



The Top-Two Open Primary: What It Means for Voters

The Top-Two Open Primary Act, which was approved by voters in June 2010, changes the way people vote for certain candidates in a primary election.

In an open primary, you may vote for any candidate running for a congressional or state office, no matter which political party you or the candidate belongs to.

The two candidates who get the most votes will move on to the general election in November.

The Top-Two Open Primary Act does not apply to the election for president and the central committees. For those offices, you may only vote for candidates from the party in which you're registered.

Type of Candidate Contest	Offices	Who Can Vote	Which Candidates Advance to the General Election
Party-Nominated (formerly known as Partisan) <i>Nominees are selected by the political party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ U.S. President ✓ County Central Committee 	Only registered voters in the same political party as the candidate*	For the presidential contest only, the top vote-getter from each party
Top-Two Open Primary Act			
Voter-Nominated <i>Nominees are selected by voters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ U.S. Senator ✓ U.S. Representative ✓ State Senator ✓ State Assembly ✓ Governor ✓ Lt. Governor ✓ Attorney General ✓ Secretary of State ✓ State Treasurer ✓ State Controller ✓ State Insurance Commissioner ✓ State Board of Equalization 	All registered voters, regardless of political party	The top two vote-getters, regardless of political party
Non-Partisan <i>Nominees are selected by voters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Superintendent of Public Instruction ✓ Superior Court Judge ✓ County Offices 	All registered voters, regardless of political party	The candidates who receive a majority of the votes win outright in the primary If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, then the top two vote-getters move on to the general election

* Except parties that allow non-partisans to cross over and join their primary