

Party Affiliation in New Hampshire

One of the most frequently asked questions from voters, especially during primary election season is **WHEN CAN I CHANGE PARTY AFFILIATION?**

The answer depends on your party affiliation as last recorded on the checklist. To determine this, the latest Voter Checklists are posted outside of Town Hall and the Public Safety Building. You can also visit our Town Clerk during posted business hours, or the Supervisors while they are in session. Supervisor sessions are always posted by public notice as scheduled by law and are on the town website and in the Concord Monitor.

If you are registered to vote without declaring an affiliation with a political party, your affiliation is recorded as **Undeclared**. This means you may declare an affiliation at any time when registration is permitted, including when checking in to vote at a primary election. This allows you to go to the polling place on primary election day and choose the ballot of any political party and vote in that primary. Choosing the ballot of a political party affiliates you with that party unless you change your affiliation back to **Undeclared** when exiting the polling place or at a later date with either the Supervisors of the Checklist or Town Clerk subject to the date exceptions outlined below for **Declared** Voters.

The term “**independent**” is often misused as a label for “**undeclared**”. New Hampshire recognizes a political organization as a political party only when candidates for Governor or United States Senator who ran as the candidate of that political organization got at least 4 percent of the total number of votes cast for that office. As of 2012, the only recognized political parties in New Hampshire are the **Democratic** and **Republican** parties. Procedures exist for political organizations (such as the Libertarian organization) to place a slate of candidates on the General Election ballot, but not on ballots for State operated primary elections.

If you are registered with a party affiliation (**Declared Democrat or Republican**), you may change party affiliation by appearing in person before the Supervisors of the Checklist or Town Clerk any time except:

- * Between the first Wednesday in June and the day before the State Primary Election
- * During the period ten days prior to any election.
- * During the period starting the day that candidates for the Presidential Primary may file for office and ending on the day the Presidential Primary is held, which occurs every four years.

Your Supervisors and Town Clerk endeavor to post these date restrictions as they apply to individual elections for you on the town website and in The Grapevine.

Declared voters seeking to change party affiliation on primary day can do so, but will NOT be able to vote in that primary election. If your chosen candidate on primary day is

a nominee of a different party, you may write in that candidate on your affiliated ballot. However, votes on primary ballots are counted only within the party listed on the ballot. Therefore a write-in vote in this circumstance will not affect who is elected as the nominee of that candidate's party. It will, however, show that the candidate has some level of support among voters who are registered as affiliated with a different party. News stories following primary elections consistently report the number of such write-in votes and this option does provide such voters with a means to express their preference for a candidate who is not a nominee of their affiliated party.

Click on Boards, and select Supervisors of the Checklist.

Your Supervisors of the Checklist,
Barbara Corliss, Ellen Kontinos-Cilley and Dot Proulx