

Elections Instructions 2024

Elections

Before you begin the elections, explain that the caucus rules this year require the threshold for winning an election to be by a majority. The caucus may choose the method of voting—either multiple-round voting or preference voting. The caucus may make these decisions once for the whole evening, or before each election.

Majority Threshold

A *majority* is an integer greater than half of the votes cast. If 10 votes are cast, half of 10 is 5; the integer greater than 5 is 6; so, 6 is a majority of 10. If 11 votes are cast, half of 11 is 5.5; the integer greater than 5.5 is 6; so, 6 is a majority of 11. So, for an even number of votes, you halve the number and add one; and for an odd number of votes, you halve the number and add a half. The advantage of a majority election is its fairness—its “majority rules” outcome (most of the voters get what they want); the disadvantage is it takes more time (multiple rounds of voting).

Multiple-Round or Preference Voting

The state party constitution says the elections may be done with *multiple-round voting*, or with *preference voting*. The choice is left to the precinct. You should understand both methods, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

On a **multiple-round ballot**, you mark one and only one candidate. The ballots are collected, and counters sort them—one stack of ballots for each candidate. Each stack is counted, the number of votes cast for each candidate is noted on the tally sheet, and a *majority* is computed. A tie is broken by a coin toss.

If no candidate gets a majority of the votes cast, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and another round of balloting begins. Ballots are distributed, and voters again mark one and only one candidate. The ballots are collected, and counters sort them—one stack of ballots for each candidate. Each stack is counted, the number of votes cast for each candidate is noted on the tally sheet, and a *majority* is computed.

This process is repeated until a candidate gets a majority of the votes cast.

On a **preference ballot**, a voter ranks one, several, or all of the candidates. The ballots are collected, and counters sort them—one stack of ballots for each candidate. Counters sort *preference* ballots according to the voter's *first* preference. Each stack is counted, the number of votes cast for each candidate is noted on the tally sheet, and a *majority* is computed. Again, a tie is broken by a coin toss.

If no candidate gets a majority of the votes cast, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and his ballots are distributed among the remaining candidates according to the voter's next preference. Each stack is counted, the number of votes cast for each candidate is noted on the tally sheet, and a *majority* is computed.

This process is repeated until a candidate gets a majority of the votes cast.

Comparison Between Multiple-round and Preference Voting

****Multiple-round voting takes more time, but counting is easier; and voters can change their preferences between rounds. Preference voting takes less time, but counting is harder, takes more time; and voters cannot change their preferences between rounds.**

Duties of Officers

Read the duties of each precinct officer before opening nominations for that office. Potential officers must know what will be expected of them. For example, they inform neighbors about issues, clean up voter rolls, and encourage neighbors to vote. The chair and vice chair attend a quarterly (central committee) meeting.

Duties of Delegates

Read the duties of delegates before opening nominations for those seats. Delegates are expected to devote dozens of hours (before the convention) vetting the candidates—visiting with them, studying their voting records, and comparing their words and actions with the party platform. Those who want to serve as delegates must be able to devote time to that responsibility, and to attend the conventions—one this year, and one next year—where they will cast their votes. Convention delegates may also be asked to vote to accept or reject proposed changes to the party platform, party bylaws, and party constitution.

Be sure delegates know the date of the convention they must attend. There is no sense in being a delegate if you cannot attend the convention—because absentee ballots are not allowed at convention.

Nominations

Those who pre-registered (if applicable) or signed up to self-nominate for a particular office or position are automatically nominated. Additional nominations may be made at caucus by credentialed attendees. A “second” is unnecessary. A person may nominate himself. A person need not be present to run, but whoever nominates someone who is absent must have permission from the person to place his/her name in nomination. Nominations may not be closed until all who wish to be nominated are in fact nominated.

Election by Acclamation

If only one person is nominated for an office, or if the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of seats (meaning the election is not contested), that person, or persons, may be elected by *acclamation*. In other words, the caucus chair simply declares that person, or persons, to be elected.

Speeches

Candidates get 30 seconds to address the caucus, unless a majority of the caucus wants to give them more time. Support for the party platform, positions on issues of interest, employment, personal views, etc. are in order. The caucus may ask questions of the candidates to better understand their views, but a litmus test, such as “Will you vote for so-n-so in the convention?” is not appropriate. Delegates must vet the candidates, and give all of them a fair hearing, before deciding how to vote.

Balloting

After the candidates address the caucus and answer any questions that are asked, announce the number of credentialed attendees (including the number of same-day ballots), and invite credentialed attendees to mark their ballots. Voting is done by secret ballot. Attendees should cast their ballots systematically to ensure that each attendee casts one and only one ballot in each race. After attendees have had an opportunity to cast their ballots, close the balloting and begin the counting. Be sure to include any same-day ballots with the ballots cast in person. Announce the vote totals of each candidate each round and announce the winner(s) of each election.

You are welcome to proceed with speeches from candidates for the next office, but voting may not begin until after the results of the current election are announced.

Other Business

Each precinct has election judges who work at the polls on the day of the election. These volunteers are trained and paid by the respective county governments. They work at the polls from dawn to dusk, checking off voters in the official record log and assisting with technical voting questions. Ask for volunteers. These do not need to be voted on.

Wrap up

Give the appropriate handouts to the newly elected officers and delegates (Precinct Officer Duties, State Delegate Duties and Responsibilities, Meet the Candidates & Convention Dates). Invite them to regularly check their email and to plan on attending county and district-wide training and meet-the-candidate events that will follow the caucus.

Have at least two people count the money in the donation envelopes to make sure it is properly accounted for. The former treasurer and your newly elected treasurer could do this together. After all, the newly elected treasurer will want to follow up on attendees who pledged donations to the party. After verifying that the money on the inside matches the numbers on the outside of the envelope, those who counted the money should seal the envelope and sign it on the outside.

Take pictures of everything before submitting it at the end of the night. Do not allow candidates to take pictures of the delegate sheet; they will get that information at the same time all other candidates get it. Make sure to return all documents and donation envelopes as well as used ballots and their accompanying tally sheets (gallon-sized zipper bags work great as ballot boxes and to store used ballots and tally sheets) to the House District Officers.