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[**Questions about the Global Presidential Primary**](file:///C:\display\DSP2016\Questions+about+the+Global+Presidential+Primary)

* Created by [Will Bakker](file:///C:\display\~will), last modified on [06-Feb-2016](file:///C:\pages\diffpagesbyversion.action?pageId=11567341&selectedPageVersions=12&selectedPageVersions=13)

Your Questions Below!

Please add your comments in the comment box below.  If you do not have a personal wiki account, please add your name in the text of the message.

**Can changes be made to the Voting Center hours, dates, or locations after the December 31 deadline?**

**Answer**

Late changes present the GPP Team with a serious problem, because DA should distribute the final list of Voting Centers by January 11, when ballots for remote voting become available.

According to the DSP, any changes after December 31 would require the written agreement of the International Chair -- after a formal request from the Country Committee chair.

 If there is a change after the official list is published -- which is, again, expected to be *finished* by January 11 -- our DSP will require an expensive "effort at public notification" to correct the mistaken impression given by the initial list. The costs of that effort will be the Country Committee's responsibility. Still, once the list goes online, there will forever be an old and inaccurate version out there, seeding misinformation.

 It's not enough to say, "Our members will get plenty of notices about the new location," because this Voting Center must serve all Americans residing in a chapter's territory -- and also Americans living elsewhere who know that they will visit the area in March.

 The Dec 31 deadline exists for a reason. We should adopt a final list of Voting Centers early enough to give voters the information they need to decide whether to vote by mail. Voting by mail starts January 11. As it is, the GPP Team will need to scramble to assemble the final list of Voting Centers by that date.

**Can voters living abroad vote in both the GPP and their home state's Democratic primary?**

**Answer**

The GPP Team is eager to provide straightforward language to help you explain the situation to fellow Democrats living abroad. When we finished the “short version” last week, we decided to get that in your hands as early as possible. So here it is:

Many voters living abroad wonder how voting in the Global Presidential Primary affects voting in state primaries. As a Democrat living abroad, you may vote in only one primary ***for a Presidential candidate.*** In other words, you may vote ***for a Presidential candidate*** in EITHER the Global Presidential Primary, OR your home state’s primary (or caucus if you happen to be there).

When you vote in DA’s Global Presidential Primary, you may not vote ***for a Presidential candidate*** in your voting state’s primary. BUT you may still vote in your home state’s primary for US House and Senate and other down ballot races as determined by your local election official.

**How will DA's current members learn about voting by email, post, or fax?**

**Tentative Answer**

The first date that DA's current members will be able to request a remote ballot is January 11. (A "remote ballot" is a ballot returned by email, post, or fax – rather than a ballot voted in-person at a Voting Center.) By that time, every CC will have designated an individual to receive those requests by email (and by post). A global team of volunteers will also respond to requests emailed to a central email address and sent to a central postal address. The global and CC-level contacts will be published on DA's website along with an announcement that DA members who cannot come to a local Voting Center may vote by email, post, and fax.

The GPP Team continues to work on a clear and comprehensive guide for those volunteers. That guide will include explicit and detailed instructions to send to anyone who requests a ballot. (There may be separate instructions for current members and for those who need to sign up as a DA member first.)

From January through February, we expect that CC leaders at the country and chapter levels will include a note describing the Global Presidential Primary and the online availability of ballots with most regular announcements. The GPP Team will make a template available to ensure that those descriptions are clear and accurate.

The GPP Team will coordinate with the ExCom, the Comms Team, and others to build a communications campaign that is well-timed and well-crafted to maximize its visibility. CC leaders can expect to hear more about that campaign, including the task of reaching members without email addresses, in the next few weeks.

**Eligibility to vote in the GPP**

Who can vote in the Global Presidential Primary? Is there same-day registration?

**Answer**

All American citizens who will be 18 by the date of the general election (Nov 8, 2016), who live outside the United States and its territories, and who wish to participate as Democrats. In order to participate as a Democrat, one *must* be a member of Democrats Abroad. Qualified individuals may join DA on the day of the primary.

Our DSP mentions a deadline of January 31, 2016 that can be misleading. The DSP states that all members of Democrats Abroad as of January 31 are "presumed qualified to vote in the Global Primary unless proof can be established to the contrary." The intent of this statement is to set a high bar for disenfranchising these Americans living abroad.

This statement does *not* mean that individuals joining Democrats Abroad after January 31 are *not* qualified to vote. It simply means that they *may* be asked for evidence of their eligibility to vote. (Guidelines on when and how to ask for such evidence will be part of the Guide for Voting Center Managers.)

***Americans living abroad may join Democrats Abroad after January 31 and still cast a valid remote ballot by mail, fax, or email, up to the same deadlines that apply to everyone else.*** This is true for in-person voting at Voting Centers as well.

There are US citizens born overseas to American parents who are residents of one of the states that does not grant voting rights to residents' children born overseas. These US citizens cannot obtain a ballot to vote in the primary of their "home state." Democrats Abroad has no such restriction. In these cases, the Global Presidential Primary is these US citizens' only opportunity to help determine the Democratic nominee for President. Our Voting Rights group is always interested to learn more about such cases, so please suggest that US citizens in this situation (1) vote in the GPP, of course, and (2) contact [info@democratsabroad.org](mailto:info@democratsabroad.org) and ask for the Voting Rights group.

**Checking eligibility to vote at a Voting Center**

Does the Voting Center Manager need to check the passports of all new members of DA casting ballots at a Voting Center?

**Tentative Answer**

Each person voting must sign a statement on the ballot itself that certifies his or her eligibility to vote, which includes US citizenship and other qualifications including residence abroad and not voting for a Presidential candidate in any other primary. There is no duty of the Voting Center Manager to check passports or otherwise guarantee the eligibility of those who wish to become members of Democrats Abroad and vote on the same date.

According to our DSP, members of Democrats Abroad as of January 31, 2016, are presumed to be qualified to vote in the primary, in the absence of positive proof of disqualification. An observer may challenge a voter's status by processes outlined in the DSP, including "positive proof" as defined below:

Positive proof of this kind could include, but would not be limited to, documents that indicate that a person attempting to vote is not a U.S. citizen, is not a member of Democrats Abroad, is a member of a Country Committee of Democrats Abroad other than the one in which the voter is seeking to participate, or records indicating that the person attempting to vote, voted in another Country Committee, in another delegation’s delegate-selection process, or in the corresponding elections of another political party.

The GPP Team recognizes that non-citizens will attempt to participate -- almost always out of a combination of enthusiasm for American politics and misunderstanding our very real primary as a mere straw poll. Voting Center Managers will benefit from a set of clear and comprehensive guidelines that set out when asking for evidence of eligibility would be appropriate and what kind of evidence would be acceptable. Those guidelines will be distributed as part of the overall guide to running a Voting Center.

A key point is that our provisional ballot is intended to ensure that we *never* turn away an individual who might be eligible to vote in our primary. (Thanks to IVC Ken Sherman for stressing this crucial aspect of our primary.) Voting Center Managers will have a clear sequence of steps for using a provisional ballot in these circumstances.

**Use of a private home as a Voting Center**

How does the exemption for using a private home as a Voting Center work?

**Answer from Will Bakker**

The exemption (mentioned in Section III.B.3.d, on page 13 of the DSP) is due by December 31. There is no formal process at this time, so you can send an email message to the International Chair at [chair@democratsabroad.org](mailto:chair@democratsabroad.org) (and carbon-copy counsel@democratsabroad.org). Your request should be clear in all its details, including your name, your position (chapter chair or country committee chair), and the area served by the Voting Center. You should provide at the beginning of the request the specific address, building type, proprietor, and residents of the proposed site.

The explicit standard in the DSP is "good cause for the exemption." This is like saying, "I know it when I see it." Ultimately, each case is down to the judgment of the International Chair with the assistance of the International Counsel. If you're looking for certainty so that you can plan well in advance, submit your request early. The deadline is December 31, but there is no reason to wait until the last day or week if you are concerned whether you have "good cause." There's also no reason why you can't start a conversation before submitting the formal request.

The idea is that the private home must be as accessible as a good public site for a polling place and as neutral as a typical public site. So, it should be easily accessible to persons with physical disabilities, centrally located, and easy to enter without undue security barriers. You must be able to post large signs that make it easy for people to find, with adequate access to parking and/or public transportation.

The residence itself should not send any kind of political message. What we are doing at the Voting Centers is not an ordinary chapter event or even a special event. It involves the same concerns as running a real polling place in a primary in a US state.

Here in Luxembourg, I would never consider using an apartment that requires a buzz-in security door. I would not accept the offer to use the home of an ExCom member who is known to be a vocal supporter of one candidate or another, no matter how neutral or convenient the site. I would hesitate to use a home that was not on a major road directly served by local and regional buses. I would ensure that we could post large signs throughout the neighborhood without the neighbors or local authorities getting upset. I would prefer a location that encouraged people to mill around at the exterior entrance, sending the message that something big is going on. (All these things also make it easier for local media to cover the event.)

Your guiding principle in this situation -- whether you agree with it or not -- should be that the very fact that it is a private residence will be a hurdle for the participation of some Democrats. Make your choices with the idea that you're already behind. Write your request for an exemption by showing how you made up for that basic disadvantage and avoided the pitfalls.

**Country Committee Compliance**

Is there a relationship between a Country Committee's compliance with the DA Charter and its participation in the Global Presidential Primary?

**Answer**

The Country Committees that can participate in the Global Presidential Primary with Voting Centers are the CCs that are "in good standing" (which mostly means "in compliance with DA's Charter") as of December 31, 2015. Not coincidentally, that's the same deadline for most of the information that CC chairs need to provide about how they'll run the Global Presidential Primary. Country Committees need to **stay**in good standing to participate in the subsequent steps, such as the Regional Caucus and the Global Convention. There are several Charter-mandated deadlines between Dec 31, 2015 and the Global Convention, such as the membership verification process.

**32 Comments**

**Anonymous**

Would it be possible to have a list of all the deadlines that country committees need to meet in one place?

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Good idea, and the GPP team is working on it now. It will be available here as soon as it is finished.

*Please add your name to your comments in the future, so we can get back to you personally!*

**Anonymous**

How can I be sure that our chapter will get an exemption for the use of a private home?

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Please see the new answer above to the "Question on the use of a private home as a Voting Center".

**Anonymous**

How does CC compliance impact the GPP?

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Please see above, Question on Country Committee Compliance.

**Anonymous**

Is proof of citizenship necessary for an individual joining DA at a voting centre?

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

The short answer is "No" but it can be more complicated than that. Please see the answer above.

**Anonymous**

Who will notify DA's current members about the procedure for requesting a ballot?

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

The GPP Team will distribute clear and quotable instructions to CC leaders well before the date that voters can begin requesting ballots, January 11.

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

Can we get a clear and concise description of the differences between a Voting Center and a Voting Assistance Center, please? How does the number of VACs affect the number of voting centers required in 2020?

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

I have no idea why this shows as DPCA General Leadership. I'm just a lowly Secretary in Sweden. (Mary)

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Your name in the comment is the generic name that displays for everyone using the default name and password. Thanks for signing your note nonetheless.

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Hi Mary! Thank you for your question (which is an opportunity to clarify these terms for everybody).

A Voting Assistance Center is a facility run by the Department of Defense to aid absentee voting by military voters stationed overseas. FVAP (Federal Voting Assistance Program) is the Federal entity that serves both military and civilian soldiers, so maybe you saw that term used on FVAP documentation.

A Voting Center is a place which is recognized by the International Chair of Democrats Abroad (Katie Solon)

* + - as a valid location to cast in-person ballots in the Global Presidential Primary, March 1-8, and
    - as a place for the daily tabulation of ballots cast for each day that the Voting Center is open.

The number of Voting Centers in a Country Committee in 2016 is *not expected* to set any precedents for the number of Voting Centers required in 2020. (Consider that the number of Voting Centers in 2012 did not create any strict requirements for 2016.) Still, the rules for the delegate selection process are set by the Democratic National Committee, not by Democrats Abroad. So nobody (including the current members of the Rules and Bylaws Committee of the DNC) can guarantee what the rules for 2020 will be.

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

I realized after submitting the forms for  DA Madrid that I had mistakenly checked the yes box answering the question whether there was a GPP voting center in 2012.   I was thinking of 2008.  To my knowledge there was no DA GPP voting center anywhere in 2012.  I answered correctly when I filled in the information for DA Barcelona.  I presume I don't need to fill out the three forms for Madrid again.

Gil

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Gil, thank you for the notice. I relayed your note to Bill, who is keeping the corrections to the GPP Voting Center list. There is no need to fill out the three forms again, because the GPP Team received the correction through your comment.

Also, thank you for filling out the forms before the last minute! That makes our job a little easier.

* + - Will

[**Kat Allikain**](file:///C:\display\~katallikain)

Question about primary voter eligibility:  The eligibility statement above says: "All American citizens who will be 18 by the date of the general election (Nov 8, 2016), who live outside the United States and its territories, and who wish to participate as Democrats. In order to participate as a Democrat, one *must* be a member of Democrats Abroad."  We have a prospective member who was born overseas to American parents who were residents of PA.  PA is one of the states that does not grant voting rights to residents' children born overseas.  Does PA's restriction extend to the GPP?  Does DA have any such restriction?  Bottom line: Is this person eligible to vote in the GPP?

Thanks.

Kat (DANZ)

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Apologies for the delayed response.

PA's restriction DOES NOT extend to the GPP. For many US citizens in this situation, the Global Presidential Primary may be their only opportunity to help choose the next President of the United States.

Our Voting Rights team is always interested in expanding the franchise for US citizens living abroad. If this prospective member would like to talk with our team, please let me know.

Bottom line: This person meets all our eligibility requires and may vote in the GPP.

**Anonymous**

The Voting Center Manager's Guide stresses no campaigning within 10 meters of the entrance or of actual voting. I have both Hillary and Bernie "yard signs" and – since they are the only two active candidates (I believe!?) – can they be displayed in some way that doesn't give precedence to one or the other? Or is that forbidden?           /Rick Wicks, Western Sweden

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Thank you for the question, Rick. Campaign materials are forbidden within 10 meters, and that rule applies just as much if they are even-handed. (By the way, Rocky De La Fuente is still an active candidate as of February 21, 2016.)

[**Julie Buchanan**](file:///C:\display\~juliebu)

About this issue. The rules refers to official observers, Presidential candidates or their representatives, voting center staff about campaigning ( or not)  near Voting Centers

It is okay for Unofiicial campaigning? by 'fans'? outside 10 meters, of course. That really can't be monitored to be fair between the candidates. And nobody's going to have Fuentes sign.

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Outside of 10 meters, anybody can electioneer in any way that is consistent with local laws and doesn't interfere with the normal functioning of the Voting Center.

That's within reason, of course. If a rowdy group starts doing "Keg Stands for O'Malley" 12 meters from your door, then you should politely ask them to leave. (If a solemn group starts doing keg stands, take a video first, because *I want to see that*.)

Voting Center Managers have no responsibility to ensure that the space outside of 10 meters is distributed "fairly" but it is in your best interests to structure that space as best you can. As mentioned in the Guide for Voting Center Managers, by providing designated spaces (outside 10m) as suggested areas, you can prevent a lot of headaches. (I recognize that's not possible at some sites.)

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

Where is the file for printing VC Rules which the VC Manager's Guide says is here somewhere?    /Rick Wicks, Western Sweden

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

As of February 21, that file is not yet available. It will appear on the [Global Presidential Primary 2016](file:///C:\display\DSP2016\Global+Presidential+Primary+2016) wiki page when it is.

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

Two questions:

1) Just to be clear, NOWHERE in the process (including joining DA) does American citizenship get verified (except by self-certification), is that correct? I'm guessing that's because the Democratic Party doesn't want to reinforce efforts in the States to restrict voting by demanding proof of citizenship from people who may not even have a birth certificate, or?

2) I assume that we can number ballots as we hand them out, right? Then unused (and thus unnumbered) ones can be used at one of our other voting centers on succeeding days – so we don't have to print masses of ballots that may not get used. Or?

Rick Wicks - Secretary, Western Sweden

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Rick, I can't speak to the reason for the rules, but I can help you understand them. In light of those rules, I cannot agree with your assertion. The process of determining that an individual is eligible to vote can require verification for good reason at several points. For example, membership administration may deny the approval of a new member until citizenship is verified (but only for good reason). And an observer or a Voting Center volunteer may challenge the U.S. citizenship (and thus the eligibility) of a voter before he or she receives a ballot (again according to the rules of the DSP). You are correct only in the fact that DA volunteers are not *required* to check U.S. passports or birth certificates unless given a reason to do so as described in the Voting Center Manual.

You may number the ballots as you hand them out. Any leftover blank ballots are the sole responsibility of the Voting Center Manager, who must either destroy them or keep them secure until they are used for another day of voting in the Global Presidential Primary.

Many Voting Center Managers will wind up will masses of ballots that may not get used. We hold a primary at most once every four years, and running out of ballots is pretty much the most scandalous thing that can happen at a ballot place. Please set aside any concerns about waste and place the highest priority on making sure that every eligible voter is able to vote quickly and conveniently.

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

Hi Will, thanks for your comments. I thought I read that one had to have "positive evidence" (which sounded like something in writing) in order to challenge a possible non-citizen. Hopefully that won't come up, of course. But yes, now I find the language: "A challenge... may only be sustained if the challenger... presents POSITIVE PROOF, that is, objective documentary evidence, that voter is not qualified." That seems clear that suspicion is not sufficient. And I believe we're not allowed to demand proof of citizenship. So IF such a case were to arise, what do we do? I missed any authorization to verify citizenship other than on the basis of POSITIVE PROOF as just cited. Is there such authorization in the rules?

Regarding ballots, we'll have plenty to start with – and we plan to have a printer if we should need more – but it will be helpful that we can take leftover (unnumbered) ballots to VCs where we expect many fewer voters.

**Anonymous**

I'm Sue Burke, manager of the Madrid, Spain, voting center, [sueburke@telefonica.net](mailto:sueburke@telefonica.net)  I am unable to log in here.

My question: Exactly what identification do new members need to bring? Do they need to prove both citizenship and residency in the non-US country (Spain, in this case)? Or do they just have to prove they are "Robert Smith"?

Thank you.

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Sue, a new member should bring proof of his or her identity – "Robert Smith" as you said. According to our rules, the join process along with the Declaration on our ballot is sufficient to establish a presumption that the new member has US citizenship and residency.

That said, observers may challenge the eligibility of voters. The burden of proof is on the challenger. Nevertheless, here's what I write to people who ask a similar question at the [PrimaryVoting@democratsabroad.org](mailto:PrimaryVoting@democratsabroad.org) helpline:

*There may be observers present who have the ability to challenge your ballot, so for things to go as smoothly as possible, it's a good idea to bring a form of picture ID that is generally accepted -- ideally your US passport.*

I hope this answer helps. Rick asked a related question above, so you may want to read that too.

[**DPCA General Leadership**](file:///C:\display\~dems)

I'm confused by the January 31 and February 29 membership deadlines (if I've got those dates right).

Members who have joined and been approved by Feb. 29 will appear on an approved list and vote regular (not provisional) ballots, I believe. So is the January 31 deadline passé, irrelevant for our purposes now? Rick Wicks - Western Sweden

[**Will Bakker**](file:///C:\display\~will)

Rick, the January 31 deadline is effectively irrelevant for the operations of Voting Centers. It may be relevant in the resolution of some challenges at the International level – I'm not sure. For Voting Center Managers, however, there is no difference in how to treat someone who joins on January 31 and on Feb 1, even in documenting and adjudicating any challenge.

**Anonymous**

After the new members are successfully registered in NB, is there any need to keep the hard-copy Membership Applications that they filled out at the Voting Centers, and if they are to be destroyed, is there any retention period at all? Apologies if this info is already available somewhere else - couldn't find it...Peggy Hamilton, Membership Secretary, DA Canada.