

Nomination Methods Explained

The following is a paraphrased explanation of the 4 different types of nomination methods outlined in the Republican Party of Virginia Party Plan. This explanation should NOT be used in lieu of the official language outlined in the Republican Party of Virginia Party Plan. Any subjective wording below shall be strictly construed as general analysis and should not be considered a substitute of the current Party Plan of the Republican Party of Virginia. For more information, please download the most up-to-date copy of RPV's Party Plan at www.virginia.gov.

Mass Meeting – as defined in the Party Plan: “is as defined in *Robert's Rules of Order* subject to the provisions of the State Party Plan.”

General Characteristics (may vary based on language in the call and rules approved):

1. The unit committee votes on and publishes a call selecting a specific time, location, date and candidate filing requirements.
2. Any qualified* registered voters may register and attend the Mass Meeting
 - a. *Refer to Article I, Section A. Qualifications in the Party Plan
3. The participant check-in by showing their ID and will have their name and address matched to the most-up-to-date voter registration file provided by the local registrar office.
4. A chairman* is elected to run the Mass Meeting
 - a. *Chairman must be a registered voter in that magisterial district. Refer to Article VI, Section D, 2,b. in the Party Plan states
5. A secretary is also elected to document the Mass Meeting
6. Participants in a Mass Meeting can challenge other participants of the Mass Meetings by making motions to amend the credentials report.
7. Once the credentials report is adopted, speeches start.
 - a. Some Mass Meetings invite special guests to speak while those working the mass meeting attend to administrative items.
 - b. Other Mass Meetings go straight to the candidates giving their speeches
8. Voting takes place after each candidate speaks
 - a. Votes are kept confidential
 - b. Each candidate has representatives monitoring the ballot count for transparency accuracy.
9. Voting results are announced by the chair of the Mass Meeting.
 - a. Depending on the rules set forth, multiple rounds of voting may ensue until the criteria for a winner is met. (I.E. If the rules require a candidate to receive a majority to become the nominee, there may be multiple rounds of voting in a race with 3 or more candidates vying for the nomination)

Commonly perceived positives of a Mass Meeting:

1. Parties responsible for a mass meeting can require participants to express in writing that he/she is in accord with the principles of the Republican Party and intends, at the time of the writing, to support the nominees of the Republican Party in the future.
2. Parties responsible for approval the “call” and/or the “rules” for a Mass Meeting can adopt language that requires the winning nominee to have a majority.
3. Costs are incurred by the party organizing the Mass Meeting, not taxpayers
4. Opportunity for collecting data and growing lists

Commonly perceived negatives of a Mass Meeting

1. Limited voter participation (no absentee ballot option).
2. Floor fights over which participants to seat and the chair of the meeting can get heated.
3. *Robert's Rules of Order* can be confusing to first time participants
4. Prep work prior to the Mass Meeting can be time consuming
5. Can be time consuming for the participant.
6. Candidates often use a “us against the world mentality” that often results in infighting and accusations of “rigged” meetings.
7. Finding qualified candidates to be chairman in lieu of party chair when required by the Party Plan.

Party Canvass – as defined in the Party Plan: "Party Canvass" is a method of electing chairmen and members of Official Committees, delegates to Conventions, or Party nominees which shall include pre-filing candidacies, then secret balloting by Party members at convenient polling places and hours after proper notice. Any Party Canvass that includes more than one (1) Unit shall have no less than one (1) polling place in each Unit unless this requirement is waived by a unanimous vote of all of the voting members of the Committee.”

General Characteristics (may vary based on language in the call and rules approved):

1. Party Canvasses, commonly referred to as “Firehouse Primaries” are a party-controlled primary.
 - a. Typically, there’s one or two voting locations within a contest.
 - b. Electoral Board Officials are typically replaced with volunteers of the committee and representatives of the candidates running.
2. Any qualified* registered voters may participate in a Party Canvass
 - a. *Refer to Article I, Section A. Qualifications in the Party Plan
3. A participant shows up and checks in to vote.
 - a. What happens next depends on the rules voted on and approved by the committee responsible for organizing the Party Canvass

1. Parties responsible for a Convention can require participants to express in writing that he/she is in accord with the principles of the Republican Party and intends, at the time of the writing, to support the nominees of the Republican Party in the future.
2. Parties responsible for approval the “call” and/or the “rules” for a Convention can adopt language that requires the winning nominee to have a majority.
3. Costs are incurred by the party organizing the Convention, not taxpayers
4. Opportunity for collecting data and growing lists
5. Potential Delegates are selected before the day of the Convention. This makes check-in and registration faster.

Commonly perceived negatives of a Mass Meeting

1. Limited voter participation (no absentee ballot option).
2. Floor fights over seating delegates opens the door for slating. (I.E. 7th District Chairman race between Cobb and Gruber in 2013)
3. *Robert’s Rules of Order* can be confusing to first time participants
4. Prep work prior to the Convention can be time consuming
5. Can be time consuming for the participant.
6. Candidates often use a “us against the world mentality” that often results in infighting and accusations of “rigged” meetings.

Primary – as defined in the Party Plan: ""Primary" is as defined in and subject to the Election Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, except to the extent that any provisions of such laws conflict with this Plan, infringe the right to freedom of association, or are otherwise invalid.”

Characteristics of a Primary:

1. Most similar to voting in a General Election.
2. Participant goes to their usual voting location and request a Republican ballot to participate.
3. Most general election rules apply.
4. Primary is controlled by the State Board of Elections and the Local Registrars’ Office.

Commonly perceived positives of a Primary:

1. Greater participation (absentee ballot allowed)
2. More participation means more voters are marked as “Republican Primary” voters*
 - a. *Since VA doesn’t have party registration, this is often how databases like i360, Advantage, rVotes, etc. mark a voter as a “Republican or not.”
3. Primaries are run by the State Board of Elections and Local Registrar’s office, so there is little to no prep work required.

Commonly perceived negatives of a Primary:

1. No way to limit potential Democrat cross-over votes in Republican primary as party pledges are not allowed in a primary.
2. Funded by taxpayers.
3. While the number of voters being marked as voting in a Republican primary increases on the voter rolls, there are fewer opportunities to collect more data such as emails, phone numbers, etc.

Specifics of nomination contests that will need to be decided and voted on:

1. Party Pledge – in Mass Meetings, Conventions, and Party Canvasses, the deciding committee can require participants to express in writing that he/she is in accord with the principles of the Republican Party and intends, at the time of the writing, to support the nominees of the Republican Party in the future. This can also be used to weed out candidates and participants who violated the party pledge in previous elections.
2. “None of the above option” – in Mass Meetings, Conventions, and Party Canvasses, the deciding committee can draft the call *without* the following sentence: **“If only one candidate properly files, then said candidate shall be declared the Republican nominee and no canvass will be held.”** This allows participants in a Mass Meeting or Convention to not nominate a candidate. In a Party Canvass, the option “No Candidate” or a variation of such phrase, will be placed on the ballot.
3. Run-off options if a candidate receives less than 50% of the vote in a Party Canvass.
4. Voting to NOT pay for an advertisement in the Free Lance-Star. The Party Plan used to require all committees to advertise the nomination method and details in their local newspaper. Now, it requires 2/3 of the committee to vote in favor of waiving this requirement.
5. Number of Mass Meetings/Conventions: Should there be one large Convention/Mass Meeting or multiple ones for each Magisterial District and one for the countywide offices? Should we require participants to sit through at least 3 votes that they may not be interested in?