

Some general information on elections in Maine and the U.S.

Compiled by the Maine Association of Broadcasters

FEDERAL OFFICES:

President of the United States: Election held every four years, in years evenly divisible by 4.

United States Senate: There are two Senators in each state, elected to staggered 6-year terms. An election for a Senate seat will be held in Maine in 2014 and 2018.

United States House of Representatives (also known as Congress): Number of Reps. per state varies by state population. Maine has two congressional districts, First (southern Maine) and Second (central, northern and eastern Maine). U.S. Reps. are elected to two-year terms, in years evenly divisible by 2. (Political trivia: Maine's Second Congressional District is the largest geographic district east of the Mississippi River.)

STATE OFFICES:

Governor: Elected every four years, in even-numbered years that are NOT Presidential election years.

State Senate and State House of Representatives: Elections held every two years, in even-numbered years. All of Maine's 35 Senate seats and 151 House seats are up for election every two years.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Maine Presidential Preference Caucuses: Held early in the year of a Presidential election. The Democrats in Maine generally hold all their local caucuses on the same day, usually in early March, in which case LUR applies for any presidential-candidate advertising during the 45 days prior to caucus day. The Republicans generally hold their caucuses over a period of several days or a couple of weeks, in which case LUR may not apply because there's no way to fix a particular 45-day LUR period. Disclaimer: The FCC's Political Programming Branch has informally advised that a LUR period may apply if the Republican caucuses are held within a one-week or 8-day period, e.g. on two successive Saturdays.

June: Primary election day in Maine, held on the second Tuesday in June, according to state law (21-A MRSA Sec. 339). The 45-day lowest-unit-rate window for candidate advertising for this primary is counted backward starting with the day before election day as day #1.

Primary elections are held to determine a single candidate among competitors for the same office within the same political party. May encompass both federal and state elections, if multiple candidates emerge for the US Senate, US House, Governor, State House or State Senate seats that are up for election.

There may also be one or more statewide referendum questions on this primary-day ballot.

September: Primary election day in New Hampshire (held on the second Tuesday in September of every even-numbered year).

New Hampshire's governor is up for election every two years, as are its two Members of Congress.

November: General Election Day in the U.S. and in Maine, always held on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November, in even-numbered years (which is why the general election never falls on Nov. 1). The 60-day lowest-unit-rate window for candidate advertising for this election is determined by counting backward from election day, with the day before election day as day #1.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Lowest-unit-rate (LUR) windows apply ONLY to ads placed by candidates for office (federal, state, county or local), or their authorized committees. LUR does not apply to issue ads, ballot-question or referendum ads, or to third-party advertising for or against candidates or ads sponsored by the political parties or by county political committees, unless the county committee is the authorized committee for a candidate (this is rare).

Required advertising disclaimers may vary for federal candidates (governed by the Federal Elections Commission, <http://www.fec.gov/>) and for state candidates (governed by the Maine Secretary of State's Office, Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/index.html>), as well as for federal or state issue advertising. Federal law, for example, requires that federal candidates include in their ads a "stand by your ad" disclaimer, along the lines of "I'm John Smith and I approved this message"; this disclaimer is not required on ads for state candidates -- yet (MAB successfully beat back an attempt in the State Legislature in 2003 to impose this requirement on state ads, but bad ideas never really die).

Political advertising agreement forms for candidate ads and issue ads may be purchased directly from the National Association of Broadcasters, www.nabstore.com, keyword search PB-18. Sorry, MAB does not keep these forms on hand; they must be ordered directly from NAB.

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