



May 1, 2024

*Sent via email*

President Dennis J. Shields  
801 Harding Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70807

Re: Planning for Future Election Dates

Dear President Shields:

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) and the Power Coalition for Equity Justice (Power Coalition), and The Team write to encourage Southern University and A&M College (Southern) to consider critical election-related dates in planning for the institution's academic, alumni, and athletic calendars. Amid an important election year for the state and nation, it is incumbent upon Louisiana universities to employ calendaring measures that would allow students, faculty, and staff to avoid making costly trade-offs between engaging in the election process or participating in coveted school events. For example, in 2023, several Louisiana-based colleges and universities hosted major academic, alumni, or athletic events during critical election periods, including early voting and Election Day.<sup>1</sup> By anticipating important election dates, the institution may deploy scheduling and awareness strategies to boost the campus's engagement with the 2024 election and future cycles.

An institution's calendar that reflects key election dates will likely raise awareness among institutional leadership, faculty, and staff. In 2023, Southern's homecoming football

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<sup>1</sup> For example, both Southern University and Grambling State University hosted their homecoming weekends on October 14, 2024, the date of the statewide Gubernatorial Primary Elections, while many other schools, including LSU, hosted home football games. *See, e.g.*, La. Sec. of State, Twitter (Sep. 29, 2013), [https://twitter.com/Louisiana\\_sos/status/1707806210026606915/photo/1](https://twitter.com/Louisiana_sos/status/1707806210026606915/photo/1).

game against the Lincoln University Oaklanders conflicted with the state's Primary Election on October 14. Over twenty-one thousand people attended the game.<sup>2</sup>

Looking ahead to 2024, event scheduling premised upon the institution's calendar can avoid conflicting with the early voting period leading into the November 5<sup>th</sup> Open Primary.<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, should a conflict stand, institutional leadership, faculty, and staff could promote and encourage students to take a course of action to engage in the political process. For instance, in 2022, the NBA announced they would not have games on Election Day.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, all games on the night before Election Day encouraged voting and civic participation, including having voter registration tables at the games.

Southern can be proactive by encouraging students to vote early in person or absentee-by-mail (if they qualify),<sup>5</sup> imploring students to develop a voting plan, advising students to check their voter registration status, and advertising important election dates via available print and digital media. The University could also place voter registration tables at any events scheduled on important election dates, including sporting events. Taking these affirmative steps to avoid or mitigate scheduling conflicts and encourage participation in the electoral process is essential.

Election calendars for the next several years are attached herein for your consideration. It is worth noting that additional election dates will likely be added in 2026 given the state's change from an open primary system to a closed primary system for select offices.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it will be important to refer back to the Secretary of State's website for updates.<sup>7</sup>

Post-secondary institutions play a critical role in promoting and supporting the community's participation in the election process. As partners in nonpartisan political participation work, LDF, Power Coalition, and The Team remain prepared to offer any support in civic engagement programming or voter education during the 2024 and future

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<sup>2</sup> See *Southern 45-18 Lincoln (CA)*, (Oct. 14, 2023), [https://www.espn.com/college-football/game/\\_/gameId/401540170](https://www.espn.com/college-football/game/_/gameId/401540170).

<sup>3</sup> *Elections Calendar 2024*, Louisiana Secretary of State, <https://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVoting/PublishedDocuments/ElectionsCalendar2024.pdf> (last accessed June 2021).

<sup>4</sup> See *NBA Won't Have Games on Election Day in 2022*, NBA (Aug. 16, 2022), <https://www.nba.com/news/nba-wont-have-games-on-election-day-in-2022>.

<sup>5</sup> See La. Sec. of State, Vote Absentee, <https://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVoting/Vote/VoteByMail/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited Mar. 14, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> See H.B. 17, 1st Spec. Sess. (La. 2024) <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1341043>.

<sup>7</sup> See La. Sec. of State. Search Election Dates, <https://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVoting/GetElectionInformation/SearchElectionDates/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited Mar. 14, 2024).



### **Power Coalition for Equity and Justice**

The Power Coalition for Equity and Justice works to build voice and power in traditionally ignored communities. We are a coalition of groups from across Louisiana whose mission is to organize in impacted communities, educate and turn out voters, and fight for policies that create a more equitable and just system in Louisiana.

### **The Team**

The Team is a nonprofit organization that creates award-winning programming focused on integrating nonpartisan civic engagement and voter participation into college athletics. We offer pathways for every athlete, coach, and administrator to become more engaged citizens.

# 2024 ELECTIONS

Date of Election	March 23 <sup>^</sup>	April 27 <sup>^</sup>	November 5	December 7
Type of Election	Presidential Preference Primary/Municipal Primary	Municipal General	Open Primary/ Presidential/Congressional	Open General/ Congressional
Deadline: Specials	11/15/2023	n/a	6/19/2024	n/a
Deadline: Propositions	11/15/2023	3/4/2024	6/19/2024	10/14/2024
Qualifying Dates	12/13/2023 – 12/15/2023*	n/a	7/17/2024 - 7/19/2024	n/a
In Person/By Mail Registration Deadline	2/21/2024	3/27/2024	10/7/2024	11/6/2024
Geaux Vote Online Registration Deadline	3/2/2024	4/6/2024	10/15/2024	11/16/2024
Deadline to Request a Mail Ballot from Registrar (other than Military and Overseas)	3/19/2024	4/23/2024	11/1/2024	12/3/2024
Deadline for Registrar to Receive Voted Mail Ballot (other than Military and Overseas)	3/22/2024	4/26/2024	11/4/2024	12/6/2024
Early Voting Begins	3/9/2024	4/13/2024	10/18/2024**	11/22/2024***
Early Voting Ends	3/16/2024	4/20/2024	10/29/2024	11/30/2024

<sup>^</sup> Election dates advanced one week in accordance with R.S. 18:402(G)

\* Qualifying dates advanced one week in accordance with R.S. 18:467.1

\*\*Early voting extended due to Act 365 of the 2021 regular session.

\*\*\*Early voting advanced one day due to the state observed holiday for Thanksgiving and Acadian Day.

## PRESIDENTIAL QUALIFYING

**3/23/2024 Presidential Preference Primary:** Democratic/Republican presidential nominees - Qualifying period begins 12/13/2023, ends 12/15/2023.

### 11/5/2024 Presidential Election:

- **Recognized political party candidates** are certified to SOS by state central committee prior to 4:30 p.m. on 8/20/2024. If not timely certified by state central committee, then national chairman of Democratic/Republican Party certifies presidential candidates to SOS prior to 4:30 p.m. on 8/23/2024.
- **Other presidential candidates** - Qualifying period begins 7/16/2024, ends 4:30 p.m. 8/23/2024.

**DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE LEGISLATURE**

Revised 6/2021

## Appendix II

# 2026 ELECTIONS

(DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE LEGISLATURE)

<b>Date of Election</b>	<b>March 28</b>	<b>May 2</b>	<b>November 3</b>	<b>December 5</b>
<b>Type of Election</b>	Municipal Primary	Municipal General	Congressional Open Primary	Congressional General
<b>Deadline: Specials</b>	12/31/2025	n/a	6/17/2026	n/a
<b>Deadline: Propositions</b>	12/31/2025	3/9/2026	6/17/2026	10/12/2026
<b>Qualifying Dates</b>	1/28/2026 – 1/30/2026	n/a	7/15/2026 – 7/17/2026	n/a
<b>In Person/By Mail Registration Deadline</b>	2/25/2026	4/1/2026	10/5/2026	11/4/2026
<b>Geaux Vote Online Registration Deadline</b>	3/7/2026	4/11/2026	10/13/2026	11/14/2026
<b>Deadline to Request a Mail Ballot from Registrar</b> <small>(other than Military and Overseas)</small>	3/24/2026	4/28/2026	10/30/2026	12/1/2026
<b>Deadline for Registrar to Receive Voted Mail Ballot</b> <small>(other than Military and Overseas)</small>	3/27/2026	5/1/2026	11/2/2026	12/4/2026
<b>Early Voting Begins</b>	3/14/2026	4/18/2026	10/20/2026	11/20/2026*
<b>Early Voting Ends</b>	3/21/2026	4/25/2026	10/27/2026	11/28/2026

\* Early Voting advanced one day due to the state observed holiday for Thanksgiving and Acadian Day. (Act 83, 2016 R.S.)