

Super Tuesday



Super Tuesday is March 3, when [fourteen states](#) and American Samoa will hold caucuses or primaries to help determine presidential candidates for the November election. This is the single greatest day of primary voting, with the greatest number of delegates hanging in the balance (see the Primaries & Caucuses brief for a description of how delegates are awarded). A candidate can make great progress toward the presidential nomination on this day. Alternatively, a candidate who performs poorly in the geographically diverse states voting on Super Tuesday shows little indication that he or she could win national support in November. Up for grabs on Super Tuesday are about one third of all pledged delegates needed to win a party's nomination. While the Democratic Party has yet to identify its presidential candidate, President Trump is the expected Republican candidate for the 2020 election. He is eligible to be president for one more four-year term.

Unlike in 2016 when California held its primary in June, this time Californians will have earlier input on shaping the candidate field when they vote in the state's March primary. As the most populous state in the nation, California has the most delegates to award (494). The state with the next highest number of delegates to pledge is Texas, with 261. The Democratic Party's candidate will need to win 1,991 pledged delegates this year. If no Democratic candidate wins that amount by the time of the

Democratic National Convention in July (which is possible given the large number of candidates still in the race) there will be a second vote by delegates at the convention. 771 superdelegates—made up of leaders in the Democratic Party—will weigh in on the nomination process at that point. If it goes to a second vote at the convention there will be another twist: pledged delegates can change their vote to whichever candidate they would like to see win. The Democratic Party uses a proportional allocation system; that is, if a Democratic candidate wins 1/3 of the vote in a state, he or she will get 1/3 of that state's Democratic delegates (as long as that candidate wins at least 15% of the state's vote).

With the final primaries taking place in June, the race for the presidential nomination is not over after Super Tuesday. However, the momentum gained or lost on this day is significant. Those candidates winning few votes may very well choose to withdraw from the election after Super Tuesday, or after March 17 when additional states weigh in and over 60% of total Democratic pledged delegates will be allocated. Come mid-July, the Democratic Party will formally nominate its presidential candidate in its national convention in Milwaukee. Between July and November, the news will center around which party – the Republicans or the Democrats – is best situated to secure a victory on November 3.



Did you know?

Though state primaries have been in existence since the early twentieth century, it wasn't until the 1970s that this democratic exercise has had so much influence. Since then, it has been the citizens voting in primaries and caucuses (not the Republican and Democratic Party leaders) who dominate the nominating process for presidential candidates.

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