

What to Expect at the Republican Convention

As a delegate you have a unique opportunity to make your voice heard. At conventions you will vote not only on candidates for public or Party office, but also on matters regarding Party governance, the Party Platform, etc. You will also participate in important procedural votes (e.g., adopting the convention agenda and rules, accepting the credentials report, etc.). As you prepare, take time to understand what will happen and how business will be conducted at convention.

Display Area

Candidates usually set up booths and are on hand to answer your questions directly. Plan to arrive in plenty of time to take advantage of this opportunity before the meetings begin.

Food

Concessions may be available, but there is no lunch break. Experienced delegates bring water, snacks, and a commitment to “stick to it” until the end. Plan to stay all day – that is what you were elected to do.

Credentialing

Credentialing opens early to give Central Committee members time to visit candidate booths prior to their first meeting of the day. Delegates should also plan to arrive early; if you get stuck in last-minute long lines at the Credentials Desk, you may miss the vote in your Legislative or Senate District Caucus. To vote at the convention you need an official badge and ballots. To obtain these you must present your identification at the check-in table. You usually get a lanyard so you can wear your credentials around your neck. This is your pass to enter the convention hall. If you lose credentials or ballots, go to the table where you checked in and explain your problem. Replacements are not guaranteed, so treat your documents like folding money.

Central Committee Meeting

A State Central Committee meeting immediately precedes State Convention, and a County Central Committee meeting immediately precedes County Convention. Only Central Committee members need to attend (Precinct Chairs and Vice Chairs and other Party leaders are members of the County Central Committee). Delegates may observe these meetings, but are not entitled to vote.

Utah Senate and Legislative Caucuses

In your Senate District Caucus, you will hear candidate speeches and cast ballots for your District's State Senate race. If there is no Senate race, you will get a report with Q&A from your State Senator. In your Legislative District Caucus, the delegates will always hear candidate speeches and cast ballots for the District's State House race since these seats are up for reelection every two years. (Note: If you live in a District that crosses county lines, your District Caucus will be held at State Convention.)

Call to Order

Convention begins with the invocation, flag ceremony, the national anthem, and pledge.

The credentials report states the number of authorized delegates and the number attending. You will be asked to vote to accept this report. If you accept the report, you are stating that you accept that each precinct's or county's delegates are legitimate and are entitled to vote at convention.

Sometimes you are asked to vote to resolve credentialing problems (e.g., someone forgot an ID but would like to be credentialed, a delegate's qualifications are challenged, etc). A challenge or motion may affect a delegate's right to vote, so listen carefully – it might even affect YOUR ability to vote.

Ratification of Convention Delegates/Election of State Delegates

At the County Nominating Convention, you will be asked to ratify County and State Delegates. A vote to ratify means that you believe the delegates are legitimate and obtained their status through proper means.

Adoption of Rules and Agenda

You will be asked to accept or “adopt” the proposed rules and agenda. Once adopted, the rules and the agenda strictly regulate what items of business can come before the convention, how long candidates will be allowed to speak, the length of time allowed for debate of proposals, etc. Because this is an important step, there are often motions to amend the agenda or rules. When voting, carefully consider the affect of any proposed change to the meeting.

Study the Robert's Rules instruction provided with your training materials so you can follow or participate in the proceedings.

Elections

Each candidate has an opportunity to speak. Regardless of your feelings about any candidate, heckling or booing is in very poor form. Feel free to support the candidate of your choice with enthusiastic applause. Generally the convention rules prohibit campaign signs inside the convention hall. Don't hurt your favored candidate by breaking the rules.

To vote, you must leave your seat and walk to the ballot area where you will be required to present your credentials to be marked when casting your ballot.

Proposals

There will often be proposed changes to the Party Platform, Constitution, or Bylaws, or other resolutions for your vote. Generally these proposals can be debated but not amended at convention. If this is the case, the convention can either adopt or reject the proposals. This is governed by the Bylaws and the convention rules and agenda – another reason the votes to adopt or amend the convention rules and agenda are important.

Quorum

There is a minimum number of delegates required for the convention to continue. If too many people leave early, the convention must end before completing its business. You were elected to attend the entire convention. Please plan to stay all day.

Enjoy the Grass Roots Process

You represent the people who elected you. Honor them by giving a full measure of effort and preparation. You are a full participant in the greatest republic in the history of the world.