

-- THE ABC'S OF CONDUCTING YOUR PRECINCT CONVENTION --

At 7:15 p.m., on the evening of the Primary Election, Democratic primary voters throughout Texas will meet to hold their precinct convention to do the following:

- Elect delegates to the county or senatorial district convention
- Adopt resolutions that will be submitted to the county or senatorial district convention

The convention may seem complicated at first, but it is very easy and quick to conduct. This flyer will have the following: a basic overview, a dialogue showing how the convention should work and an agenda for hosting your own precinct convention. Here are some basic rules that you need to follow:

1. Voters who **VOTED in the Democratic Primary** can participate in the Precinct Convention.
2. **The standing precinct chair has priority in terms of running the precinct convention and is considered the temporary chair of the convention; however, anyone can start the convention in the event the precinct chair does not attend the convention, or the seat is vacant.**
3. The convention is supposed to start at 7:15; **however, if voters are still in line, you MUST wait for that last person to vote before you can begin the convention.** No one can sign in before 7:15 pm, or when the last person has voted – whichever occurs later. The convention will be convened, and then sign-ins may begin.
4. You should get a voter roster/roll from the election judge. You need this voter roll to verify the voters who have voted in the Democratic Primary (i.e. by early vote, voting by mail or by voting the day of the Primary).
5. Anyone can be nominated and elected as a delegate even if they are not present; however, all delegates must be duly-elected the evening of the precinct convention – **the convention chair cannot take home the precinct materials to fill in any vacant delegate seats.**

STEPS TO CONDUCT YOUR CONVENTION:

IMPORTANT: If you have any difficulty conducting your precinct convention, please call the toll-free Helpline the evening of the precinct convention: 1-800-DEM-3254.

Step 1: Around 7 pm, check in with the election judge to confirm whether the precinct chair (if any) has picked up the precinct convention packet. If there is no precinct chair, let the judge know that you will be picking up the precinct convention packet. The election judges have been advised not to release the precinct convention packets until 7 pm.

Step 2: Around 7:10-7:15 pm, if the precinct convention packet has not already been picked up by the precinct chair, go back to the election judge and get the packet from him or her. You will need to sign out the packet from the Election Judge on the "Precinct Convention Packet Sign out Sheet." In addition to the packet, the election judge should give you a copy of the voter roll after the final person in line has voted (this ensures you'll be verifying Democratic primary participation using the most current information).

When you open the precinct convention packet, you should have the following items:

1. A letter from the State Chair/ EZ Math Form (used only in presidential election years)
2. Precinct Convention Democratic Minutes Form – carbon copy set
3. Precinct Convention Sign-in Sheets (aka "Exhibit A") – carbon copy set
4. Texas Democratic Party Rules – most current version
5. Return Envelope
6. Contribution Envelope
7. Precinct 101/Helpline Flyer
8. "Urgent" Memo
9. Results Hotline Flyer

Step 3: Ask people who enter the election site if they are there to participate in the convention. If they are, direct them to the location where the convention is going to held (corner of the room, another room assigned, or even outside with lighting, as long as it easily accessible).

Step 4: At 7:15 (or when the last voter has voted), the Temporary Chair will call the meeting to order. The precinct chair is considered the temporary chair of the Convention; however, if they are not present, anyone can call the meeting to order. Ask someone to be the Temporary Secretary.

Step 5: After the meeting is called to order, have all the convention attendees sign in on the Precinct Convention Sign-in Sheet. **Note: In presidential election years, when people sign in to participate in the precinct convention, they must state their presidential preference (or specify that they are “uncommitted”).** Be sure to verify that those who are signing in have voted in the Democratic primary by checking the voter roll.

Step 6: The first order of business is to elect a permanent Precinct Convention chair and secretary. Remind the secretary that they must print clearly and firmly on the Precinct Convention Minutes because it is a carbon copy form.

Step 7: Next, you will elect delegates and alternates to the County/SD Convention. In your packet, you should find the number of delegates allocated to your precinct. If there are more people present than that number, you must conduct an election. (As a reminder, there are no secret ballots in the Democratic Primary). As part of conducting the precinct convention, you will also need to elect a delegation chair to the County Convention. **Note: In presidential election years, elect the Delegates and Alternates by following the instructions on the “EZ Math” form to: a) form your presidential caucus by meeting the “threshold”; and b) determine the number of delegates and alternates allocated to each presidential preference (or uncommitted status).**

Step 8: If you have any delegate or alternate seats remaining unfilled at the end of the convention, you can call through the voter roll and ask individuals who voted in the Democratic Primary to be delegates or alternates to the County Convention. However, all delegates and alternates must be duly-elected the evening of the Precinct Convention – the Convention Chair cannot take home the convention materials to fill in any remaining seats. **Note:** If there are any remaining seats, those individuals chosen to fill the vacancies must still preserve the allocation or “split” between the candidates. For example, if Candidate A received 60% of the sign-ins and Candidate B received 40% of the sign-ins, those called to fill in those vacancies must reflect the same 60/40 split).

Step 9: Ask for any resolutions to be read. Read them, discuss them, and approve or discard them. After all resolutions have been dealt with, adjourn your convention.

AFTER THE CONVENTION:

You have a very important responsibility! As you should have noticed, the Precinct Convention Minutes and the Precinct Convention Sign-in Sheet are carbon copy documents. There should be a white (first page), gold, pink, and blue copy of each form. The blue copies are for you to keep. There are four things you must do:

1. Call in the results of your precinct convention into the toll free results hotline number located on the “Results Hotline” flyer. (The Results Hotline toll-free number is **1-800-336-3248**). Each precinct will have a unique access code to identify their precinct. The system is an automated system – simply follow the prompts and punch in the information the system asks you to input (see flyer for the process).
2. You must turn in the packet by **Thursday of that week to the local County Democratic Party (via mail or delivery)**. For people who were elected to be a delegate or alternate, but were not present, you must put a **double asterisk (**)** next to their names on the Precinct Convention Sign-in Sheet.
3. Return the gold and pink copies **and** the voter roll to your County Democratic Party by **Thursday of that week (March 7th)**.
4. Mail the white copies to the State Democratic Party by **March 5th**.

-- SAMPLE CONVENTION SCRIPT --

The following is a script showing how the conventions should work. For this example, there are **10** people (Kevin, Courtney, Bobby, Martha, Russell, Kristen, Nick, Madaline, Dane, and Sam), all qualified to participate in the precinct convention and it is now 7:15 p.m. and Courtney is the current precinct chair, so she will call the meeting to order. This is a dialogue to help you anticipate what might go on at a Precinct Convention. This is only a scenario.

Courtney: I would like to call this meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. I have asked Russell to be the temporary secretary. If everyone can sign in quickly so we can move on to the first order of business, which is to elect a permanent chair and secretary of this Precinct Convention. (Everyone has signed in). There are 10 people certified that they voted in the Democratic primary, so this is the roll. We will now accept nominations for a permanent chair of the convention.

Kevin: I nominate Sam for permanent chair. **Bobby:** I second that nomination.

Courtney: Just to inform the group, there is no need for a second on a nomination. Sam, do you accept the nomination?

Sam: Yes.

Russell: I nominate Kristen for permanent chair.

Courtney: Kristen, do you accept the nomination? **Kristen:** Yes.

Courtney: If there are no other nominations, then I will call for a vote. But first, without objections, let's give the candidates two minutes to say why they should be elected permanent chair. ****Candidates talk**** Per State Democratic Party Rules, there are no secret votes, so please raise your hands for the candidate you favor. All those in favor of Sam, raise your hand. ****Courtney, Kevin, Bobby, Martha, Nick, and Sam raise their hands**** All those in favor of Kristen, raise your hand. ****Madeline, Dane, Kristen, and Russell raise their hands**** Sam wins and is the permanent chair. We will now take nominations for permanent secretary. Are there any nominations?

Bobby: I nominate to keep Russell.

Courtney: Are there any other nominations?... Are there any other nominations?... Are there any other nominations?... Hearing none, all in favor of keeping Russell as permanent secretary raise your hands. ****All raise their hands**** I will now give Sam the floor to conduct the rest of the convention....

For Precinct Conventions held in Presidential Years:

Sam (Convention Chair): ...Thank you, Courtney. We will now elect delegates and alternates to the county convention. According to the County Democratic Party, we have 5 delegate and 5 alternate slots to the county convention. When you entered the precinct convention, you were to state your presidential preference on the sign-in sheet. Has everyone done so? If not, I will give you a few minutes to do so. If you leave your presidential preference blank, I will consider you as an "uncommitted" delegate.

(****A few minutes pass. Nick and Kevin return to the sign-in sheet to fill in their preference. Sam counts how many persons are currently in each caucus****)

After adding up, there are **6** people (Kevin, Courtney, Bobby, Martha, Russell, Kristen) who are committed to Mr. Green for president; there are **3** (Nick, Madeline and Sam) who support Mrs. Smith for president; and **1** (Dane) who is uncommitted. After using my E-Z Math Chart provided by the Texas Democratic Party (**see below**), at least **2** people are needed to form a caucus, or "meet the threshold." As it stands now, according to the EZ Math Chart, the Green caucus will have **3** delegates and **3** alternates to the convention; the Smith caucus will have **1** delegate and **1** alternate to the convention; and those who are uncommitted do not have a delegate allocated to them because the threshold was not met in order to form a caucus. Dane, since you are uncommitted, you may join a candidate caucus of your second choice to properly allocate the last delegate.

****Dane joins the Smith Caucus****

Now that the Smith caucus has **4** members, I recalculated the Smith figures, and according to the EZ Math Chart, the Smith caucus is now entitled **2** delegates and **2** alternates to the county convention. At this time, we will break up and each caucus will elect their delegates (Review the "Caucus Delegate Selection" portion of this handout).

-- EZ MATH CHART --

First, determine which groups of supporters are eligible to caucus:

- 10 Number of people attending the Precinct Convention; **Divided by**
- 5 Number of delegates to the County/SD Convention to which the precinct is entitled; **Equals**
- 2 Number needed to form a caucus - aka the "threshold."
(Always round the threshold result **UP**, e.g. 5.1 = 6)

Second, determine how many delegates each eligible caucus gets:

Green Caucus:

- 6 Number of people in the Green caucus; **Divided by**
 - 10 Number of people at your Precinct Convention; **Equals**
 - 60% Percent of Convention **Multiplied by**
 - 5 Number of **delegates** to which your precinct is entitled; **Equals**
 - 3 **Unrounded** number of delegates to which the caucus is entitled. (In this example, it's a whole number; if the answer is not a whole number, we need to round this figure down)
- 3 Next, round the number **DOWN** to the next whole number to determine the number of delegates to which the caucus is entitled (**e.g., 3.6 = 3**). Green caucus is entitled to 3 delegates (and an equal number of alternates).

Smith Caucus (BEFORE Dane joins)

- 3 Number of people in the Smith caucus; **Divided by**
 - 10 Number of people at your Precinct Convention; **Equals**
 - 30% Percent of Convention **Multiplied by**
 - 5 Number of **delegates** to which your precinct is entitled; **Equals**
 - 1.5 **Unrounded** number of delegates to which the caucus is entitled.
- 1 Next, round the number **DOWN** to the next whole number to determine the number of delegates to which the caucus is entitled (**e.g., 3.6 = 3**) At this point, the Smith caucus is entitled to 1 delegate (and an equal number of alternates).

Smith Caucus (AFTER Dane joins)

- 4 Number of people in the Smith caucus; **Divided by**
 - 10 Number of people at your Precinct Convention; **Equals**
 - 40% Percent of Convention **Multiplied by**
 - 5 Number of **delegates** to which your precinct is entitled; **Equals**
 - 2 **Unrounded** number of delegates to which the caucus is entitled. (In this example, it's a whole number; if the answer is not a whole number, we need to round this figure down)
- 2 Next, round the number **DOWN** to the next whole number to determine the number of delegates to which the caucus is entitled (**e.g., 3.6 = 3**) With Dane having joined the Smith Caucus, the Smith Caucus is now entitled to 2 delegates (and an equal number of alternates).

-- CAUCUS DELEGATE SELECTION --

Green Caucus

- The Green caucus chooses Kristen as their leader and they are allocated **3** delegates and **3** alternates.

Kristen: Since we have three delegate and three alternate slots to fill, we will take nominations and then vote. At the precinct level, each member of the caucus will cast votes equal to the number of delegates our caucus is entitled to. In our caucus, then, each member gets to cast **3** votes. The top vote-getters will be our delegates and the next highest will be the alternates. Are there any nominations?

Kevin: I nominate Russell. **Russell:** I nominate Kevin. **Bobby:** I nominate myself. **Kristen:** Since I cannot go to the convention due to a prior obligation, I nominate Courtney. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, we must hold an election to choose our delegates and alternates.

****Green Caucus Members vote as follows:****

Kristen casts 2 votes for Courtney and 1 vote for Kevin
Courtney casts 3 votes for Courtney
Bobby casts 3 votes for Bobby
Martha casts 1 vote for Russell, 1 vote for Kevin, and 1 vote for Courtney
Russell casts 3 votes for Russell
Kevin casts 3 votes for Kevin

Totals:

- Courtney gets 6 votes;
- Bobby gets 3 votes;
- Russell gets 4 votes; and
- Kevin gets 5 votes

Therefore, the following members of the Green caucus are Delegates:

Courtney – with 6 votes
Kevin – with 5 votes
Russell – with 4 votes

Bobby is an Alternate with 3 votes

Note: There are still two alternate slots remaining for the Green caucus which can be filled. You can locate persons to fill the slots by doing the following:

If you know of someone who supports your candidate who would like to be a delegate but who could not attend the precinct convention, you may elect them without them being present (they will just need to be nominated and elected at the end of the Precinct Convention before the convention adjourns). You can also work with the other members of the precinct convention to call through the voter roll to find individuals who voted in the Primary who are willing to be delegates and alternates.

Note: When electing additional delegates and alternates to fill any vacant seats, **you must preserve the allocation/split established during the convention** – e.g. if candidate A received 60% of the sign-ins and candidate B received 40% of the sign-ins, the vacant seats must be filled with persons whose preferences reflect that same 60/40 split.

Important: Individuals elected as delegates or alternates to the County/Senatorial District Convention who did not attend the precinct convention are to be signed in on the sign-in sheet (aka Exhibit A) and **marked with a double asterisk (**)**.

Smith Caucus: Same procedures as the Green Caucus, but only two are nominated to be delegates – Sam and Madeline. Nick and Dane are nominated to be Alternates. As such, no election need be held.

****The caucuses complete their delegate/alternate selections and come back together to finish the business of the convention****

Sam (Convention Chair): The Green Caucus has chosen their delegates and the Smith Caucus has chosen theirs as well. Is there a motion to ratify the following delegates and alternates who were elected? (Kristen motions, Dane seconds the motion, all say "AYE". Next, we need to nominate a delegation chair to the convention.

Nick: I nominate Courtney as our delegation chair.

Sam: Are there any nominations, any nominations, any nominations? Hearing none, Courtney you are the delegation chair. The next order of business is to discuss resolutions. Does anyone have a resolution to present?

Kristen: I have a resolution to read.

Sam: Thanks, Kristen. Please read your resolution.

Kristen: This is a resolution on school finance. Whereas... ****reads resolution**** Therefore, be it resolved that school funding should be equalized.

Sam: Is there a motion to approve this resolution?

Nick: I move to approve this resolution. **Dane:** I second.

Sam: Is there any discussion?

Kevin: I move to amend the resolution by adding the words "with all deliberate speed" to the end of the resolution.

Bobby: I second that amendment.

Sam: Is there any discussion on the proposed amendment? Hearing none, all in favor of amending the resolution, say aye. ****some say aye**** All opposed? ****most say nay**** In the opinion of the Chair, the nays have it and the amendment to the resolution fails.

Sam: Is there any other discussion on the resolution itself? Okay, hearing none, all in favor of Kristen's resolution, say aye. ****all say aye**** All opposed? The resolution passes. Are there any other resolutions? ****Silence**** Hearing none, is there a motion to adjourn this convention?

Madeline: I move to adjourn this convention. **Courtney:** I second.

Sam: All in favor say aye. ****All say aye**** Any opposed? Okay - well thank you, and this convention is adjourned.

-- HOSTING YOUR OWN PRECINCT CONVENTION WORKSHOP -- **SAMPLE AGENDA**

Overview of the Convention System

1. Why we have it
2. What is done
3. What's the difference

Day of Convention

1. Make sure the "Precinct Convention Here Tonight at 7:15 p.m." sign is up!
2. Call a group of people – friends, family, neighbors
3. Put a sign outside too

Your Packet

1. At 7 p.m., check in with the election judge to see if the precinct chair has picked up the packet. If there is no precinct chair, let the judge know that you will be picking up the precinct convention packet. Then, at 7:10 – 7:15 p.m., get the packet if it has not been picked up by the precinct chair. You should get a large envelope with the convention materials. Additionally, you should receive a copy of the election roll from the election judge once everyone in line to vote before 7 p.m. has had the opportunity to vote.

2. In the packet, you will have the following items:
 - a. A letter from the State Chair/ EZ Math Form (used only in presidential election years)
 - b. Precinct Convention Democratic Minutes Form – carbon copy set
 - c. Precinct Convention Sign-in Sheet (aka “Exhibit A”) – carbon copy set
 - d. Texas Democratic Party Rules – most current version
 - e. Return Envelope
 - f. Contribution Envelope
 - g. Precinct 101/Hotline Flyer
 - h. “Urgent” Memo
 - i. Results Hotline Flyer

How to Start – Generally

1. At 7:00 – 7:10 p.m., ask people if they are attending the Democratic Precinct Convention. Try to get everyone moved towards the convention location.
2. At 7:15 p.m. (or when the last person in line has voted, whichever occurs later), call the convention to order
3. Have convention attendees fill out Exhibit A (sign in sheet) after the convention has been called to order. **As convention attendees sign in, make sure you check the voter roll to confirm that all the attendees voted in the Democratic primary!**
4. Elect a permanent chair and permanent secretary
5. Elect your convention delegates
 - a. What if you don’t fill up all the slots your precinct is allocated?
 - a. Call friends and family who reside in the precinct and who voted in the Democratic Primary and see if they want to be delegates or alternates; call through the voter roll and try to find names of individuals willing to serve as delegates or alternates. Be sure all delegates and alternates are duly-elected the evening of the convention. The paperwork cannot be taken home and filled in with delegates and alternates after the fact.
6. Approve resolutions
7. Close/Adjourn

Going Through Specifics

1. Conducting your convention in presidential and non-presidential election years – what are the differences?
 - a. Caucuses
2. Resolutions
 - a. Dissecting a Resolution: What it is – and what it is not
 - b. Key components of an effective Resolution
3. What happens after the Precinct Convention? (i.e. County/SD and State Conventions)

Practice

First Practice:

- John Rawls, Jacob Smith, Ramon Ramirez, and Sheila Johnson come into the room where the precinct convention is being held after the caucus percentages are announced and accepted by the convention participants – they want to participate – how to handle?
- Practice filling out the delegate form with those who are eligible to participate.

Writing a Resolution:

- Have workshop attendees write a resolution on anything.

Complete a Mock Precinct Convention

- Have everyone fill in the Precinct Convention Minutes sheet
 - Make copies of the 1st page and distribute for your practice