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Nonpartisan Election Q&A

1. Q: What races are nonpartisan in Jefferson County?

A: Mayor, Metro Council, and all judicial races (district, circuit, appellate). These offices do not list party affiliation on the ballot.

2. Q: What races are partisan?

A: Constitutional offices such as county clerk, sheriff, Property Valuation Administrator (PVA), and county attorney. These candidates run with party labels.

3. Q: What does “nonpartisan” mean for voters?

A: All candidates appear on one ballot without party labels, and all registered voters—including independents—can vote in the primary.

4. Q: How do nonpartisan primaries work?

A: If more than two candidates file, the top two vote-getters advance to the general election. If there are only one or two candidates, the race goes straight to November.

5. Q: How do partisan primaries work?

A: Democrats vote only in Democratic primaries, Republicans only in Republican primaries, and independents cannot vote in those primaries. Each party's winner advances to the general election.

6. Q: Why were mayor and Metro Council changed to nonpartisan races?

A: House Bill 388, passed in 2024, made these races nonpartisan to reduce polarization, increase voter participation, and align Louisville with most Kentucky cities.

7. Q: When does House Bill 388 take effect?

A: Starting with the 2026 primary and general elections.

8. Q: Does straight-party voting apply to nonpartisan races?

A: No. Straight-party voting only applies to partisan offices. Voters must select candidates individually for mayor, Metro Council, and judges.

9. Q: Why is this important for voters?

A: About 75,000 independent voters in Jefferson County can now vote in mayor and Metro Council primaries, increasing access and participation.

10. Q: What should voters remember on Election Day?

A: Scroll through the entire ballot—straight-party voting will not fill in nonpartisan races, and skipping them means your vote won't count in those contests.

11. Q: Key deadlines voters should know?

- Candidate filing deadline: January 9, 2026, at 4 p.m.
- Voter registration deadline for the primary: April 20, 2026
- Primary Election Day: May 19, 2026