



ALEX PADILLA
California Secretary of State

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Contact:

SOS Press Office

(916) 653-6575

Three Parties to Allow No Party Preference Voters to Participate in Presidential Primary

SACRAMENTO, CA – The following parties have notified California Secretary of State Alex Padilla that they will allow No Party Preference voters to request their party’s presidential ballot in the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election:

American Independent Party

Democratic Party

Libertarian Party

The Green, Peace and Freedom, and Republican presidential primaries are open only to voters registered with their respective parties.

“As we enter the fifth election cycle under the ‘Top Two Primary’ system, California voters have become increasingly accustomed to voting for the candidates of their choice regardless of political party preference,” Secretary of State Alex Padilla said. “The Presidential Primary, however, remains the exception. Voters registered as ‘No Party Preference’ have the option of requesting a ballot that includes presidential candidates of a political party that allows ‘crossover’ voting. I urge every Californian to verify their voter registration today at VoterStatus.sos.ca.gov. If any voter wishes to change their political party, they can do so easily by re-registering at RegisterToVote.ca.gov.”

As of February 10, 2019, there were 5,645,665 voters in California registered with No Party Preference. This is an increase from 4,177,648 voters registered with No Party Preference ahead of the 2016 Presidential Primary Election.

Crossover Voting

Californians who are registered to vote with No Party Preference may request an American Independent Party, Democratic Party, or Libertarian Party presidential primary ballot. This is a process known as ‘crossover voting.’ If a No Party Preference voter does not request a crossover ballot, they will receive a primary election ballot without any presidential candidates listed.

No Party Preference voters who vote in person may simply request their desired crossover ballot when checking in at the polls.

No Party Preference voters who vote-by-mail will receive a postcard from their county elections official in advance that will allow them to select an American Independent Party, Democratic Party, or Libertarian Party ballot. A No Party Preference voter may simply select which party's ballot they would like to vote for and return the post card by mail. These postcards will be sent in advance of vote-by-mail ballots being sent out.

No Party Preference voters who do not respond to this postcard will be mailed a ballot without any presidential candidates listed. If this happens, they are still able to request a crossover ballot from their county elections official via:

- Phone
- Email
- Fax

Voters can also take their non-partisan vote-by-mail ballot to their polling place (or any vote center in a Voters' Choice Act County) and exchange it for a ballot with presidential candidates from the American Independent, Democratic, or Libertarian Party.

Voters Registered with a Political Party

Voters registered with a political party can only vote for that party's presidential candidates in a primary election. These voters must re-register to vote if they wish to vote in another party's presidential primary election.

