

How Democratic Caucuses & the State Convention Work

A quick guide for Democratic Town, Ward, and City Committees

What Is a Democratic Caucus?

A caucus is a local meeting where Democrats elect delegates and alternates to represent their community at the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic State Convention where delegates nominate candidates and vote on endorsements. Caucuses keep the process grassroots, transparent and accessible.

Caucuses take place in any town or city/ward that has a Democratic Committee- or where a caucus has been duly called by an alternate method. Anyone may attend a caucus, but only registered and pre-registered Democrats in that town or ward may vote and run as delegates or alternates. Attendees may register or pre-register as a Democrat at the caucus.

How Delegate Selection Works in 2026

- Each town, city and ward is assigned a specific number of delegates and alternates. The State Party Allocates a certain amount of delegates and alternates based on democratic registration and performance in the most recent gubernatorial and presidential elections.,
- Chairs (at the time of the convention) serve as ex-officio delegates and do not count toward the allocated number.
- Delegates and alternates are elected according to the 2026 Method of Selecting Delegates. Ward and Town Committee Chairs shall retain their ex-officio status only if they have called a Caucus, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 4 and complied with the filing requirements outlined in Section 29.



See the 2026 Method of Selecting Delegates here



2026 Delegate Allocations

What Happens at the Caucus?

- Check-in: Confirm Democratic registration or pre-registration.
- Call to order: The Chair will review caucus rules and the 2026 selection method.
- Nominations & statements: Interested Democrats may introduce themselves, and be nominated as a delegate or alternate.
- Election: Delegates and alternates are elected up to the community's allocation.
- Certification: After the caucus, delegate and alternate information is submitted by the Chair to MassDems by the deadline.

What Is the 2026 Democratic State Convention?

The 2026 State Convention is a nominating convention, where delegates will gather to vote on Democratic candidates for statewide office- and determine which candidates qualify for the September 2026 primary ballot.

Offices Up for Nomination in 2026

United States Senate (Seat currently held by Senator Ed Markey)

Governor

Lieutenant Governor

Attorney General

Secretary of the Commonwealth

State Treasurer

State Auditor

How the Convention Works

- Certified delegates and alternates receive their credentials either by mail or day-of at check in.
- Candidates give speeches and address the delegation.
- Delegates choose candidates to vote for and votes are recorded.

Ballot Access Rule

- To appear on the September 2026 Democratic primary ballot, a candidate must earn at least 15% of the delegate vote at the Convention.
- A candidate earning a majority receives the Party's endorsement.

Interested in getting involved with your local democratic committee? Find your chair here and reach out!



Caucus Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to commit to supporting a particular candidate at the caucus?

No.

Caucus votes do not bind delegates and you don't have to declare support for any candidate. Delegates are free to change their minds at any time.

Can I run in support of one candidate but stay neutral in other races?

Yes.

You can support a candidate in one race and remain neutral- or support someone different- in another. For example, someone on a gubernatorial campaign slate can support a different candidate for U.S. Senate or constitutional office.

Can I distribute a card with my name and the candidates I'm supporting?

Yes.

This is common practice and helpful for caucus participants. Your card can list your name, your contact information and the candidates you're supporting.

Convention Frequently Asked Questions

When is the Convention? How long will it last?

Based on timing from the 2018 convention (the most recent fully in-person two day convention):

- Friday: approximately 6:30 PM – 8:45 PM
- Saturday: approximately 7:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Delegates should plan to attend both days.

The 2026 Convention will be held at the DCU Center in Worcester on Friday, May 29th and Saturday, May 30th.

How does voting work?

Convention voting is conducted by roll call vote, with tellers collecting each delegation's results.

All voting for contested races happens on Saturday.

If a race is not contested, delegates take a voice vote instead of a ballot vote.



Convention Frequently Asked Questions, cont.

If one candidate gets majority support, can other candidates still get on the ballot?

Yes.

To “win” the Convention, a candidate needs 50% + 1 of the delegate vote.

If no candidate reaches that on the first ballot, the top two vote-getters move on to a second ballot.

BUT: Even if one candidate wins the Convention, other candidates can still appear on the Democratic primary ballot **as long as they reach the 15% threshold** on the first ballot.

Why does the Party endorsement matter?

The endorsement shows which candidate won majority support among Democratic delegates.

All candidates who get 15% or more votes at the convention will appear on the primary ballot along with the candidate who won the convention and received the endorsement.

To appear on the September 2026 primary ballot, candidates must:

- Collect signatures:
 - 10,000 certified signatures for U.S. Senate, Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General
 - 5,000 certified signatures for Treasurer, Auditor, Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Receive at least 15% of the delegate vote at the State Convention.

What Does It Cost to Attend the Convention?

Delegates are responsible for a convention fee of \$85.

A reduced fee of \$65 is available for seniors, students, and people with disabilities.

The Massachusetts Democratic Party also offers partial and full fee waivers for delegates for whom the cost would impose a financial hardship. No one is turned away due to inability to pay, and delegates are encouraged to apply for a waiver if the fee would be a barrier to participation.

