

No Party-Switching During the new Same-Day Voter Registration Period (the final 28 days before an election).

This is the fifth in a series of articles addressing the changes made to the New Mexico Election Code during the 2019 legislative session.

Provided by: THE NEW MEXICO ELECTION INTEGRITY PROJECT (a task force sponsored by The New Mexico Justice Project)

Article #5:

The fifth amendment submitted by House Republicans to Senate Bill 672 this past March provides that same-day voter registrants cannot change parties during the same-day voter registration period leading up to a primary election.

This amendment is intended to prevent campaigns and groups from “gaming the system” after they’ve already obtained data regarding voter turnout during the early voting period. For example, members of both major parties could look at detailed polling showing their standing in their party’s primary. They could then analyze the ongoing turnout in each party’s primary and decide to appeal to potentially sympathetic voters in the other party (or among independents). All their target audience would have to do would be to fill out a “same-day” registration form or update their registration, and use that moment to change party affiliation.

It is immediately clear of course that such a scenario reflects precisely the same dynamic which exists in states with open primaries. That is for good reason—because the candidates’ tactics would be exactly the same. It would create an open primary under a different name: “same-day registration.” So, the House Republicans helped ensure New Mexico is not an open-primary state. At least not yet. (That subject is constantly up for debate.)