

Top Two Candidates Open Primary Act and Voter-Nominated Offices

On June 8, 2010, California voters approved Proposition 14, which created the Top Two Candidates Open Primary Act.

Except for the office of U.S. President and county central committee offices, offices that used to be known as "partisan offices" (e.g., state constitutional offices, U.S. Congress, and state legislative offices) are now known as "voter-nominated" offices.

Under the Top Two Candidates Open Primary Act, all candidates running in a primary election, regardless of their party preference, will appear on a single Primary Election ballot and voters can vote for any candidate. The top two overall vote-getters – not the top vote-getter from each qualified party and anyone using the independent nomination process – will move on to the General Election.

Candidates for voter-nominated office can choose whether to list their party preference on the Primary and General Election ballots. Political parties can no longer formally nominate candidates for voter-nominated offices, so a candidate who finishes in the top two at the Primary Election and advances to the General Election is not the official nominee of any party for the office.