

The logo for City Watch Notebook is centered at the top of the page. It features the word "CITY" in a bold, sans-serif font with a magnifying glass icon over the letter 'I'. Below "CITY" is the word "WATCH" in a larger, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath "WATCH" is the word "Notebook" in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed in a rounded rectangular border.

# CITY WATCH Notebook

## THE 2020 MISSOURI PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

On March 10, 2020, Missouri will hold a Presidential primary, ostensibly to determine which presidential candidates will receive delegates to the national conventions of each of the respective political parties. Other states will also be holding Presidential Primaries that day including Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, and Washington. (Hawaii Republicans and North Dakota Democrats will also hold caucuses that day.)

In Missouri, voters are not registered to vote by party, but will be required to select the ballot of one party when they cast their presidential preference votes. Voters may choose a ballot from any one of the following political parties: Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, Green and Constitution.

Although it is surprising to many people, a total of 33 people have filed to appear on the Presidential Primary ballot in Missouri. Any candidate who wanted to appear on the Missouri Presidential ballot was required to pay a \$1,000 filing fee in advance – or submit a petition containing 5,000 qualified Missouri voter signatures along with a statement indicating that they couldn't afford the \$1,000 filing fee. There will be 5 Republicans; 22 Democrats; 1 Libertarian; 3 Green; and 2 Constitution Party candidates on this year's ballot (Including the names of some people who have officially suspended their campaigns, but didn't have time to pull their names from the official ballot.

Even more surprising perhaps, is that 3 of the candidates are actually from the State of Missouri – and they are all Democrats: Leonard Steinman II and Velma Steinman of Jefferson City and William C. (Bill) Haas of St. Louis. One candidate, Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente, originally filed as a candidate in both the Democratic and Republican Missouri presidential primaries using two different California addresses, but now will only appear on the Democratic ballot in Missouri.

### Candidate List

#### REPUBLICAN

Donald J Trump, Bob Ely, Bill Weld, Joe Walsh, Matthew John Matern

#### DEMOCRATIC

Amy Klobuchar, Tom Steyer, Tulsi Gabbard, Leonard J. Steinman II, Cory Booker, Joseph R. Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg, Bernie Sanders, Velma Steinman, Henry Hewes, Andrew Yang, Roque De La Fuente, John K. Delaney, Julián Castro, Deval Patrick, Marianne Williamson, Michael Bennet, Michael R. Bloomberg, Steve Burke, Robby Wells, William C. (Bill) Haas

#### LIBERTARIAN

Jacob Hornberger

## **GREEN**

Howie Hawkins, Dario Hunter, David Rolde

## **CONSTITUTION**

Don J. Grundmann, Don Blankenship

### **Awarding Delegates**

Once you cast your vote, the political parties are notified of the results, and they use those results on some level to award national convention delegates to each successful candidate. But, not each of the political parties do it the same way. Missouri's major parties have a hybrid system that includes the results of both the presidential primary and local meetings or "caucuses" to determine percentages of representation. (Our caucus system is different than the infamous Iowa caucus system, so we should have far fewer problems in determining who actually won or lost.)

For instance, in Missouri, the Republicans choose delegates on a "winner-take-most" basis, meaning that the top vote getter in the Presidential Primary gets the lion's share of the delegates based on the results of the popular vote, with very few left over for the second or third place candidates. If, however, any one candidate gets more than 50% of the Republican popular vote, that candidate gets ALL of the delegates. And, if any candidate fails to get at least 20% of the vote, they get no delegates at all, even if they are still considered to be an active candidate nationally.

On the Democratic side, the award of delegates is completely proportional and, outside of super delegates (like elected officials or the party chair), is based on how candidates do both statewide and in individual congressional district caucuses. The one NON-candidate category that can receive delegates is "Uncommitted" – and voters who select a Democratic ballot can actually choose the "Uncommitted" option when they vote on March 10.

The Libertarians, Green and Constitution Parties have a different patchwork of rules since they do not all appear on each state's ballots – and in some cases the outcome of the Presidential Primary is just a "beauty show" and does not bind delegates to any one candidate until they get to the national convention.

What about those people who call themselves Independents? Well, in Missouri, "Independent" is not an officially recognized political party. Those voters are free to participate in the election by choosing the ballot of any other party (since we don't register by party here), or just skip the whole election entirely and wait to see if a truly Independent candidate emerges on a national level sometime in late summer of 2020. (That's what happened when Ross Perot emerged as a third-party candidate in 1992.)

In most jurisdictions, including the City of Columbia, there will be no other issues on the ballot, so choosing a "Non-Partisan" ballot to vote on *issues only* is not an option. (Four years ago, Columbia voters did have the trash roll-cart issue on the same ballot as the Presidential Primary – but nothing like that appears this year.)

### **Voting Rules**

On Tuesday, March 10, the polls will be open from 6:00 AM until 7:00 PM. To vote, you will be required to show one of the following forms of acceptable identification and sign the poll book to obtain your ballot:

- Identification issued by the state of Missouri, an agency of the state, or a local election authority of the state;
- Identification issued by the United States government or agency thereof;
- Identification issued by an institution of higher education, including a university, college, vocational and technical school, located within the state of Missouri; or
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check or other government document that contains the name and address of the voter.

If you do not possess any of these forms of identification, but are a registered voter, you may cast a provisional ballot. Your ballot will count if: (1) you return to your polling place on Election Day with a photo ID; or (2) the signature on your provisional ballot envelope is determined by your local election authority to match the signature on your voter registration record. If you cast a provisional ballot, you will receive a stub from your provisional ballot envelope with instructions on how to verify that your provisional ballot is counted.

### **Accessible Voting**

You may not know it, but every polling place is required to provide access to every voter. This even includes “curbside service”, if needed. Here are the general rules:

**Curbside Voting:** Voters with limited mobility can vote "curbside" or outside the polling place.

Just go to your polling place and ask someone to go in and ask poll workers to bring a ballot out to you. They should bring you a ballot within a reasonable period of time.

**Accessible Polling Places:** If you have physical disabilities, and your polling place is not accessible, you may request a different polling place assignment so that you may vote in a more accessible polling place. You may also vote at a central location. Simply contact your local election authority to make this request. You can [find your local election authority here](#) or by calling (800)NOW-VOTE.

**Accessible Voting Systems:** Every polling place must have an accessible voting system for individuals with disabilities including audiovisual accessibility. Accessible systems include an audio ballot to make your selections or the ability to enlarge text so that you can read the on-screen ballot with ease.

**Permanent Absentee Voting:** If you have a permanent physical disability, you may request to be placed on a designated list so that your local election authority can automatically mail an absentee ballot application directly to you prior to each election. You will need to make this request directly to your local election authority who will send you further information.

**Regular Absentee Voting:** You may also choose to request a regular absentee ballot.

Absentee voters must provide one of the following reasons for voting absentee:

1. Absence on Election Day from the jurisdiction of the election authority in which such voter is registered to vote;
2. Incapacity or confinement due to illness or physical disability, including a person who is primarily responsible for the physical care of a person who is incapacitated or confined due to illness or disability;
3. Religious belief or practice;
4. Employment as an election authority, as a member of an election authority, or by an election authority at a location other than such voter's polling place;
5. Incarceration, provided all qualifications for voting are retained.
6. You are participating in a witness protection program

Voters can request absentee ballots from their local election authority in person, by mail, by fax or by e-mail. Relatives within the second degree (spouse, parents and children) may complete an absentee ballot application, in person, on behalf of the voter who wishes to

vote absentee. However, you must submit the request in a timely fashion PRIOR TO the actual election date. (Oddly, absentee voting for the Missouri Presidential Primary has already begun since that starts six weeks prior to the actual election.)

### **Registration**

To participate in any form, you must be registered to vote in the State of Missouri. The qualifications are very basic. You must be a United States citizen. You must be a resident of the State of Missouri. You need to be at least 17 ½ years old when you register and turn 18 by election day. The deadline to register to vote in the March 10 Presidential Primary is February 12, 2020. If you register later than that, you will be able to vote in other elections in April, August and November, but not in this particular presidential contest.

(NOTE: Much of the information presented here regarding voting rules and registration was taken from the website of the Missouri Secretary of State. If you have specific questions regarding your eligibility to vote, please contact your county election authority or the Missouri Secretary of State.)

© 2020 CityWatch-Columbia

*(This document may not be reproduced, redistributed or significantly cited in other works without the written permission of the author.)*