

HB 1639 -- PRIMARY ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: Taylor

Beginning January 1, 2021, this bill allows established political parties to use a state funded, closed political primary system conducted by local election authorities. The local election authority will allow registration of voters as members of a particular political party and enforce time limits on registration or changing political parties as specified in the bill. The Secretary of State shall maintain voter registration and party affiliation records and provide such information to local election authorities as specified in the bill. If the state funded closed primary system is not employed, then political parties may submit candidates chosen by caucus or some other method funded by the political party for a general election to the requisite election authority.

Persons not previously registered to vote in Missouri may choose a party affiliation and register until the fourth Wednesday before a primary election. Independent candidates must be unaffiliated with a political party no later than the 23rd Tuesday before a primary election in order to run for office. Political party candidates must be affiliated with their party no later than six months prior to the last Tuesday in February. Any candidates selected by nominating committees must be affiliated with the requisite political party no later than six months prior to the date of selection.

This bill establishes the "Integrity in Political Party Voting Act". Local election authorities shall notify registered voters of the primary election system using current notices mailed to voters and party affiliation changes will be noted beginning January 1, 2020. The voter registration application form will allow an initial choice of party affiliation during the presidential primary, August primary, or general election. Party identity will be required to remain the same for one year after a primary election held after January 1, 2021.

The closed primary system applies to the presidential primary as well as other state and federal races (Section 115.628, RSMo).

This bill is the same as HB 922 (2019).