

Oct. 30, 2025

Shifting the Elections Calendar

Lawmakers delay spring elections, awaiting high court's ruling on congressional map

In a quick special session that lasted only a week, Louisiana lawmakers pushed the spring 2026 election dates back a month amid hopes the delay could buy them enough time to redraw state congressional districts if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the current map.

Legislators passed two bills during the session, which ended Wednesday. One bill will move the April 18 closed party primary election to May 16 and the party primary runoff election from May 30 to June 27. The other bill will shift the five constitutional amendments scheduled for the April election to the May date as well.

Gov. Jeff Landry, who called the special session, is expected to speedily sign both measures into law.

	Original Date	New Date
Party Primary	April 18	May 16
Party Primary Runoff	May 30	June 27
Candidate Qualifying Opens	Jan. 14	Feb. 11

All About Redistricting

The delayed elections come as the governor and lawmakers are awaiting a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court about the legality of Louisiana's six-district U.S. House map, which includes four seats held by Republicans and two majority-Black seats held by Democrats.

The pair of bills in the special session passed largely along party lines, with Republicans in support and most Democrats opposed.

Republicans said pushing back the elections will give the Legislature more time to respond to a Supreme Court ruling, while Democrats said their GOP colleagues are hoping the congressional districts will be thrown out so they can draw a map with only one or possibly no Black majority districts.

States must redesign their political maps every decade with the release of new U.S. Census data to account for population changes. Louisiana lawmakers debated the congressional district lines for the state's six seats across four legislative sessions from 2022 through 2024 to land on the current map in dispute at the Supreme Court.

The majority-Republican Legislature initially sought to maintain the status quo, keeping the broad outlines of districts that protected incumbents already in office and maintaining one majority-Black congressional district.

Civil rights groups successfully challenged that congressional district map as a violation of the federal Voting Rights Act. A federal judge ordered lawmakers to draw a new map that contained two majority-Black congressional districts, and Landry called lawmakers into a special session last year that created the current map.

That map was challenged as too heavily using race to draw districts, and the Supreme Court is considering that lawsuit.

Changing the election dates gives the Louisiana Legislature more time to potentially hold a special session and redesign the congressional map if the district configuration is voided by the high court.

But it's unclear when the Supreme Court will issue a decision in a term that runs until June and whether its ruling will be an up or down decision on the current map or something more complex. In other words, the shift in the election calendar still may not provide enough time to respond to a court ruling before the election cycle gets underway.

Party Primary Complication

The switch to closed party primaries created the time crunch at issue.

In the same January 2024 special session in which they drew the current U.S. House districts, lawmakers agreed to Landry's effort to create a closed party primary system in Louisiana.

Most elections in the state will continue to run under the open primary system, where candidates regardless of party affiliation compete in a single election against each other. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, the top two vote-getters in an open primary advance to a runoff to determine the winner for an elected seat.

Starting next year, however, elections for Congress, the Louisiana Supreme Court, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Public Service Commission will run through a closed party primary system.

Under this election change, candidates registered as Republican or Democrat will run in that party's primary. If no candidate tops 50% of the vote in the first primary election, the top two vote-getters will face each other in a runoff to determine who advances to the November general election as the party nominee.

Candidates who aren't registered Republican or Democrat will bypass the primaries and go straight to the general election to compete against the party nominees. But they have a more limited path to get on the ballot, through a nominating petition.

The addition of closed party primaries to the election cycle required more election dates – held earlier in the year, creating a tighter timeline for awaiting a Supreme Court ruling. Those are the dates that lawmakers pushed back in the special session.