

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

April 5, 2016

To the American Bahá'í community

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Further to our letter of March 8, 2016 to this much-loved community, in which clear statements were made regarding the avoidance of partisan politics, many friends responded with questions concerning voting in primary elections. It was stated in the letter that “nor should we, even as an ‘independent,’ vote in primaries—the purpose of which is to elect delegates to political conventions.”

Upon further research, it has been determined that this is inaccurate, as many electoral districts do not require individuals to affiliate themselves with a particular political party in order to vote in the primary. In a letter dated February 4, 2008 to an individual believer, the Universal House of Justice states that:

A Bahá'í may not vote in a primary election if in order to do so he or she must declare membership or affiliation with, or support for, a particular political party. But if the ballot is secret, a Bahá'í is free to vote in any political election provided that he does not, by doing so, identify himself with any political party and bears in mind that he is voting on the merits of the individual rather than because he belongs to one party or another.

Individual Bahá'ís, therefore, bear the responsibility of researching the election laws in their particular electoral district to determine whether or not the above-mentioned criteria have been met and may vote their consciences as they see fit.

We are happy to make this clarification, but remind the friends to not lose sight of the larger point of the original letter, that is, we should eschew any semblance of involving ourselves in the divisive partisan aspects of our political system.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary