

The Blog

Slow momentum for the March Presidential Primary

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Our office was expecting a higher voter turnout for the March Presidential Primary. After five weeks, the city finally reached over 1000 voters for in-person Early Voting as of February 28. With the end of Early Voting approaching, our office is expecting a relatively low voter turnout on Super Tuesday as well.

“It is slow across the entire state. I have talked to registrars in other localities and it is just slow,” said General Registrar Keith Balmer.

The City of Richmond has 160,000 registered voters. Within the past five weeks, our Early Voting locations have received less than 30 voters each day.

There are two reasons for the low turnout. First, the two major political parties have not advertised the election in the state of Virginia as aggressively compared to previous presidential elections. Many citizens are simply unaware that there is a Presidential Primary coming up.

“There are no commercials, there are no billboards, there are no yard signs, there are no campaign materials sent in the mail to let people know that there is a presidential primary next week,” Registrar Balmer said.

Secondly, there are many citizens who are aware of the upcoming primary election, however, they may feel that the primary is an illusion of choice.

“It’s clear that it’ll be a rematch of the 2020 election. People know that,” Registrar Balmer said.

Over 50,000 voters participated in the 2016 Presidential Dual Primary. At this rate, it does not appear the city will receive the same amount compared to the 2016 Dual Primary.

Usually in a presidential election year, the nominees are determined around June. In 2024, we are expecting to know the two nominees soon after Super Tuesday.

The slow momentum for the state of Virginia seems to also be the case for other Super Tuesday states like Texas, California, and Massachusetts.

A slow presidential primary does not mean it’ll be a slow general election. The City of Richmond will also be voting for U.S. Senator, House of Representatives, mayor, city council, and school board in the November election.

We still encourage people to vote in the primary next Tuesday on March 5. **The polls will be open at 6:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M.**