

# [***AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Louisiana's presidential primaries***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKR-39W1-DYMD-60NY-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WASHINGTON — Louisiana ***politics*** have been dominated this year by new Republican Gov. Jeff Landry’s [*special legislative sessions*](https://apnews.com/article/louisiana-crime-session-landry-c743c5945972acea8f36693ba825f4c2) to [*address crime*](https://apnews.com/article/louisiana-jeff-landry-crime-bills-3f985b6d8abefda715da6e54d9ef608a) and [*adopt new congressional maps*](https://apnews.com/article/louisiana-redistricting-congressional-map-landry-87ce38e0f716c565178099ed92725751). On Saturday, the focus will shift to the state’s presidential primaries.

There’s little doubt who will win.

Democratic President Joe Biden and Republican Donald Trump, the former president, unofficially sewed up their parties’ nominations last week. But the process of selecting the nominees has long depended on voters in places such as Louisiana and about two dozen other states and territories where people will vote in primaries and caucuses long after the presumptive nominees have been determined.

Louisiana also did not play a decisive role in the 2020 primaries.

It had planned to hold a contest on April 4 of that year, but instead became the first state to postpone its primary in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. After [*a second delay*](https://apnews.com/article/77b592d115f019647da28f9b602fd3d5), Louisiana held its primary on July 11, followed only by a Democratic primary in Puerto Rico the next day. Biden and Trump, who had already unofficially clinched the 2020 nominations by then, [*easily won in Louisiana.*](https://apnews.com/article/2b1c648f10f81d6d56dc7425b6c0f0b3)

The Louisiana primaries were more competitive in 2016, when they were held in early March, just after that year’s Super Tuesday. Trump narrowly edged Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas in a four-way contest that also included Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and former Ohio Gov. John Kasich. On the Democratic side, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton trounced Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Republicans control the levers of government in Louisiana today, and most of the state’s prominent elected officials have endorsed Trump. That includes [*Landry*](https://x.com/jefflandry/status/1745494115532390826?s=12), who had Trump’s backing last fall in his race for governor, along with House Speaker [*Mike Johnson*](https://apnews.com/article/mike-johnson-donald-trump-2024-c0d8304f44bd7158415ac80673eb8c7f), House Majority Leader Steve Scalise and Sen. John Kennedy.

Trump carried Louisiana in the 2016 and 2020 general elections with 58% of the vote. Biden’s statewide showing of about 40% in 2020 slightly improved upon the 38% that Clinton received there four years earlier.

A look at what to expect on election night:

**PRIMARY DAY**

Polls close at 8 p.m. CDT, which is 9 p.m. EDT.

**WHAT’S ON THE BALLOT**

The Democratic ballot lists Biden, Marianne Williamson, former candidate Dean Phillips and five others. On the Republican ballot are Trump, former candidates Chris Christie, Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Asa Hutchinson, Vivek Ramaswamy, and three others.

**WHO GETS TO VOTE**

Only voters registered with a party may participate in that party’s presidential primary. Democrats can’t vote in the Republican primary and vice versa.

**DELEGATE ALLOCATION RULES**

There are 48 pledged Democratic delegates at stake. Ten at-large delegates are allocated in proportion to the statewide vote, as are six PLEO delegates, or “party leaders and elected officials.” The state’s six congressional districts have a combined 32 delegates at stake, which are allocated in proportion to the vote results in each district. Candidates must receive at least 15% of the statewide vote to qualify for any statewide delegates and 15% of the vote in a congressional district to qualify for delegates in that district. Delegates will be awarded using the old 2022 congressional district boundaries, not the [*new map passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature and signed by Landry*](https://apnews.com/article/louisiana-congress-map-black-b5c7c6964ec815b5c6fb34ab4d9ba771) in January.

There are 47 pledged Republican delegates at stake. They are awarded on a “winner-take-all” basis to the top statewide vote-getter.

**DECISION NOTES**

Louisiana’s presidential primaries once again are not competitive because Biden and Trump have unofficially clinched their nominations and face no major candidates on the ballot. The release of vote results tends to begin shortly after polls close. The first indications that the two are winning statewide on a level consistent with the overwhelming margins seen in most other contests held this year may be sufficient to determine the statewide winners.

The Associated Press does not make projections and will declare a winner only when it’s determined there is no scenario that would allow the trailing candidates to close the gap. If a race has not been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, such as candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear that it has not yet declared a winner and explain why.

**WHAT DO TURNOUT AND ADVANCE VOTE LOOK LIKE**

As of March 1, there were 2,977,408 voters registered in Louisiana. Of those, 38% were registered as Democrats and 34% were registered as Republicans. Turnout for last October’s gubernatorial primary was about 36% of registered voters. Turnout for the twice postponed presidential primaries in 2020 was 9% of registered voters for the Democratic contest and 7% for the Republican. In 2016, Democratic primary turnout was 11% of registered voters, and for Republicans it was 10%.

The amount of pre-Election Day voting in Louisiana’s presidential primaries jumped significantly from 2016 to 2020 because of the pandemic. In 2016, about 17% of Democratic primary voters and 16% of Republican primary voters cast ballots before primary day. In 2020, after the state expanded early voting and mail-in balloting options, the level rose to 42% for Democrats and 36% for Republicans. In the 2023 gubernatorial primary, pre-Election Day voting was at about 34% of total votes cast.

As of March 15, a total of 130,549 voters had cast ballots before Election Day. About 46% of those came from Democrats and about 48% came from Republicans.

**HOW LONG DOES VOTE-COUNTING USUALLY TAKE?**

In the 2023 Louisiana state primary, the AP first reported results at 9:03 p.m. EDT, or three minutes after polls closed. The election night tabulation ended at 12:59 a.m. EDT with all of the vote counted.

**ARE WE THERE YET?**

As of Saturday, there will be 114 days until the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, 149 days until the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and 227 days until the November general election.

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