

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

2020 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 political party’s nominee for President in the general election. 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 a specific party’s nominating process, 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 is there no Republican Presidential Primary?

A. The Republican Party chose not to have one. State law allows political parties to choose whether to hold a presidential primary.

Q. If I vote in one party’s Presidential Primary, do I have to vote in the same party’s state primary in June?

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

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.](#)

Q. Why does my ballot still show candidates that have withdrawn?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

A. The state political party notifies the SEC of candidates who withdraw from contention in the S.C. Presidential Primary. The names of candidates who withdraw early in the ballot creation process can be removed from ballots, but names of those who withdraw after absentee voting is underway cannot be removed from ballots. Therefore, ballots will show some candidates that have withdrawn. The SEC provides information to voters about candidates who have withdrawn through the agency website, social media, flyers and posters. Votes cast for these candidates will be counted, and results will be reported on election night. [Click here for a list of candidates that will appear on ballots and those who have withdrawn.](#)

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Q. There are candidates running that I don't see on the ballot. Why is that?

A. There can be candidates that are running nationally for the party's nomination that are not participating in the South Carolina Presidential Primary. The ballot features all candidates that filed in South Carolina and who did not withdraw before ballots were finalized.

Q. Can I write-in a candidate?

A. No. Write-ins are not allowed in primaries.

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. Who conducts the S.C. Presidential Primaries?

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

Q. Where do I vote?

A. At the polling place in your precinct. Your precinct and polling place are listed on your voter registration card. However, some polling places are combined for Presidential Primaries, and sometimes polling places change or are unavailable for a particular election. Be sure to check your polling place prior to election day by visiting www.scVOTES.org and clicking "Find My Polling Place," or call your [county voter registration and elections office](#).

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. I still have my absentee by mail ballot. What do I do?

A. You can vote your absentee ballot and return it to your county elections office no later than 7:00 p.m. on election day. If you want to vote at your polling place, you will need to return your unvoted absentee ballot to your county elections office and receive a letter authorizing you to vote at the polls.

Q. Can I return by absentee ballot to my polling place on Election Day?

A. No. Poll managers cannot accept absentee ballots at polling places.

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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 I take my child with me to vote?

A. Yes. Minor children (under age 18) of a voter may accompany the voter in the voting booth.

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
 - Includes the S.C. Concealed Weapons Permit
- S.C. Voter Registration Card with Photo
- Federal Military ID
 - Includes the VA Benefits Card
- US Passport
 - Includes the US Passport Card

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.

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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 ID. Can I still vote?

A. Yes. See answer to previous Question "What if I don't have one of these Photo IDs?" for details.

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

A. Yes. Your voter registration card is your notification that you have registered to vote and shows your precinct and polling place. Your non-photo voter registration card is not necessary to vote unless you are voting under the reasonable impediment exception. See answer to previous Question "What if I don't have one of these Photo IDs?" for details.

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

- A. If you moved to...
1. ...another residence within your precinct, you can vote at your polling place but must first fill out a change of address form.
 2. ...a different precinct within your county, you are eligible to vote a failsafe ballot (see below).
 3. ...another county within 30 days of the election, you are eligible to vote a failsafe ballot (see below).
 4. ...another county prior to 30 days before the election, you had to register by the deadline and are not eligible to vote.

Two Options for Voting Failsafe:

1. Vote at the polling place in your previous precinct using a limited, failsafe ballot including only federal, statewide and countywide offices.
2. Go to the voter registration office in the county in which you currently reside, update your address, and vote a full ballot there.

Q. I moved to SC from another state after the voter registration deadline. Can I vote?

A. No. For the failsafe provisions detailed in the previous answer to apply, the voter would have had to be a registered voter in South Carolina before the registration deadline.

Q. Are "ballot selfies" legal? Can I take a picture of my ballot and share it with others?

A. No. State law prohibits anyone from showing their ballot to another person (S.C. Code of Laws Section 7-25-100). The use of cameras is not allowed inside the voting booth.

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Q. What is South Carolina's new voting system and how does it work?

A. South Carolina has been using the ExpressVote ballot-marking system in all elections since October 1, 2019. After checking in at your polling place, you will be given a blank ballot and be directed to an ExpressVote. You insert the ballot into the ExpressVote to begin making your selections on a touchscreen. Making selections on the touchscreen is very similar to making selections on the old voting system. After making your selections, you will do a final review then print your ballot. To cast your vote, you will be directed to a ballot scanner. Review the selections on your printed ballot and insert it into the scanner. The scanner tabulates the votes on your ballot and feeds the ballot into a locked ballot box. The paper ballots are then used to verify and audit election results.

[Click here for more on South Carolina's Voting System.](#)

Q. What are the benefits of a ballot-marking device?

- A. Ballot marking devices (BMDs) offer many of the benefits of touchscreen voting machines while also providing the assurance and security of a paper ballot.
- BMDs are fully accessible for people with disabilities allowing every South Carolinian to vote independently using the same equipment. Hand-marked paper systems are not accessible and require voters with disabilities to vote with assistance or on a device different from other voters.
 - BMDs prevent voters from overvoting (selecting more candidates than allowed). Hand-marked paper ballots can be overvoted. Election officials are unable to determine voter intent in an overvoted office leading to the voter's vote not being counted.
 - BMDs prevent stray marks. Unintended marks on a paper ballot can cause overvotes or votes to be cast differently than intended.
 - BMDs prevent improper marks. Voters do not always mark paper ballots by filling in the oval as instructed. It is common for voters to circle a candidate's name, make a check mark, or even cross through a name. Improper marks require election officials to try to interpret these marks to determine voter intent. Ultimately, marking the ballot differently than instructed can cause a voter's vote to not be counted.
 - BMDs reminds voters if they have undervoted (missed an office or voted for fewer candidates than allowed).
 - BMDs offer the easiest transition for voters. South Carolinians have been voting on touchscreens for the past 15 years. Voting on the ExpressVote will offer a familiar experience with the added assurance of verifying their vote on a paper ballot.

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

A. Yes. It is permissible for any person, even a candidate, to give a voter a ride if it is being done solely to help facilitate voting. However, no one can give a voter anything of value in exchange for voting.

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.

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.

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 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 are also reported at the county and precinct levels. On Thursday following the primary, county boards determine which provisional ballots to count and add those votes to the totals. On Friday after the primary, the SEC will meet to certify the results, and the results become official.

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. 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.

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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. 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.

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