

Political Briefs for Aug. 3

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Ads to alert voters of primary changes

Secretary of State Jay Dardenne is ramping up for a statewide radio campaign to alert voters of a big change occurring with fall federal elections.

There will be closed party primary elections in congressional races.

Dardenne said he will use up to \$500,000 in federal funds to get the word out.

Under the change, Democratic contenders will face Democrats and Republicans fellow Republicans to determine which candidate will carry the party's banner into the November general election.

On the Republican side, only Republicans can vote. The Democrats are allowing No Party registrants to participate.

There will be closed party contests in the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th congressional districts because Democrats and/or Republicans have same-party opposition.

Up until this year, all congressional candidates, regardless of party, ran in a primary election, and the top two vote getters met in a runoff in what is known as an open primary system.

The open system stays for state and local elections. But the closed primary system kicks in for federal elections.

Voters in the Baton Rouge-based 6th Congressional district experienced the change earlier this year with a special election to replace Republican incumbent Richard Baker, who quit before his term's end.