



Establishing Your Party Registration for the Presidential Primary in New York

New York has a “closed” primary system. That means that only people who are registered in a particular party can vote in that party’s primary. So long as you registered to vote in New York for the first time by March 25, 2016, *and* checked the box next to a party name on your registration form, you will be able to vote in the April 19 presidential primary for the presidential nominee of the party you’re registered in. For example, if you are registered in the Working Families Party you *cannot* vote in the Democratic primary; if you are registered in the Conservative Party, you *cannot* vote in the Republican primary. You can only vote in the Republican Primary if you checked the box on the registration form next to Republican Party.

How do you register in a party?

You register with a political party by checking the box on the registration form for the party you want to register in when you first register. Then, you are listed on the official voter rolls as being enrolled in that party.

What if you want to change your party registration?

You need to fill out a new voter registration form with the party you now want to be enrolled in and mail or deliver it to your local Board of Elections by the deadline for changing party enrollment. For this year’s presidential primary, the deadline to change your party enrollment was October 9, 2015.

What if you’re not registered for any party, but you want to vote in this year’s presidential primary?

[See procedure for changing party registration immediately above]

What if you missed the October 9, 2015 deadline to choose or change your party registration?

You will be listed on the voter rolls on April 19 as enrolled in no party or the party you were previously enrolled in. You will not be allowed to cast a regular ballot for the party you newly registered for. You can insist on casting an affidavit ballot, but it is likely that it will not be counted. You will get a letter after the election telling you whether your affidavit ballot was counted.

What if you mailed in a voter registration form postmarked no later than October 9, 2015 to change or declare your party and you are still listed on the voter rolls as if you didn’t fill out the form (i.e., still enrolled in the OLD party)?

You might still be able to vote in your new party’s primary if you can show you did everything necessary to change your registration. Ask the Board of Elections to check your most recent registration form or go to your local Board and ask to see the digital version of your registration form. If they made a mistake, insist on talking to a supervisor about fixing their error. Or, you can vote on April 19 with an affidavit ballot and, if the error was the Board’s, your vote might be counted. Finally, you can demand to be heard by an election judge on April 19, explain what you did to comply with the legal deadline, and request an order allowing you to vote.

This is crazy! I want to talk to someone about this!

PLEASE do not yell at the poll workers or even the Board of Elections. They can only follow the law as it exists. Only the state legislature can change the Election Law. **DO call your state assembly member and your state senator** [\[find out who they are here\]](#). They can change the law!