

No Party Preference Information

Voting in the Upcoming June 5, 2012, Presidential Primary Election

If you are a voter who has declined to provide a political party preference (formerly known as a "decline to state" voter), you may be able to vote for a Presidential candidate of a specific party in the upcoming June 5, 2012, Presidential Primary Election. Each political party has the option of allowing people who register to vote without stating a political party preference to vote in their primary election.

Political parties have until 135 days prior to an election to notify the Secretary of State whether they will allow voters who have declined to provide a political party preference to vote the ballot of that individual party.

If you wish to vote in the primary election of a political party that allows voters who have not stated a political party preference to vote in their primary, simply ask your **county elections office** or ask a poll worker at your polling place for a ballot from that political party. You may not request more than one party's ballot.

If you do not request such a ballot, you will be given a nonpartisan ballot, containing only the names of candidates for local offices and measures if any, to be voted upon at the primary presidential election.

History Behind California's Primary Election System

Closed Primary System

A "closed" primary system governed California's primary elections until 1996. In a closed primary, only persons who are registered members of a political party may vote the ballot of that political party.

Open Primary System

The provisions of the "closed" primary system were amended by the adoption of Proposition 198, an initiative statute approved by the voters at the March 26, 1996, Primary Election. Proposition 198 changed the closed primary system to what is known as a "blanket" or "open" primary, in which all registered voters may vote for any candidate, regardless of political affiliation and without a declaration of political faith or allegiance. On June 26, 2000, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision in *California Democratic Party, et. al. v. Jones*, stating that California's "open" primary system, established by Proposition 198, was unconstitutional because it violated a political party's First Amendment right of association. Therefore, the Supreme Court overturned Proposition 198.

Modified Closed Primary System for Presidential Elections

California's current "modified" closed primary system for Presidential elections was chaptered on September 29, 2000 and took effect on January 1, 2001. Senate Bill 28 (Ch. 898, Stats. 2000) implemented a "modified" closed primary system that permitted voters who had declined to provide a political party preference (formerly known as "decline to state" voters) to participate in a primary election if authorized by an individual party's rules and duly noticed by the Secretary of State.