



Mississippi Secretary of State's Office
Study Group to Review Mississippi Election Laws
Primary Election Systems Overview

1. Closed Primary

- Only voters registered with a particular party may vote in that party's primary election.
- Some parties require registration a year in advance of the election while other parties may allow registration on the day of the election.
- State mandated: Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wyoming.
- Party elected: Alaska (R), Idaho (R), Kansas (R), Maine, Maryland, North Dakota (R), South Dakota (R) and Utah (R).

2. Semi-closed Primary

- Unaffiliated voters may choose which party primary to vote, while voters registered with a party may only vote in that party's primary.
- State mandated: Arizona, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Rhode Island and West Virginia.
- Party elected: Kansas (D), North Carolina and South Dakota (D).

3. Open Primary

- Voters of any affiliation are allowed to vote in the primaries of any party they choose.
- Voter cannot vote in more than one party's primary and must choose candidates for all offices from only one party.
- Voters typically do not have to declare their affiliation when they register to vote.
- State mandated: Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.
- Party elected: Alabama, Alaska (D), Idaho (D), North Dakota (D) and Utah (D).

4. Top-two Primary

- A two-stage system where all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, appear on the same ballot.
- Parties do not hold their own primaries and if they do it is done outside the public election system.
- The purpose is not to choose the nominee for a political party, but narrow the list of candidates for the election.
- Voters are free to participate in any party primary on an office-by-office basis and may switch "party affiliation" within the ballot.
- States: California, Louisiana and Washington.



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Old Capitol Inn
226 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

AGENDA

- 10:30 Coffee and Registration**
- 11:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Honorable Delbert Hosemann, Mississippi Secretary of State
James S. "Jim" Overstreet, Chairman
- 11:10 Primary Election Systems: A Look at Open, Semi-Closed, Closed and "Top Two" Primaries**
Justin Fitch, Senior Attorney
Overview of Mississippi's Primary Election System
Kim Turner, Assistant Secretary of State for Elections
- 12:00 Louisiana's Top-two Primaries and Closed Presidential Primaries**
Honorable Tom Schedler, Louisiana Secretary of State
- 12:30 Member Discussion and Deliberations**
Led by Chairman Overstreet
- 1:30 Adjourn**

DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State



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Summary of Articles on Primary Election Systems

- 1. Congressional and Presidential Primaries: Open, Closed, Semi-Closed and "Top Two" Fair Vote**
 - This article provides information regarding the main categories of congressional primaries in the United States which include open, closed, semi-closed and top-two primary systems.
- 2. What Are the Different Types of Primary Elections?**

By Debbie Sharnak for IVN (the Independent Voter Network)

 - This article provides details of the different types of primary election systems.
- 3. Towards a More Perfect Election: Improving the Top-Two Primary for Congressional and State Races**

By Chenwei Zhang for the Ohio State Law Journal 2011-2012, 72 OHSLJ 615

 - Although this his law review article focuses on the top-two primary election system, it also provides a good overview other types of primary election systems.
- 4. Idaho Primary: Why the GOP Closed Its Ballot**

By Samantha Wright on Boise State Public Radio

 - This article discusses the Idaho Republican Party's challenge to the closed primary system in Idaho.
- 5. Hawaii Democratic Party Fails to Prove Open Primaries are Unconstitutional**

By Shawn M. Griffiths for IVN (the Independent Voter Network)

 - This article discusses the Democratic Party of Hawaii's challenge to the open primary system in Hawaii.

DELBERT HOSEMAN
Secretary of State