



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF COLLIN COUNTY**
www.lwvcollin.org

Nonpartisan

VOTERS GUIDE

**March 1, 2016, Primary Election
Collin County Voter Information**

Early voting: February 16-26

Election Day: March 1 – Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Voting in Texas primaries

When you vote in a political party's primary, you become affiliated with that party for the next two years. At the time you vote, your voting certificate may be stamped with the name of the party in whose primary you vote. You may vote in only one party's primary and if there is a runoff, you may vote only in the same party's runoff election. However, if you do not vote in either party's primary, you may vote in either runoff.

Note: In the general election in November, you can vote for any candidate you wish, regardless of whether you voted in a party primary or runoff or participated in a party convention. All candidates from all parties are on the same ballot.

In Texas only the Republican and Democratic parties hold primary elections. Other parties, such as the Libertarian and Green parties, select their candidates in conventions. In addition, independent candidates not affiliated with any party may file a declaration of intent to run with the Texas Secretary of State; they must then ask persons who have not participated in any party primary or convention to sign their petitions in order to be placed on the ballot.

Why is it important to vote in the primary election?

Only party members can participate in the precinct, county or senatorial district, and state conventions of a particular party. Proof of party affiliation, such as your stamped voting certificate, is needed for admission to a party's convention.

Party precinct conventions are the first step in the process that adopts the state party platform; certifies the party's nominees for state office in general elections; selects delegates to the party's county or senatorial district, and the state and national conventions; nominates presidential electors; elects national party committee members; and writes the national party platform.

Primary election dates:

February 1	Last day to register to vote
February 16	First day of early voting
February 19	Last day to apply for ballot by mail
February 26	Last day of early voting
March 1	Primary Election Day

Primary runoff election dates:

May 16	First day of early voting
May 20	Last day of early voting
May 24	Primary Runoff Election Day

Helpful websites

Secretary of State

sos.state.tx.us
VoteTexas.gov

Collin County Elections

co.collin.tx.us/elections

League of Women Voters

Collin County: lwvcollin.org
Texas: lwvtexas.org
U.S.: lwv.org

Political Parties

Republican: texasgop.org
Democratic: txdemocrats.org
Libertarian: lptexas.org
Green: txgreens.org

What to take to the polls

Texas now requires voters to show an acceptable photo ID at the polls.

The only acceptable photo IDs are:

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) issued photo IDs

- Driver's license
- Personal identification card
- Concealed handgun license
- Election Identification Certificate

United States government issued photo IDs

- Passport
- Military identification card
- Citizenship certificate or naturalization certificate with photograph

Only the above photo IDs can be accepted at the polls. Other photo IDs including student IDs and employer IDs cannot be accepted.

Additional information about the photo ID requirements:

- ✓ The photo ID needs to be *current or have expired no more than 60 days* before voting (citizenship and naturalization certificates have no expiration date).
- ✓ The *name on the photo ID should match* the voter registration card. If names don't match, a voter may be accepted if names are "substantially similar." If names match, addresses don't need to match. If the names don't match exactly, the voter can be accepted if names are substantially similar; poll workers will look at address, date of birth, and the photo. If names are substantially similar, the voter will initial a box for

similar name when signing in to vote.

- ✓ Voters with a *documented disability* from Social Security or Veterans Affairs can apply for a voter registration certificate exempting them from the photo ID requirement.
- ✓ Voters without acceptable ID can obtain an *Election Identification Certificate (EIC)* from Texas DPS at no cost by providing proof of citizenship and identity and registering to vote at DPS or showing a voter registration card. Requirements for the EIC can be found at <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/electionID.htm>. There is no charge for the EIC but the necessary documentation may have a cost.
- ✓ *Photo ID is not required to vote by mail.* Voters may apply for a mail ballot if 65 or older, ill or disabled, or absent from their county during early voting and on Election Day. Note: Photo ID will be required of first time voters if a driver's license or Social Security number was not included with the voter registration application.
- ✓ Voters who do not show an acceptable ID at the polls can vote a *provisional ballot* and have 6 days to show the required photo ID.
- ✓ Those who lack a photo ID because of a religious objection to being photographed or because of a natural disaster declared by the president will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot and complete an affidavit within six days of the election.

When and where to vote

Early Voting

All registered voters may vote early by personal appearance at any early voting location in the county. Early voting days for the March 1, 2016, Primary Election are **February 16-26**.

Election Day Voting

In Collin County, you may also vote in countywide vote centers on Primary Election Day.

Ballot-by-Mail Voting

Only specific reasons entitle a person to vote by mail (no longer called absentee voting). You may request a ballot by mail if you

- will be away from your county on Election Day and during early voting
- are sick or disabled
- are 65 years of age or older on Election Day
- are confined to jail

You do not need a photo ID to vote by mail, but photo ID will be required of first time voters if a driver's license or Social

Security number was not included with the voter registration application.

Request an Application for Ballot by Mail from the Collin County Elections Department, or download the form from www.VoteTexas.gov. The completed form must be received by mail or fax by February 19. Note: postmarks don't count.

A ballot will be mailed to you, and you must return your completed ballot to your county elections department by 7 p.m. on Election Day, March 1. The ballot must be received, not just postmarked, by that date. If you are mailing your ballot from outside the United States, the early voting clerk must receive your ballot by the fifth day after Election Day. (You must mail it no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day.)

Check the Collin County Elections Department for information about polling places, sample ballots and applications to vote by mail.

election@collincountytx.gov
800-687-8546
co.collin.tx.us/elections

Registering to vote

You must register to vote at least **30** days before the election date. The last day you can register to vote in the 2014 Primary Election is **February 1**.

Who can register?

To register to vote, you must be

- a citizen of the United States,
- a resident of the county, and
- at least 18 years old on Election Day.

You must not have been declared mentally incapacitated by a court of law.

If you have been convicted of a felony, you may register to vote only after you have completed the punishment phase of your conviction, including any terms of incarceration, parole, supervision, or period of probation ordered by the court.

Where do I register?

You can register

- in person at the voter registration office in your county, or
- fill out an application that can be mailed or returned in person to the voter registrar in your county of residence.

Application forms are available at many libraries, government offices and high schools. The application is available online at the Secretary of State's voter information website, www.VoteTexas.gov. The website also allows you to search to see if you are already registered.

After you apply, a voter registration certificate will be mailed to you within 30 days. This certificate includes your

precinct for voting on Election Day as well as your congressional, state legislative, county, and local districts.

For how long is my registration effective?

The registration will remain in effect until you move or change your name, and a new certificate will be sent to you every two years without further application on your part. If you move, however, your

registration certificate will not be forwarded to your new address. If you move within the same county or change your name, you must notify the election office in writing or online of your new address or your new name as soon as possible. Then a new certificate will be mailed to you. If you move to another county, you must re-register by applying to the election office in your new county.

Student voters

Students may use either their parents' address or their college address for voter registration, whichever they consider to be their permanent address. Students cannot be registered at both places. The general rule of thumb is that wherever students claim residency is the place

where they should be registered to vote. Students who will be away from their address on Election Day and during early voting may request ballots by mail. Student IDs are not adequate photo IDs for voting and will not be accepted at the polls.

Provisional voting

The Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 provides for provisional voting if a voter's name does not appear on the list of registered voters due to an administrative error.

If your name is not on the rolls of registered voters in your precinct, but you believe you are registered, the election judge will attempt to determine if you are registered somewhere in your county. If your registration cannot be found, you may cast a provisional vote by filling out an affidavit and a paper ballot.

This ballot is kept separate from the regular ballots, and the case will be reviewed by the provisional voting ballot board. The ballot will be counted only if the voter is determined to be a registered voter in that precinct.

Provisional voters will receive a notice in the mail by the tenth day after the local canvass advising them if their provisional ballots were counted and, if they were not counted, the reason why.