How to Choose a Political Party

When you sign up to vote, you can join a political party. A political party is a group of people who share the same ideas about how the government should be run and what it should do. They work together to win elections. You can also choose not to join any of the political parties and still be a voter. There is no cost to join a party.

How to choose a political party:

- Choose a political party that has the same general views you do. For example, some political parties think that government should do more for people. Others feel that government should make it easier for people to do things for themselves.

- If you do not want to join a political party, mark that box on your voter registration form. This is called “no party preference”. Know that if you do, you may have limited choices for party candidates in Presidential primary elections.

- You can change your political party registration at any time. Just fill out a new voter registration form and check a different party box. The deadline to change your party is 15 days before the election.

If you are not registered with a political party and want to vote for a Presidential candidate from a party that lets you vote with their ballot, you must ask for that ballot when you go to your polling place on election day. If you plan to vote by mail, you must write on the application the name of the political party whose ballot you want to use.

If you want to be able to vote for a Presidential candidate from a political party that does not let you vote with their ballot, you need to fill out a new registration form and choose to join that party. Send it to your County Elections office by the registration deadline 15 days before the election.

No Party Preference
If you do not want to register with a political party (you want to be “independent” of any political party), mark “I do not want to register with a political party” on the registration form. In California, you can still vote for any candidate in a primary election, except for Presidential candidates. Each political party will decide before the election whether you may vote in their Presidential primary.
## Fast Facts

### Political Parties

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<th>Party</th>
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| **American Independent** | • Protect the right to life and strengthen families  
                                 • Secure the border and enforce immigration laws  
                                 • Balance state budget   | 397,000 members / 707-359-4884 / www.aipca.org |
| **Democratic**          | • Expand jobs through economic reinvestment  
                                 • Improve access to affordable health care  
                                 • End wars in Iraq and Afghanistan   | 7,553,000 members / 916-442-5707 / www.cadem.org |
| **Green**               | • Living wages; health care; education for all  
                                 • Clean energy and environment  
                                 • Election reform and accountability | 113,000 members / 916-448-3437 / www.cagreens.org |
| **Libertarian**         | • Increase individual liberty and responsibility  
                                 • Shrink government, reduce taxes  
                                 • Liberate education, commerce and personal choice | 87,000 members / 916-446-1776 / www.ca.lp.org |
| **Peace and Freedom**   | • Bring all troops home now  
                                 • Provide good jobs at higher pay  
                                 • Tax the rich to give health care, housing and education to all | 57,000 members / 510-465-9414 / www.peaceandfreedom.org |
| **Republican**          | • Promote an economy that creates new jobs  
                                 • Reform education and pension systems  
                                 • Protect taxpayers—force government to be accountable | 5,228,000 members / 916-448-9496 / www.cagop.org |

The statements and priorities were written by the political parties for the November 2010 issue of the Easy Voter Guide. The number of party members listed for each political party is from the Secretary of State’s May 24, 2010 totals and has been rounded to the nearest thousand.