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History of Proposals to Change Oregon's Primary Elections

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Overview

- Types of primary elections
- Timelines of proposals in Oregon
- Proposals in Oregon
    - Initiative petitions
    - Ballot measures
    - Legislative measures

Types of Primary Elections

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

Closed

Only registered party members can vote.

Partially Closed (Oregon)

Parties may allow unaffiliated voters to participate.

Open to Unaffiliated

Unaffiliated voters can choose a party's primary election, but registered voters cannot cross over to a different party's ballot.

Types of Primary Elections

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

Partially Open

Voters can cross party lines, but their choice may be regarded as a form of registration.

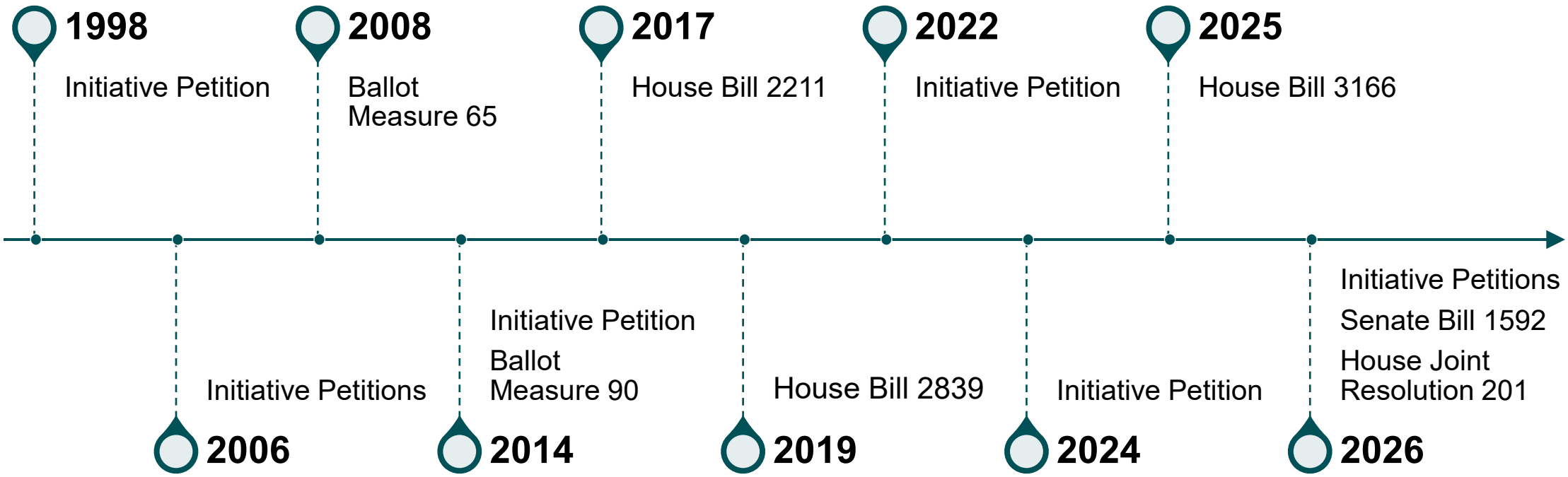
Open

Voters choose which party's ballot to vote. Voters do not have to affiliate with a party to vote.

Multiparty

All candidates, regardless of party, are listed on a single ballot, and top vote-getters advance to the general election.

Multiparty Primary Proposals in Oregon



Other Primary Proposals in Oregon

2015

House Bill 2061
(Open to Unaffiliated)

2017

Senate Bill 226
(Open to Unaffiliated)

2019

Senate Bill 225
(Nonaffiliated)

1998
Initiative Petition 1

Primary Type: **Multiparty**

Added to ballot: **No**

Subject: Election by majority with consensus primary process

- Would have amended the constitution to establish a single/unified primary election ballot

2006 Initiative Petition 38

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Added to the ballot: **No**

Subject: Open primary

- Would have amended statute to do the following:
  - Establish single/unified primary election for the following “voter choice offices”:
    - Statewide elected offices
    - Any partisan state, county, city, or district office
  - Require the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election

2006 Initiative Petition 86

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Added to the ballot: **No**

Subject: Oregon open primary

- Would have amended statute to do the following:
  - Establish single/unified primary election for the following “voter choice offices”:
    - Statewide elected offices
    - Any state, county, city, or district office that are not nonpartisan
  - Require the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election
  - Allow an eligible person, regardless of party affiliations, to fill a vacancy

2008
Ballot Measure 65

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Approved by voters: **No**

Subject: Creates open primary elections

- Would have amended statute to do the following:
  - Establish a single/unified primary elections ballot for the following offices:
    - Statewide elected offices
    - Any state, county, city, or district office that are not nonpartisan
  - Require the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election
  - Allow an eligible person, regardless of party affiliations, to fill a vacancy

2014 Initiative Petition 54

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Added to ballot: **No**

Subject: Unified primary elections initiative

- Would have amended statute to do the following:
  - Establish a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Allow voters to vote for one or more candidates for a single office
  - Require the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election

2014
Ballot Measure 90

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Approved by voters: **No**

Subject: Open primary initiative

- Would have amended statute to do the following:
  - Establish a single/unified primary elections ballot for the following offices:
    - Many federal offices (not presidential)
    - All state, county, city, or district offices
  - Allow an eligible person, regardless of party affiliations, to fill a vacancy

2015
House Bill 2061

Primary Type: **Open to Unaffiliated**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to voting in primary elections

- Would have given nonaffiliated electors the ability to vote in the primary election of their choice

2017
Senate Bill 226

Primary Type: **Open to Unaffiliated**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to application for major political party ballots

- Would have permitted nonaffiliated electors to request the major political party ballot of their choice

2017
House Bill 2211

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to elections

- Would have done the following:
  - Established a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Required the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election

2019
Senate Bill 225

Primary Type: **Nonaffiliated**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to nonaffiliated primary elections

- Would have established a **nonaffiliated primary election**, in which nonaffiliated electors may select a nominee who is not affiliated with a major or minor political party to appear on the general election ballot

2019
House Bill 2839

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to elections

- Would have done the following:
  - Established a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Required the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election

2022 Initiative Petition 39

Primary Type: **Multiparty**

Added to ballot: **No**

Subject: Free and equal elections

- Would have amended the constitution to do the following:
  - Allow the following candidates to run in an open primary:
    - Legislative, congressional, and statewide elected offices
  - Allow all voters to participate, regardless of affiliation or nonaffiliation

2024 Initiative Petition 16

Primary Type: **Multiparty**

Added to ballot: **No**

Subject: Free and equal elections

- Would have amended the constitution to require all candidates for the following partisan offices to participate in the same primary election:
    - State legislature
    - Congress
    - Statewide elected offices

2025 House Bill 3166

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Five**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to elections

- Would have done the following:
  - Established a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Required the five candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election

2026 Initiative Petitions 55 & 56

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Added to ballot: **No**

Subject: Voters fairness act

IP 55: Constitutional amendment

IP 56: Statutory amendment

- Would have done the following:
  - Established a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Allowed nonaffilliated voter participation
  - Required the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election

2026
Senate Bill 1592

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to primary elections

- Would have done the following:
  - Established a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Required the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election
  - Allowed a political party to decline participation in the primary
  - Provided a process to fill vacancies

2026 House Joint Resolution 201

Primary Type: **Multiparty/ Top-Two**

Enacted: **No**

Relating to primary elections

- Would have amended the constitution to do the following:
  - Establish a single/unified primary elections ballot
  - Require the two candidates who received the most votes to advance to the general election
  - Allow all nonaffiliated electors to vote
  - Allow a political party to decline participation in the primary