers and posters. Votes cast for these candidates will be counted, and results will be made available to the public. Election night results will not show candidates that have withdrawn from contention in the S.C. Presidential Primary. [Click here for a list of candidates that will appear on ballots and those who have withdrawn.](#)

Q. What hours will the polls be open?

A. Polling places are open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Anyone in line at 7:00 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

Q. When and where will results be reported?

A. Unofficial results will be reported by the SEC on election night at www.scVOTES.org. Results are reported in real time as we receive them from each county board of voter registration and elections. Results may also be reported locally by county board. On Thursday following each Presidential Primary, county election boards determine which provisional ballots to count and those votes are added to the totals. The SEC also conducts a statewide audit of the voting system to ensure all votes were counted accurately and completely. On Friday after each Presidential Primary, the SEC will meet to certify the results at which time the results become official.

Q. Who conducts the S.C. Presidential Primaries?

A. State and county election officials. Unlike Presidential Primaries in other states where political parties conduct primaries by their own rules, sometimes using paper ballots, South Carolina's Presidential Primaries are conducted by election professionals at public polling places using electronic voting machines.

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

Q. What do I need to take with me to the polls to vote?

- A. At your polling place, you will be asked to show one of the following Photo IDs:
- S.C. Driver's license
 - ID card issued by the S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles
 - S.C. Voter Registration Card with Photo
 - Federal Military ID
 - US Passport

Q. What if I don't have one of these Photo IDs?

- A. If you do not have one of these photo IDs, you can make your voting experience as fast and easy as possible by getting one before Election Day. If you are already registered to vote, you can go to your county voter registration and elections office, provide your date of birth and the last four digits of your Social Security Number, and have your photo taken. You can do this even on Election Day. Free DMV ID Cards are also available from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

If you cannot get a photo ID, bring your non-photo voter registration card with you to the polling place. You may vote a provisional ballot after signing an affidavit stating you have a reasonable impediment to obtaining a photo ID. A reasonable impediment is any valid reason, beyond your control, which created an obstacle obtaining a photo ID. Some examples include: a disability or illness, a conflict with your work schedule, a lack of transportation, a lack of a birth certificate, family responsibilities, a religious objection to being photographed, and any other obstacle you find reasonable. This ballot will count unless someone proves to the county board of voter registration and elections that you are lying about your identity or having the listed impediment. To vote under the reasonable impediment exception:

1. Inform the poll managers that you do not have a photo ID and could not get one.
2. Present your current, non-photo registration card.
3. Sign the affidavit provided by the poll managers stating why you could not obtain a photo ID.
4. Cast a provisional ballot that will be counted unless the county board of voter registration and elections has reason to believe your affidavit is false.

Q. What happens if I forget to bring my Photo ID to my polling place?

- A. If you forget to bring your photo ID to your polling place, you may vote a provisional ballot that will count only if you show your photo ID to your county board of voter registration and elections office prior to certification of the election (on Thursday after each Presidential Primary).

Q. I've lost my photo voter registration card. Can I still vote?

- A. Yes. Voters may also vote with their driver's license, DMV issued ID card, federal military ID, or U.S. passport. Voters may also get a replacement photo voter registration card from their county voter registration and elections office, even on Election Day.

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

Q. I've moved and haven't updated my voter registration card. Can I still vote?

A. If the voter moved to...

1. ...another residence within his precinct, he can vote at his polling place but must first fill out a change of address form.
2. ...a different precinct within his county, he is eligible vote a failsafe ballot.
3. ...another residence in another county within 30 days of the election, he is eligible to vote a failsafe ballot.
4. ...another residence in another county prior to 30 days before the election, he is not eligible to vote.

Two Options for Voting Failsafe:

1. The voter may vote at the polling place in his previous precinct using a failsafe ballot.
2. The voter may go to the voter registration office in the county in which he currently resides, change his address, and vote there.

Q. Do employers have to give you time off to vote?

A. No. There is no state or federal law mandating that employers must give time off to employees to cast their vote. Voters who know they will not be able to visit the polls on Election Day should apply to vote absentee before the day of the election.

Q. Can candidates or their representatives take people to the polls to vote?

A. Yes.

Q. I saw a candidate/member of candidate's campaign at my polling place talking to voters. Can he do that?

A. Yes, but there are restrictions:

- Inside the polling place: No campaigning is allowed. Candidates may be inside the polling place and talk to voters as long as they are not campaigning, intimidating voters, or interfering with the election process.
- Within 200 feet of an entrance to a polling place: Candidates and campaign staff may campaign as long as they are not intimidating voters or interfering with the election process. However, no campaign literature, signs, or posters are allowed. Candidates are allowed to wear a badge no larger than 4.25" x 4.25" featuring only the candidate's name and office sought. Candidates must remove their badge upon entering a polling place.
- Outside 200 feet of an entrance to a polling place: does not fall under the jurisdiction of the poll clerk.

Q. A candidate is definitely campaigning while in the polling place, or there is campaign literature within 200 feet of the entrance. What can I do?

A. Inform the poll clerk immediately. If the issue is not resolved, contact the county board of voter registration and elections. The county board will address the complaint.

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

Q. How much do the Presidential Primaries cost, and who pays for them?

A. The State pays a majority of costs associated with conducting Presidential Primaries. Counties also incur costs that are not covered by the state. The state political parties are required to pay the SEC a \$20,000 filing fee for each Presidential Primary candidate certified to be on the ballot. Political parties may also charge candidates “certification” fees that are kept by the party. The SEC estimated the 2016 Presidential Primaries will cost the state \$2.6 million. The SEC was appropriated \$2.2 million to conduct the Primaries. The SEC received \$360,000 in filing fees from the political parties (14 Republicans, 4 Democrats x \$20K each).

Q. Can alcoholic beverages be sold on Election Day?

A. Yes, the ban on the sale of alcoholic liquors on statewide election days was lifted as of July 1, 2014. For more information contact the S.C. Department of Revenue, (803) 898-5864.

Q. Can lottery tickets be sold on Election Day?

A. Yes, the sale of lottery tickets is restricted only on Presidential Election Days (the Presidential Primary is not a Presidential Election).

Q. Are there any laws about candidates posting their signs along the roadway?

A. Yes, there are several state laws addressing political signs on roadways, as well as county and municipal ordinances. See S.C. Code of Laws Sections 57-25-10, 57-25-140, and 7-25-210. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the entity that maintains the road (state, county, or municipality) to enforce applicable sign laws.

Q. When I left the polls, I was asked to participate in an “exit poll.” Is this legal?

A. Exit polls are legal and participation is voluntary. They are NOT conducted by the State Election Commission or the county boards of voter registration and elections. Generally, polls may not be conducted inside the polling place, and we ask that voters not be approached before they have voted. If a voter feels threatened or intimidated by a pollster, it should be reported immediately to the precinct’s poll clerk.

Q. Where can I file a complaint about the election?

A. General complaints regarding the election should be addressed to your county board of voter registration and elections.

###