



2008 washington general election media kit

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Washington
Secretary of State
SAM REED

voters' tool kit

Free services available 24-7 at the Secretary of State's website, www.vote.wa.gov .

MyVote

MyVote gives personalized, specific information to each voter who logs on with his or her name and birthdate, such as voting status, Voters' Pamphlet entries in the voter's district, ballot dropbox sites, voting history and contact information for federal, state, local and judicial officials, including websites and e-mail addresses.

Online Voters' Guide

The state's Online Voters' Guide allows voters to read the official statement and view a photo and bio for each of the candidates listed. Phone numbers, e-mail addresses, website addresses and mailing addresses for each of the candidates is also provided. Maps to ballot dropbox locations are provided for voters in many counties.

Video Voters' Guide

TVW and the Office of the Secretary of State collaborate to present voters with the Video Voters' Guide. The guide features statements from candidates for statewide elected office. The General Election edition will air through the November 4 General Election and is available online at www.tvw.org and www.vote.wa.gov .

voter registration

- Citizens wishing to vote in the November 4 General Election have until October 4 to register to vote or update their voter registration.
- Citizens not currently registered in Washington State have until October 20, 2008, to register in person at their local election office.
- Washington has a statewide voter registration database that screens the voter rolls for duplicate registrations, felons and deceased persons.
- The database is made up of three categories:
 - Active Registrations**
 - New registrations are added to the database when people decide to register for the first time, turn 18 and register, or move into the state and register.
 - Registrations may be pending because more information is needed.
 - Inactive Registrations**
 - A registration is put in an inactive status when election material is mailed to a voter and returned by the post office as undeliverable.
 - A voter who is on inactive status may switch back to active status simply by updating his or her registration information.
 - An inactive registration is eventually canceled if it remains inactive through two federal general elections.

voter registration

Canceled Registrations

- An inactive registration is canceled if it remains inactive through two federal general elections.
 - An active or inactive registration is canceled if it duplicates another registration that is more up-to-date. Duplicate registrations may occur when people move from one county to another, change their name, or forget they were still registered in another county.
 - A registration is canceled if the registration is identified in a screening for people who are deceased or convicted of a felony.
 - A registration is canceled if a voter requests it to be canceled.
- Citizens who have a Washington driver's license or ID card can register to vote online at www.vote.wa.gov.
 - Washington State does not have party registration.

vote by mail

- Thirty-seven of Washington's 39 counties vote by mail. King and Pierce counties still maintain poll sites, but King County plans to switch to vote-by-mail elections in 2009.
- In the 2007 November General Election, 92.2 percent of Washington voters cast ballots by mail.
- Once a ballot is returned to an elections department, the voter's registration file is checked to confirm that the voter has not already returned a ballot.
- The signature on the envelope is verified against the signature on the voter registration file. If the signature on the envelope does not match the signature on file, or if the voter failed to sign the envelope, the County Auditor must attempt to contact the voter to correct the situation.
- Ballots are returned approximately:
 - 20 percent through the end of the first whole week in which ballots are out;
 - 23 percent from then through the end of the second week;
 - 10 percent the Monday before Election Day;
 - 21 percent on Election Day;
 - 26 percent come after Election Day.
- Ballots to overseas and military voters will be mailed by October 5, 2008.
- All other mail ballots will be sent by October 17, 2008.
- Many vote-by-mail counties have established voting centers to accommodate voters who prefer to vote in person or wish to vote on an accessible voting device. At a community voting center, voters may drop off ballots, request provisional ballots, vote on accessible voting equipment, and receive "I Voted" stickers.
- Each County Auditor is required to provide at least one location in addition to the County Auditor's Office for voters to drop off their ballots.

voting at the polls

- King and Pierce counties still maintain poll sites, although most voters cast ballots by mail.
- Polls are open on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Voters choosing to vote at polling places are required to show identification. Most voters choose to show photo identification, such as a driver's license, state ID card or student ID card. Federal law allows voters to present other forms of identification such as a voter registration card, utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check or other government document.
- A voter who does not present ID may vote with a provisional ballot.

voting equipment

- In Washington State, there are three types of paper ballots:
 - Fill in the oval
 - Fill in the rectangle
 - Connect the arrow
- Federal law requires all counties to have electronic voting equipment available for voters with disabilities to exercise their civic duty independently. These machines allow voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently.
- Washington State law requires all electronic voting equipment to produce a paper trail. All voters may cast ballots on electronic voting machines; those who do are able to verify their choices before casting their vote.
- Approximately 1 percent or less of the total ballots cast in an election are cast using electronic voting devices.
- In Pierce and King counties, approximately 2.2 percent of the ballots are cast on electronic voting devices.
- In the remaining counties, approximately 0.08 percent of the ballots are cast on electronic voting devices.
- Washington State requires a voter-verified paper trail. Voters who cast ballots using electronic voting equipment can verify that their selections have been recorded properly.

certification of election

- Counties have until November 25, 2008, to certify the November 4 General Election.
- The Office of the Secretary of State has until December 4, 2008, to certify the November 4 General Election.
- To trigger a mandatory machine recount, the difference between the top two vote-getters must be less than 2,000 votes and less than one-half of 1 percent of the total number of votes cast for both candidates.
- To trigger a manual recount in a statewide election, the difference between the top two vote-getters must be less than 1,000 votes and less than one-fourth of 1 percent of the total number of votes cast for both candidates.

statistics

- Washington has approximately 3.4 million registered voters.
- Voter participation in the 2000 General Election was 75 percent.
- Voter participation in the 2004 General Election was 82 percent.
- Approximately 156,283 voters ages 18 to 24 participated in the November 2000 General Election, equaling 6 percent of all ballots cast.
- Approximately 244,112 voters age 18 to 24 participated in the November 2004 General Election, equaling 8.5 percent of all ballots cast.
- Voter participation is much higher for vote by mail than for poll voting.
 - In the 2008 Presidential Primary, King County mail voters turned out 29.8 percent, while poll voters turned out only 3.5 percent.
 - In the 2008 Presidential Primary, Pierce County mail voters turned out 34.61 percent, while poll voters turned out only 2.37 percent.
- The state is a very mobile population.
 - Each year approximately 96,000 people turn 18.
 - Each year approximately 46,000 to 49,000 people die.
 - Each year approximately 15 percent of the population moves.
 - Each year approximately 42,000 people change their name.

dates to remember

October 4, 2008 - Last day for mail-in and online voter registrations and transfers for the November 4 General Election.

October 5, 2008 - Overseas and military ballots mailed for the November 4 General Election.

October 15, 2008 - Absentee ballots available for the November 4 General Election.

October 17, 2008 - Absentee ballots mailed for the November 4 General Election.

October 20, 2008 - Last day for in-person registration for voters not currently registered in Washington State for the November 4 General Election.

November 4, 2008 - General Election Day.

November 25, 2008 - County Canvassing Boards certify the November 4 General Election.

December 4, 2008 - Final day for the Secretary of State to certify the November 4 General Election.

general election voter education

September 29, 2008 - TV and radio ads start.

October 6, 2008 - Internet and ethnic print ads start.

new look on the ballot

Overview:

Washington has a new election system. In each race for partisan office, the two candidates who received the most votes in the August primary advanced to the November General Election. Under the provisions of the voter-approved Top 2 Primary, no party “owns” a slot on the November ballot and it is possible that the two candidates in a race will prefer the same party.

The election for president and vice-president is different. Those candidates are the official nominees of their political parties.

Quick facts:

- A Top 2 Primary allows voters to choose among all candidates running for each office. Voters do not have to declare a party affiliation or select one party’s ballot to vote in the primary.
- Candidates for each partisan office may state a preference for a political party, which is listed on the ballot.
- Candidates do not have to be supported, nominated or endorsed by the party they prefer, and that preference does not imply that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.
- The two candidates who receive the most votes for each office in the Primary Election qualify for the November General Election. Candidates must also receive at least 1 percent of the votes cast in that race to advance to the November General Election.

Same party preference:

For the first time, eight legislative finals will feature finalists who prefer the same party. This is eight out of 124 seats on the ballot (26 Senate, 98 House).

In the case of five legislative races, that’s because the only candidates who filed listed the same party preference.

Legislative District 7

State Representative Position 1

Ferry, Lincoln, Okanogan,
Pend Oreille, Spokane,
and Stevens Counties

Sue Lani Madsen
(Prefers Republican Party)
Shelly Short
(Prefers Republican Party)

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new look on the ballot

Legislative District 8

State Representative Position 2

Benton County

Rob Welch
(Prefers Republican Party)
Larry Haler
(Prefers G.O.P. Party)

Legislative District 11

State Senator

King County

Juan Martinez
(Prefers Democratic Party)
Margarita Prentice
(Prefers Democratic Party)

Legislative District 12

State Representative Position 2

Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties

Mike Armstrong
(Prefers Republican Party)
Write-in: Courtney Cox
(Prefers Republican Party)

Legislative District 22

State Senator

Thurston County

Karen Fraser
(Prefers Democratic Party)
Erik Lee
(Prefers Democratic Party)

In the three remaining races, two candidates with the same party preference made it past candidates with different party preferences in the August primary:

Legislative District 27

State Representative Position 1

Pierce County

Jessica Smeall
(Prefers Democratic Party)
Dennis Flannigan
(Prefers Democratic Party)

Legislative District 36

State Representative Position 1

King

John Burbank
(Prefers Democratic Party)
Reuven Carlyle
(Prefers Democratic Party)

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new look on the ballot

Legislative District 46

State Representative Position 1 King

Gerry Pollet

(Prefers Democratic Party)

Scott White

(Prefers Democratic Party)

History:

The Top 2 Primary was passed by the people in 2004 as an initiative. Nearly 60 percent of voters approved I-872.

In May 2005, the state Democratic, Republican and Libertarian parties sued in federal court to prevent its implementation. The political parties argued that the Top 2 Primary system violated their right of free association. The federal District Court agreed with them and in July 2005 prohibited the State from implementing the Top 2 Primary. In August 2006, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the District Court.

The State appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In March 2008, the Supreme Court overturned the lower courts and upheld the constitutionality of I-872.

The opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court said:

“The First Amendment does not require this extraordinary and precipitous nullification of the will of the people.”

The Court also says the new primary:

“[...]does not, by its terms, choose parties’ nominees. The essence of nomination – the choice of a party representative – does not occur under I-872. The law never refers to the candidates as nominees of any party, nor does it treat them as such. To the contrary, the election regulations specifically provide that the primary ‘does not serve to determine the nominees of a political party but serves to winnow the number of candidates to a final list of two for the general election.’”