

Options for Straight Ticket, Split Ticket and Mixed Ticket Voting

Michigan is one of a few states that allow voters to vote "straight ticket" in a general election, which means voters may fill in one oval or box next to a party name to cast a vote for every candidate of that political party. Michigan also allows for voters to select the straight party option but then cast votes for individual candidates of a different party ("split ticket"). Because voters have different ballot marking options, it is critical to provide appropriate and accurate ballot marking instructions with all absent voter ballots and on all ballot secrecy sleeves in the polling place. In the November Election, voters have the following options:

"Straight Ticket" Voting: Voters may vote in the straight party race and select the party of their choosing - this will award votes up to the maximum allowed (and maximum candidates available) for each partisan race for the voter's chosen party. The candidates receive "indirect votes" based on the voter's single straight-party ballot selection. For example: Casting a vote for the Ice Cream Party in the straight party race will indirectly cast a vote for all candidates running under that party to the maximum allowed for each race in which the party is participating. If there are any races in which the Ice Cream Party is not participating, no votes will be cast in that race. If the voter wishes to vote in any non-partisan races and proposals, the voter must make selections in these races separately.

"Split Ticket" Voting: Voters may vote in the straight party race and select the party of their choosing, but then vote directly in an individual race (or multiple individual races) by directly voting for a candidate from a different party, voting for a candidate with no party affiliation, or casting a write-in vote. As with straight ticket voting, voting in the straight party race will indirectly cast a vote for all candidates running under that party to the maximum allowed for each race in which the party is participating, except where the voter overrides an indirect vote by a casting direct vote for a candidate of a different party, a candidate with no party affiliation, or a write-in vote. For example: If a voter casts a straight party vote for the Ice Cream Party but directly casts a vote for one individual candidate of the Pie Party, the straight party vote will indirectly cast a vote for all candidates running under the Ice Cream Party to the maximum allowed for each race in which the Ice Cream Party is participating, except for the one race in which the voter cast a vote for the Pie Party candidate. If there are any races in which the Ice Cream Party is not participating, no votes will be cast in that race if no direct vote for another candidate is made. If the voter wishes to vote in any non-partisan races and proposals, the voter must make selections in these races separately.

"Mixed Ticket" Voting: Voters may decline to vote in the straight party race and directly select candidates of their choice from any party (or no party affiliation and write-ins) up to the maximum allowed for each race.

Other Notes: If a voter selects the "straight party" race but then votes for individual candidates of the same party, the vote for those individual candidates will still count, and will only count once. If a voter wishes to vote for a write-in candidate (whether or not they select the straight party option), the voter must fill out the oval for write-in candidate and write the name or it will be an invalid write-in and will not be counted.