

# [***Alabama lawmakers advance bills to ensure Joe Biden is on the state's ballot***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTP-1NT1-JC5B-G12D-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama lawmakers advanced legislation Wednesday to ensure President Joe Biden will appear on the state's November ballot, mirroring accommodations made four years ago for then-President Donald Trump.

Legislative committees in the Alabama House of Representatives and Senate approved identical bills that would push back the state's certification deadline from 82 days to 74 days before the general election in order to accommodate the date of Democrats' nominating convention.

The bills now move to to the full chambers. Alabama has one of the earliest candidate certification deadlines in the country which has caused difficulties for whichever political party has the later convention date that year.

"We want to make sure every citizen in the state of Alabama has the opportunity to vote for the candidate of his or her choice," Democratic Sen. Merika Coleman, the sponsor of the Senate bill, told the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The issue of Biden's ballot access has arisen in Alabama and Ohio as Republican secretaries of state warned that certification deadlines fall before [*the Democratic National Convention*](https://apnews.com/article/democratic-convention-2024-8616953934537edbf2cf795066c878ec) is set to begin on Aug. 19. The Biden campaign has asked the two states to accept provisional certification, arguing that has been done in past elections. The Republican election chiefs have refused, arguing they don't have authority, and will enforce the deadlines.

Democrats proposed the two Alabama bills, but the legislation moved out of committee with support from Republicans who hold a lopsided majority in the Alabama Legislature. The bills were approved with little discussion. However, two Republicans who spoke in favor of the bill called it an issue of fairness.

Republican Rep. Bob Fincher, chairman of the committee that heard the House bill, said this is “not the first time we’ve run into this problem” and the state made allowances.

“I’d like to think that if the shoe was on the other foot, that this would be taken care of. And I think that Alabamians have a deep sense of fairness when it comes to ***politics*** and elections,” Republican Sen. Sam Givhan said during the committee meeting.

Trump faced the same issue in Alabama in 2020. The Republican-controlled Alabama Legislature in 2020 passed legislation to [*change the certification deadline for the 2020 election*](https://arc-sos.state.al.us/cgi/actdetail.mbr/detail?page=act&year=2020&act=39). The bill stated that the change was made “to accommodate the dates of the 2020 Republican National Convention.” However, an attorney representing the Biden campaign and DNC, wrote in a letter to Alabama Secretary of State Wes Allen that it was provisional certification that allowed Trump on the ballot in 2020, because there were still problems with the GOP date even with the new 2020 deadline.

Allen has maintained he does not have the authority to accept provisional certification.

Similarly, in Ohio, Attorney General Dave Yost and Secretary of State Frank LaRose, both Republicans, rejected a request from Democrats to waive the state’s ballot deadline administratively by accepting a “provisional certification” for Biden.

In a letter Monday, Yost’s office told LaRose that Ohio law does not allow the procedure. LaRose’s office conveyed that information, in turn, in a letter to Democratic lawyer Don McTigue. LaRose’s chief legal counsel, Paul Disantis, noted it was a Democrats who championed the state’s ballot deadline, one of the earliest in the nation, 15 years ago. It falls 90 days before the general election, which this year is Aug. 7.

Ohio Senate Democratic Leader Nickie Antonio said she is waiting to hear from the Democratic National Committee on how to proceed. One of her members, state Sen. Bill DiMora, said he has legislation for either a short- or long-term fix ready to go when the time comes.

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Associated Press writer Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

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