



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW JERSEY EDUCATION FUND

## **New Jersey Primary Elections at a Glance**

Primary elections provide a crucial opportunity for voters to influence the electoral process by nominating a candidate to represent their political party. Whether at the local, state or national level, voting is the most powerful way to have your voice heard. That's why it's crucial that you make sure you're registered and ready to vote! Here's a quick look to help answer your questions about this pivotal part of our voting system, specific to New Jersey.

### **NEW JERSEY SPECIFIC DEADLINES**

- **Change of Party Affiliation Deadline:** April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- **Voter Registration Deadline for Primary:** May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- **2018 NJ Primary Election Date:** June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### **What is a Primary? Am I Eligible to Vote in the New Jersey Primary?**

A primary is an election that allows members of a political party to choose a candidate to represent them in an upcoming election. New Jersey is a closed primary state, which means that only voters who are registered members of a political party may participate in nominating that party's candidates. Currently, only the Republican and Democratic parties use a primary election system to select nominees.

### **I am currently affiliated with a political party, but want to change my affiliation before the primaries. What do I do?**

You must file a [Party Affiliation Declaration Form](#) with the Commissioner of Registration/Superintendent of Elections for your county at least **55 days** before the primary election. The deadline to change party affiliation is April 12, 2017. If you are unsure of your party affiliation, you can call your county [Commissioner of Registration/Superintendent of Elections](#) and ask.

### **I am not currently affiliated with a political party, but want to vote in the upcoming Primary Election. What do I do?**

Unaffiliated voters can register with a political party up to and including Primary Election Day. You must file a [Party Affiliation Declaration Form](#) with the Commissioner of Registration/Superintendent of Elections for your county by mail or in person. You can also declare your affiliation in person at the polls on Primary Election Day.

## **Who am I voting for when I vote in a Primary?**

Primary elections happen at all levels of government including United States President, New Jersey's Senator and Representatives to the U.S. Congress, New Jersey state legislators, as well as county and municipal seats. As a declared member of a party in your voting district you vote to choose which candidate will be that party's nominee to appear on the ballot in an upcoming general election.

## **How Do I Learn About The Candidates?**

Candidate debates and forums are core features of U.S. politics that help voters learn more about a candidate and his or her stance on key issues. Candidates running for federal or statewide office are often easier to find information about. More local primary candidates typically vocalize their opinions through the local newspaper and news channel, participate in community candidate forums, and send out campaign material. The League of Women Voters of New Jersey covers races at all levels at [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org).

## **What Else Do I Need To Know?**

Whether at the local, state or national level, voting is the most powerful way to have your voice heard. That's why it's crucial that you make sure you're registered and ready to vote!

For any additional information about candidates or the primary election process, please call: 1-800-792-VOTE (8683), email us at [contact@lwvnj.org](mailto:contact@lwvnj.org), tweet us @LWVNJ, or reach out on Facebook [facebook.com/LWVNJ](https://www.facebook.com/LWVNJ).