

Belize Election Law

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Elections in Belize are the duly held elections held at various levels of government in the nation of Belize.

Dissolving elected bodies is broken down in the following order:-

The Legislature:

Dissolving the National Assembly of Belize is the prerogative of the Governor General of Belize, currently Sir Colville Young. Under sections 84 and 85 of the Constitution, the Governor General can at any time dissolve or prorogue the Assembly under the advice of the Prime Minister of Belize, with the caveat that a general election must be called within three months of such dissolution, unless the Governor General sees no reason to do so.

City and town councils:

City and town councils dissolve on the last Sunday of February in every third year, with the election called for the first Wednesday in March in every third year.

General elections:

Belize elects on national level a legislature. The National Assembly has two chambers. The House of Representatives has 31 members, elected for a five-year term in single-seat constituencies as of 2008. The Senate has 12 members appointed for a five-year term.

Belize has a two-party system, which means that there are two dominant political parties, with extreme difficulty for anybody to achieve electoral success under the banner of any other party. Only once in the most recent general elections did an independent candidate receive more votes than a party candidate. Wilfred Elrington, running independently in 2003, received twice as many votes as the UDP candidate but failed to win. Elrington had previously separated from his party but they have since reconciled. Despite the overall abysmal record of independent candidates and third parties, the political process in Belize still sees its fair share of well-intentioned people stepping forward to serve the nation.

Constituencies of Belize:

The six Districts of Belize are subdivided into 31 constituencies.

Municipal elections:

On the local level, citizens in towns and villages elect municipal councils every three years. Belize has seven towns and two recognized cities, Belize City (since 1945) and Belmopan (since 2000). Belize City, due to its bigger size, carries greater representation and importance, with one mayor and ten councillors elected (previously nine individuals out of which, the Mayor was selected), as opposed to one Mayor and six councillors for Belmopan and the towns. The two party system is in effect here as well, but independents and third party candidates have of late been doing relatively well in local elections. The latest such election was held on March 4, 2009. Voters elected sixty seven representatives, eighteen in city councils (11 Belize City, 7 Belmopan) and forty nine in town councils.




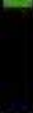

By-elections and referendums:


These types of elections are held on a less regular basis. By-elections are usually held to replace representatives either locally or nationally, who are lost during the course of their term for various reasons.

Referendums are normally held on issues of local or national importance. Belize had never held a national referendum before 2008, though one has consistently been demanded in order to settle the Guatemalan claim to Belize. Provisions have been made for a treaty to settle this claim to go to a referendum. In 1999, residents of Belmopan held a referendum to determine whether they would be responsible for their own affairs as a city; a majority voted yes, and Belmopan held its first City Council election less than a year later. Prime Minister Said Musa announced on 7 January 2008 a nonbinding national referendum would be held on the same date as general elections, asking the people of Belize to decide whether they wanted the country's upper house, the Senate, to be elected. The referendum passed with 61 percent of voters supporting an elected Senate.

List of by-elections in Belize: (See By-election chart attached) Only three by-elections have been called for Belize House seats since the country became independent in September 1981. Several other by-elections have been held at the municipal level:

Summary of the 7 March 2012 Belizean House of Representatives election results

Parties	Votes	%	Seats
 <u>United Democratic Party</u>	64,976	50.37	17
 <u>People's United Party</u>	61,329	47.54	14
 <u>People's National Party</u>	828	0.64	—
 Independents	822	0.64	—
 <u>Vision Inspired by the People</u>	382	0.30	—
Total valid votes	128,999	100.00	31
Invalid votes	1,259		
Total votes cast (turnout 73.16%)	130,258		
Registered voters	178,054		

Constituency	Date	Incumbent	Party	Winner	Party	Cause	Retained
Cayo North	5 January 2015	Joseph Mahmud	 PUP		<i>TBD</i>	Resignation	
<u>Cayo South</u>	29 October 2003 ⁽²⁾	Agripino Cawich	 PUP	John Saldívar	 UDP	Death (cancer)	No
Freetown	January 1993	Derek Aikman	 UDP	Jorge Espat	 PUP	Expelled from House due to bankruptcy	No

Government of elections by: Elections and Boundaries Commission In Belize, elections are supervised by the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the control of a Chief Elections Officer, responsible for conducting fair elections. Stuart Leslie was appointed to the post in August 2005, replacing veteran Myrtle Palacio. The EBC also has a Board of Directors which includes party representatives. The EBC was established in 1978 to relieve the public service of the duties of holding elections by themselves; an

Elections and Boundaries Department was added in 1988. The EBD maintains a list of voters at offices countrywide and new voters regularly come in to sign on to the voter registration list for elections. The list was last revamped in 1997. The vote is restricted to Belizeans 18 years and older; the 18-year old vote has been in place since 1978.

In December 2006 career public officer Dorothy Bradley succeeded Stuart Leslie as Chief Elections Officer and immediately committed herself to streamlining the electoral process and restoring voter confidence. In September 2007 Bradley reportedly resigned. The current Chief Election Officer is Josephine Tamai. List of Chief Election Officers since 1988:

1988-1994: Winston Carr

1994-1999: Urban A. Reyes

1999-2005: Myrtle Palacio

2005-2006: Stuart Leslie

December 2006-September 2007: Dorothy Bradley

September 2007-2010: Ruth Meighan (acting)

February 2010 – October 2011: Dorothy Bradley

October 2011 – present: Josephine Tamai

Editors Note: All Belizeans should exercise their right to Vote. Be part of the process and be part of the change. Vote March 2015.

Posted : **Marty Casado** - Mon, Dec 1, 2014 2:50 PM. This article has been viewed 6273 times.

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