

## HOW PHILLY WORKS

### *Countdown to the May 20 Primary – Register to Vote NOW!*

#### **Important alert for all Pennsylvanians!**

Four weeks from today – Monday, April 21 – is the deadline for registering to vote in the May 20 Pennsylvania primary.

Big races are on the ballot: Governor, state Senate and House, committeepeople. And, in Philadelphia, there's also a Special Election to decide who will serve out the remainder of Bill Green's At-Large City Council term.

But you can't vote if you are not properly registered. This **HOW PHILLY WORKS** tells what you need to know to register to vote. Don't waste any time! Or you will find yourself on the sidelines when others are making important decisions that affect your life.

-- March 24, 2013

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#### **There are 56 days until May 20. I'm not even thinking about the primary yet.**

You may not be, but Seventy is. You'll be hearing more and more from us about the candidates and the issues they are talking about as the election gets closer. In the meantime, you do have to think about whether you will be able to vote when May 20 rolls around.

#### **Remind me about Pennsylvania's voter registration rules.**

To register to vote in Pa., you must be (1) a U.S. citizen for at least one month before the next election, (2) a resident of Pa. and the election district in which you want to register and vote for at least 30 days before the next election, and (3) at least 18 years old on or before Election Day.

#### **I'm registered as an independent voter. Can I vote on May 20?**

It depends. Unless you change your voter registration to Democrat or Republican, you won't be able to vote in the primary races for Pa. governor or the state legislature. But all voters who live in Philadelphia – whether they are registered as independents, Democrats, Republicans or with any other political party – can vote in the Special Election for the citywide At-large Council seat. All voters can also vote on ballot questions.

#### **So I have to change my registration if I want to vote in the Democratic or Republican gubernatorial primary?**

Yes. And you also have to re-register when you change your name or are living in a new voting district (although, if you move within the state, you can vote in your old voting district one last time).



**You said I have until April 21 to do this. Plenty of time.**

Not really. Big elections like this tend to attract lots of voter registration applications. Since they get handled through a first-come-first-served process, you should not wait until the last minute to register. Philadelphia’s Board of Elections received nearly 200,000 voter registrations for the November 2012 presidential election. According to a report by the Board’s then-Acting Voter Registration Administrator, “tens of thousands” were submitted in the final hour of the deadline.

**This is ringing a bell. There were lots of problems in that election in Philly.**

Yes, and some had to do with last minute voter registrations. Rather than rehash what happened and why, our focus here is to help you avoid any problems.

**I get it. My neighbor is collecting voter registration applications. I’ll give mine to her today.**

That’s not the best idea, unless you really, really, really trust her to turn it in immediately. When you give your application to another person, or register through a political party’s voter registration drive, you don’t know if and when the applications are turned in. Our best advice is to do it yourself.

**I’ll do it online right this minute.**

We wish you could. But, unfortunately, Pennsylvania doesn’t have online voter registration. (A bill enabling this passed the state Senate but is sitting idle in the state House.) But you can [download a Voter Registration Application](#) and mail it to your [local voter registration office](#). Forms should also be available at U.S. Post Offices, public libraries, state liquor stores and other state agencies.

**I’m not taking any chances. I’ll register in person. Where should I go?**

The Philadelphia Board of Elections has an office in City Hall, Room 142. You can also go to the Voter Registration Office located at 520 N. Columbus Blvd on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. You can also register in person at any Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Photo License Center. You can find the center closest to you [here](#).

**Waiting in line at PennDOT? Fat Chance!**

We hear you. Which reminds us: *Pennsylvania’s Voter ID Law will NOT be in effect at the polls on May 20.* No one needs to present photo identification in order to vote at the polls.

**Will I need any identification to vote?**

All voters going to a polling place for the first time – either as a first-time-ever voter or voting for the first time in a new voting division – must present some evidence of their identity. A number of photo and non-photo IDs will be accepted. (Click [here](#) to see the full list.)

**Back to my voter registration application. How will I know when it’s been processed?**

You should receive a paper Voter Identification Card in the mail. (This is one type of non-photo identification you can bring to the polls when you go to vote.) Unless your county Board of Elections is flooded with last minute applications, you should get this card within two weeks.



### And if I don't get the card?

You should check the state's voter registration database to find out your [registration status online](#), or call your [local voter registration office](#). Try these steps before you file a duplicate voter registration application. Duplicate applications slow down the processing of voter registration applications.

### I really want to vote on May 20.

This gets us back to the point of this **HOW PHILLY WORKS**. Get yourself registered. Then you can move to the next step in getting ready to vote: finding out as much as you can about the candidates you are eligible to vote for.

### Where do I find information on the races?

Seventy's [website](#) has a lot of information, especially about the gubernatorial candidates. We have a great new feature – **Guv Race 101** – our quick guide introducing you to the major issues in the 2014 race. Our first two installments were on [fracking](#) and [marijuana](#). Job creation is up next.

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