

PARTICIPATING IN THE CONVENTION PROCESS

The Precinct Convention Process

The Republican Party's primary election will be held on March 4, 2008. Those who vote in the Republican primary will choose the candidates who will represent our Party in the November general election. Less well-known, but just as important, are the decisions that will be made after the polls close at precinct conventions – a type of town hall meeting.

Anyone who votes in the Republican primary election (either in early voting, voting by mail, or at the polls on election day) is eligible to attend his or her precinct convention. Your convention will take place at your precinct's election day polling place within two hours after the polls close at 7:00 p.m. The time and place of your precinct convention must be posted at each poll during primary election day. Expect anywhere from one to well over 100 participants to attend.

The precinct convention is called to order by the Precinct Chairman or a person acting in his stead. This person is the Temporary Precinct Convention Chairman. A Permanent Precinct Convention Chairman and Secretary are then elected by majority vote. The Convention Chairman may appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms and/or a Parliamentarian. There are only two items of business for the precinct convention: election of delegates and alternates to county or senatorial district conventions, and the approval of resolutions to be sent to these conventions.

Each precinct is entitled to send to the county/senatorial district convention one delegate and one alternate for every 25 votes, or major fraction thereof, cast for Governor Rick Perry in that precinct in the 2006 general election. In districts where the size of a convention is a problem, the ratio may be set at one delegate and alternate for every 40 votes.

At the precinct convention, attendees decide by majority vote who gets to be delegates and alternates to the county/senatorial district convention. Often, everyone who attends becomes a delegate to the next level. However, if a large number attend, decisions will need to be made as to who will be a delegate and who will be an alternate.

The only requirement to be elected as a delegate or alternate to the county/senatorial district convention is to have voted in the 2008 Republican primary election. It is not required to attend the precinct convention in order to be elected to the next higher level. Longtime Republicans often perform tasks for the party or candidates during Election Day, which prevents them from being able to attend. However, for those who are new to the party, attending the precinct convention will definitely increase the likelihood of being one of those elected.

The County / Senatorial District Convention Process

This convention is the next step up on the ladder of the party leadership and policy development. They must be held on March 29, 2008, at a time and place announced at the precinct convention. When your county is located completely within one state senate district, you will have a county convention.

When your county is split into two or more senate districts, you must have senatorial district conventions. Both type conventions are identical in conduct of business.

At the county/senatorial district convention, the formal business is the same as at the precinct convention: elect delegates and alternates to the next higher-level convention and adopt resolutions for that convention's consideration. The informality of the small precinct convention is replaced by a more formal agenda and parliamentary rules necessary for an orderly meeting.

If your convention has over 25 delegates, as most will, the temporary chairman shall appoint between five and fifteen members to the following committees to run the convention:

Credentials: hears disputes about contested delegates as well as deciding who shall be seated.

Rules: recommends supplementary rules for the convention.

Permanent Organization: recommends permanent officers of the convention.

Resolutions: recommends which resolutions should be approved.

Nominations: recommends a slate of delegates and alternates to the state convention.

Because of the amount of work involved, the Temporary Nominations and Resolutions Committees usually meet at least once prior to the convention. Some committees may have several meetings and take testimony to help them make their reports. If you are interested in being a delegate or alternate to the state convention, call the temporary Nominations Committee Chairman, find out who is on the committee, when they will be meeting, and if you may appear to speak before the committee.

Most important decisions are made in committees. Committee reports may be amended on the floor, but it is usually easier to get what you want in committee. If you are new to this process, do not be overwhelmed by the formality of the structure. Ask others who have been to conventions before to help guide you in understanding what to do.

Your county/senatorial district convention is entitled to send one delegate and one alternate to the state convention for every 300 votes cast in your county/district for Governor Rick Perry in the 2006 general election. Each county in each senatorial district is guaranteed at least two delegates and two alternates. Alternates may only vote at the state convention when seated for an absent delegate. Each county/senatorial district convention determines the manner in which alternates are seated.

The Temporary Nominations Committee proposes a slate of delegates and alternates to the state convention. They usually select experienced Republicans who have worked hard for the local party plus a few new activists. Becoming a state delegate or alternate is a great honor and must be earned. If you don't make it this time, redouble your efforts: increase your local involvement, attend GOP meetings and volunteer to assist candidates.

The State Convention Process

The 2008 Republican Party of Texas state convention will be a great experience with thousands of people in attendance. It is, in fact, the nation's largest political convention. The convention this year will be held in Houston on June 12th, 13th and 14th.

Delegates and alternates will be mailed packets containing full information from state party headquarters a few weeks after the county/senatorial district convention. A large number of hotel rooms in various price ranges will be reserved for convention attendees. The packet will include a reservation form for attendees who want to stay in those particular hotels. Attendees may also select other area accommodations on their own, stay with friends or relatives, or stay in nearby cities.

The business conducted at the state convention will be to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Republican Party of Texas, elect one male and one female member from your senatorial district to the State Republican Executive Committee, and adopt a state party platform.

Given the large size of the convention, strict rules are in place to regulate its conduct. There is a considerable reliance on the committee process in conducting business. Temporary committees members are appointed by the State Chairman on recommendation by the State Republican Executive Committee. Each senate district is entitled to be represented by one member on the following committees: Credentials, Organization, Rules, and Platform and Resolutions. All of these temporary committees meet prior to the convening of the convention. All meetings are open to the public, and each will establish a time when interested persons like you may address the committee. Some committees will begin meeting a few days before the convention convenes.

More than participating in the formal convention business, though, you will come into contact with those who run Texas government. Statewide officeholders, senators, congressmen, legislators, county officials, party leaders, as well as candidates for those offices are among those you will have the opportunity to meet and speak to personally.

These are the people who are writing the future of Texas. By attending these conventions, you have the opportunity to be one of those leaders, too. We encourage you to take advantage of that opportunity!

In presidential election years, such as 2008, on the last day of the state convention, the delegates will caucus according to congressional district. At this meeting, the delegates will vote for the National Committeeman and Committeewoman, who along with the State Chairman, represent the Republican Party of Texas on the Republican National Committee. During the congressional caucus, a person will be selected as a Presidential elector who will be a member of the electoral college. The congressional caucus is also where the delegate selection process begins for the national convention.

Becoming a Delegate to the National Convention

According to Republican National Committee rules, Texas will be allocated 140 delegates and 137 alternates to the 2008 convention in Minneapolis. 41 of these national convention delegates and alternates will be selected at-large at the state convention, according to how well presidential candidates do statewide. 96 national convention delegates and alternates will be selected according to how well presidential candidates do within Texas' 32 congressional districts. According to Republican National Committee rules, the remaining three delegate spots are automatically assigned to the Party Chairman, National Committeeman and National Committeewoman.

Each congressional district in Texas is entitled to send three delegates and three alternates to the national convention. A presidential candidate receiving more than fifty percent of the votes in a congressional district shall receive all three delegates and alternates from that district.

If no presidential candidate receives a majority of the votes in a congressional district, and two or more candidates receive more than twenty percent of the votes, then the plurality winner is entitled to two delegates and two alternates from that district and the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes receives one delegate and one alternate. If no candidate receives more than twenty percent of the votes from a district, each of the three candidates receiving the highest numbers of votes shall receive one delegate and one alternate.

A candidate receiving more than fifty percent of the votes cast in the Presidential Primary canvassed on a statewide basis shall be entitled to all at-large delegates and alternates.

If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast statewide, and two or more candidates receive more than twenty percent of the votes, then the plurality winner is entitled to two delegates and alternates and the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes receives one delegate and alternate. If no candidate receives more than twenty percent of the votes cast statewide, each of the three candidates receiving the highest numbers of votes shall receive one delegate and one alternate.

How specific individuals are nominated and selected as delegates.

Delegates to the state convention will caucus by congressional district. Each congressional caucus district shall meet and shall elect those district delegates and alternates to which a candidate is entitled. Any delegate may make a nomination as long as the person nominated agrees to the pledge in the RPT Rule 38, Section 10. A nominee for national delegate will be allowed a certain amount of time to address the congressional caucus. After nominations are complete, the delegates will vote for a person to fill the first national convention delegate slot. The process is then repeated for the second and third delegate positions, followed by the three alternate slots.

Each congressional caucus will also elect one person to serve on the National Nominations Committee. This committee nominates a slate of statewide at-large delegates and alternates. Committee members may nominate themselves. The slate approved by the committee is to be presented to the full convention and must be accepted or rejected as a whole. No amendments may be offered from the floor.