



MORRIS COUNTY

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

NJ11 special election primary and regular primary FAQ

- With Mikie Sherrill winning the governor's race, she will soon resign her seat in Congress, creating a vacancy for New Jersey's 11th Congressional District.
- Under federal and state law, that vacancy must be filled by a special election to serve out the remaining months of her current term (ending November 2026).
- At the same time, the district must also hold its regular congressional election for the next full two-year term (Beginning January 2027).
- As a result, voters—and candidates—will see two separate primaries and two separate general elections for NJ-11 over the same period: one to fill the unexpired term, and one for the next Congress.

When is the special election primary?

- The date will be set once the Governor issues a "writ of election" after Sherrill resigns.
- By law, the special primary must be **70–76 days** after the writ.
- Likely early February 2026

When is the regular primary?

- Follows the normal New Jersey schedule: Tuesday, **June 2, 2026**

Can candidates run in both?

Yes. A candidate may run in:

- Just the special election
- Just the regular election
- Or both

Who can vote in a primary?

- New Jersey has **closed primaries**, so only registered members of a party can vote in that party's primary (unless they change affiliation before the deadline).



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How is the winner decided?

- Each primary is a **plurality vote**: Whoever gets the most votes wins, even if it's under 50%.

How does a candidate get on the ballot?

- A candidate for Congress in a New Jersey **party primary** must collect **500 valid petition signatures** from voters in that district. ([New Jersey Legislature](#))
- This is a recent increase: the requirement used to be **200 signatures**, but was raised by new law. ([New Jersey Legislature](#))
- Note: Because there is *no distinct statute* for special elections that **changes the petition signature threshold**, the same signature requirement (i.e., 500 valid signatures for Congressional candidates) appears to **apply to both** at this time.

Who Can Sign a Petition?

- Signers must be **legally qualified voters** in New Jersey, *residing in the same congressional district* as the candidate.
- Crucially: **Members of one political party cannot sign a petition for a candidate of another party**. In other words, a registered republican cannot sign a petition for a democratic candidate, and vice versa.
- Unaffiliated voters can sign a petition, but by doing so they declare affiliation for that party.

How Many Petitions Can One Person Sign?

- **One (1) - that's it!** Take your time and do your research before committing.
- If you sign more than one candidate's petition for the same race, your signature will be invalidated for all petitions you've signed, and your signature cannot count toward the 500 signature total..
- Because of the party restriction above, a person **cannot** sign petitions for a candidate in a different party.