



April 29, 2022

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### What is the Difference Between a Primary and General Election?

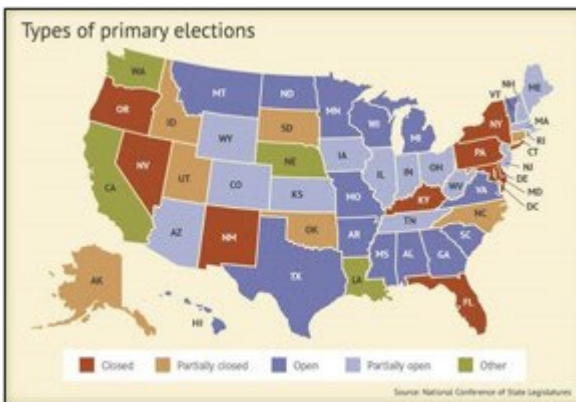
There's a lot of clamor about the 2022 mid-term elections with all eyes pointed to November. But before the November general election determines the balance of power in many state houses and Congress, states must get through their individual primaries. So what's the difference?

Primary elections are conducted within a political party to select nominees that will compete in the general elections for the office they compete for. This means Republicans will compete against other Republicans and the Democrats against the other Democrats to determine the candidates that will represent their respective parties. This implies that in a primary election, one can only vote for one party's candidates. But in some states a primary election may also be conducted for nonpartisan races with the same motive of narrowing down the number of candidates for the general elections that follow. The earliest state primary in 2022 was held on March 1, and the latest in mid-September. June and August are the busiest months, with 15 primaries each, while there are no primaries scheduled for April or July. The manner in which party primary elections are conducted varies widely by state.

The general election is held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The elections are between the nominees of a party as well as candidates that do not have any party affiliation. In this case, it is possible to split one's ballot between various political parties. The election results of a general election determine who will occupy the office that is being competed for. In addition to this, state-wide ballot proposals can also appear on the ballot of the general election.

### Do You Have to Vote Your Party Registration ?

Finding the best-qualified candidate to represent a party is challenging, and different states have different ways of choosing them in partisan primaries.



Open Primaries: any person can vote for a candidate from either party regardless of their own party.

Closed Primary: you can only vote for someone in your own party.

Semi-open: voters fill out party-specific ballots, but they do not have to officially affiliate with either party.

Semi-closed Primaries: voters still have to affiliate with a party before they can vote. But, voters do not have to officially affiliate with a party until they vote.

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