



*Washington Secretary of State*

# CLEARINGHOUSE

---

## ELECTIONS NOTICE

Issue #12-07  
August 31, 2012

### **Presidential Elections**

Presidential Elections occur every four years and have multiple effects on the General Election ballot. The requirements for Presidential Elections are different than any other election we conduct.

#### **How do Presidential candidates qualify to appear on the ballot?**

Presidential candidates are nominated by political party conventions, not by a primary. Candidates are official nominees of political parties; this means they do not fall under the Top 2 Primary requirements. Requirements for minor political party candidates are different than major political party candidates.

#### **Major Political Parties**

If a political party's Presidential candidate receives at least 5% of the total votes cast for President, that political party becomes a "major" political party for the next four years. Currently, the Republican and Democratic parties are the only major political parties in our state.

Major political parties need only hold a national convention and certify the names of the candidates and electors to the Secretary of State's Office to be placed on the General Election ballot.

#### **Minor Political Parties**

Minor political parties are those that did not meet the requirements of a "major" political party and may include "independent" candidates. To place minor party Presidential candidates on the ballot, the organization must:

- Hold at least one convention by the fourth Saturday in July. If holding more than one, each convention must have a minimum of 100 attendees.
- Submit to the Secretary of State a certification of nomination with a minimum of 1,000 signatures of Washington voters; a list of 12 Presidential elections; and

supporting documents required by law. (See [Appearing on the Presidential Ballot.](#))

### **What is different on the General Election ballot?**

There are two notices as provided in WAC 434-230-015 that apply only to a Presidential Election.

**Ballot packet materials** must include the notice:

"If a primary election was held for an office, the two candidates who received the most votes in the primary advanced to the general election.

Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.

The election for president and vice-president is different. Candidates for president and vice-president are the official nominees of their political party."

**On the ballot**, the following statement must be printed in bold after the Presidential candidates and before the US Senate and Congressional races:

"READ: Each candidate for president and vice-president is the official nominee of a political party. For other partisan offices, each candidate may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate."

The code reviser's office does not typically format with capitalization. Your office may use discretion in formatting these notices; the wording, however, must be precisely the same.

The office of President/Vice President is the first office listed on the ballot. Major political party candidates are listed in order of the votes received at the last Presidential Election. Minor parties and independent candidates follow major parties in the order which each qualified for the ballot. Candidates for President and Vice President are paired together as a "ticket" with a single response position. (RCW 29A.36.161)

The full name of the political party must be listed with a designation that these candidates are nominees; for example, "Democratic Party Nominees." Abbreviations are no longer allowed and parentheses must not be used.

## **What is the role of the Electoral College?**

Members of the Electoral College vote to determine who will ultimately become President and Vice President.

The Electoral College is comprised of electors from every state. Each state receives two electoral votes, one for each US Senator, and one for each member of congress.

Washington now has 12 electoral votes. Each of the twelve electors, nominated by the winning political party, will cast one vote for President and one vote for Vice-President.

**Do the election results or the electoral votes determine who is President?** Votes cast for President/Vice President do not directly determine the winner of the race. Each political party provides a list of electors with the candidates' nominations. State electors are members of the winning political party in that state.

Following certification of the General Election, the state electors meet on a date in December set by Congress to cast votes for President and Vice President. These votes determine the winners.

**Could an elector vote for another candidate not listed on the ballot?** Yes, but that rarely happens. Most political parties require electors to vote for the candidate nominated by the national convention.

For further information, please contact the Certification and Training Program at [ctsupport@sos.wa.gov](mailto:ctsupport@sos.wa.gov) or (360) 902-4180.