
Election Terms

Registration— The way to sign up to be able to vote. To register you must be ...



- a U.S. citizen
- 18 years of age by election day
- a resident of Michigan and the city/ township where you apply

You may register anytime, although to vote in a certain election you need to do so at least 30 days before that election. Your local clerk, county clerk or Secretary of State office can register you. It is free of charge.

Precinct— a subdivision of a city, ward, township or village for election purposes. Each precinct has a designated polling place (such as a school, fire or police station or other public building) where its residents vote. Your polling place is indicated on your voter identification card, or you can look up this information by going to www.michigan.gov/vote.

Absentee Ballot— A way to vote if you are unable to get to your polling place on election day. Your request for an absentee voter ballot must be submitted in writing to your local clerk by 2 p.m. on the Saturday prior to the election. If any of the following reasons apply, you are eligible to vote absentee:

- 60 years old or older
- Unable to vote without assistance
- Will be out of town during election
- In jail waiting arraignment or trial
- Unable to go to polls due to religion
- Plan to work as an election inspector in a precinct other than yours

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization established in 1920 to encourage citizen participation in government. It never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all citizens of voting age.



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Exercising Your Vote:



A Guide to Elections & Voting



A Project of the
League of Women Voters of Michigan

www.mivoterpower.org

Your Voice — Your Vote

In a democratic society we have the privilege of voting to choose the representatives who will work on the problems important to us.

National Elections

Officials we elect at the federal level:

- President & Vice President
- U.S. Senators
- U.S. Representatives

State Elections

Officials we elect at the state level:

n Governor n Lieutenant Governor
n Secretary of State n State Attorney
General n State Senators & Representa-
tives n State Board of Education n Boards
of the three largest public universities
(University of Michigan, Michigan State
University and Wayne State University)
n State judges

Local Elections

In addition to federal and state elections, there are several kinds of local elections, including:

- Counties
- Cities, Villages, Townships
- School Districts

For more information on Michigan elections, check out:

www.mivoterpower.org

Elect Your Representatives

Deciding who gets your vote isn't always easy! The following steps will help you find the candidate who will best represent you:

- Find out where the candidates stand on issues that are important to you
- Explore the candidates' experience

The League of Women Voters produces nonpartisan Voter Guides in many communities with information about candidates and issues. Web sites and newspapers can also provide information to help you decide.

Primaries

A *primary* is an election to select a political party's candidates for a specific office, such as governor or county sheriff. In the general election that follows a primary, the nominees run against each other, with the winner being elected to office. The state primary is held in August in even-numbered years as are most township primaries. City primaries may be held in odd-numbered years.

General Elections

There are four standard election dates in Michigan:

- **February**—Last Tuesday
 - **May**—Tuesday after the first Monday
 - **August**—Tuesday after the first Monday
 - **November**—Tuesday after the first Monday
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Voting on Issues

Sometimes elections are held for the purpose of voting on referendums, initiatives, or amendments to the state constitution.

- **Referendum**—A vote by citizens that approves or rejects an existing state or local law.
- **Initiative**—A vote on an issue put on the ballot by petition of citizens.
- **Constitutional amendment**—An addition or change to the state constitution, which requires a vote of the people.

A *millage* is a tax on property. Local units of government, including school districts, may hold millage elections.

Referendums, initiatives, constitutional amendments and millages are called *ballot issues*. Ballot issues can be on the ballot in any election.

Some counties, cities and townships have charters, which describe their government operations and may also be amended at an election. Charters are usually adopted at special elections.

Unleash Your Power.



VOTE.
