FACT SHEET

The Case for Open and Nonpartisan Primaries

September 2024



Rainey Center

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An open primary is one in which all voters can participate, regardless of partisan registration, including in states that do not register voters by party. A nonpartisan primary, also known as a jungle primary, is one in which all candidates participate in the same primary and the top candidates advance to the general election regardless of party affiliation, though party labels may still appear on the ballot.

Broadens Electoral Appeal

Open and nonpartisan primaries encourage candidates to appeal to a wider range of voters, including independents and moderates. This can help Republicans nominate candidates with broader electoral appeal, increasing their chances in the general election.

Increases Voter Participation

Open primaries allow all voters, regardless of party affiliation, to participate in the primary process. This can lead to higher voter turnout and engagement, especially in areas where Republican registration is low but conservative-leaning voters still exist.

Reduces Extremism

Nonpartisan primaries can help prevent the nomination of fringe or extreme candidates by requiring candidates to appeal to a broader electorate, not just the most active or extreme party members. This can result in more electable candidates.

Strengthens General Election Competitiveness

By allowing a wider range of voters to have a say in candidate selection, open primaries can produce nominees who are more competitive in general elections, especially in swing districts or states.

Encourages Civil Discourse

Candidates in nonpartisan primaries are incentivized to avoid polarizing rhetoric and to focus on issues that resonate across the political spectrum, fostering a more civil and productive political environment.

Supports Individual Choice

Open primaries empower voters to make individual choices free from strict party labels, aligning with the conservative emphasis on individual liberty and personal responsibility.

Reflects the Will of the People

Open and nonpartisan primaries give a voice to all voters, including those who do not align with a particular party but hold conservative values. Republican voter registration often lags behind Democratic voter registration even in red-leaning states due to the more prevalent "conservative but not Republican" voters preferring to register independent. Such sentiment being less common among progressive Democrats. So nonpartisan primaries, helps advance to the general election candidates who reflect the true preferences of the electorate.

Promotes Party Growth

By engaging independents and moderates in the primary process, Republicans can attract new supporters and expand the party's base, which is crucial for long-term growth and success.

Reduces the Influence of Party Insiders

Open and nonpartisan primaries limit the control of party insiders and special interests over the nomination process, empowering the grassroots and ensuring that candidates are chosen by a broader cross-section of voters.

Aligns with Federalism

Open and nonpartisan primaries allow states and localities to experiment with different electoral systems, enhancing federalism and local control. This can lead to innovative solutions that better reflect the needs and preferences of diverse communities.



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