



# Secretary of State

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## Presidential Primary Advisory #05

### Voter Registration | Party Selection Guide

February 24, 2016

The Presidential Primary requires voters to affiliate with a major political party. In order to participate, a voter must mark **and** sign one political party declaration. ([WAC 434-219-140\(3\)](#))

[RCW 29A.56.050](#) requires the Secretary of State to provide the list of voters who participated in the Primary.

### Party Selection

Each County Auditor must report the political party affiliation of each participating voter. ([WAC 434-219-320](#))

To report the affiliation, the voter's party selection must be documented. Typically, this is accomplished by entering the voter's selection into the voter registration system (VRS).

**Return codes.** For the Presidential Primary only, counties document the voter's party selection in the VRS. "Return codes" may also be added to the VRS to track ballots as approved, or rejected due to incomplete party declarations.

**Document each voter's selection.** During initial processing, each VRS is capable of documenting the voter's political party affiliation. The system saves the selection temporarily.

Each VRS vendor has provided instructions on how to append a voter's affiliation to the record. See the *OSOS Party Selection Guide* (attached).

Each system should also document the return method of each ballot.

### Certification and Transmittal

The county's VRS does not transmit party selections to the statewide voter registration database (VRDB). The VRDB does not retain a voter's party selection.

**Important dates.**

June 3	County Certification and transmittal of voter lists to OSOS.
June 10	State Certification.
June 23	Deadline to provide voter lists to county chair of each party.
August 11	Retention period ends for the VRS party selection.

Not later than **June 23** (thirty [30] days following the Primary), counties will provide reports to the county chair of each major political party. Each party-specific report must contain the names and addresses of voters registered in the county who marked and signed political party declaration for that party. ([WAC 434-219-320](#))

Counties should confer with their VRS vendor about how to generate reports.

Through **August 11** (sixty [60] days following state certification), counties retain the party selection of a voter in the VRS. After that date, County Auditors must clear this information from the VRS records. ([WAC 434-219-330](#))

All other records, including reports generated from the VRS, must be retained 22 months from the date of the Presidential Primary.

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**Return Codes**  
**All Systems**

The Secretary of State's Office suggests the following return "codes" be available in each system in addition to the regularly available codes:

- Approved: Democratic Party
- Approved: Republican Party
- Rejected/Challenged: No Party Declaration Selected
- Rejected/Challenged: Both Party Declarations Selected

Each system should also be able to define the return method - mail, drop box, or electronic - for each ballot returned.

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**DFM EIMS**

On the AV Return Screen, under the Phone Number Field, a drop down list for Party has been added. The Party drop down is only displayed during elections defined as a Primary Election Type. To select the voter's chosen party ballot simply select the party from the drop down list during the AV Return Process. In addition to the drop down list, there is a checkbox to Persist Party. Use the checkbox to persist the party information between records so party does not need to be selected for each record if the returned envelopes have been sorted by party.

Once party has been captured in the Return Screen, it will be available on any AV Reports and Jobs that show party. The Apply Voter History job has been updated for Washington Counties so party will NOT be recorded when applying history to the Voter File.

Last but not least, when the party information needs to be cleared for the Election, please give Customer Support at DFM a call and we will clear the party information from the Mail Ballot Voter records

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**DIMS**

See ***WA PPP DIMS Process.pdf*** for full instructions on:

- Election Setup
- Processing Ballot Returns
- Posting Voting History
- Clearing Voter Party

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**VOTEC VEMACS**

This will be done through the Ballot Return Process. The setup of the election is not different from any other election you have configured. The only difference will be the Ballot Return Status codes.

In the past you have always used just OK for a ballot return status if the ballot was returned and is countable. For the Presidential Primary the following are the codes that will be used:

DK - Democratic OK (countable)  
RK - Republican OK (countable)

The Absentee Ballot Export will be the export that will be used after the election to give the party selected to the Secretary of State's Office.