



## Open Primaries - FAQs & Research

### ***Why should we open Oregon's closed primaries?***

**Oregon now has 1.1 million voters who are not registered with a political party (36%).**

Nonaffiliated voters (NAVs) have almost doubled since 2014. [Oregon Secretary of State Elections Division, January 2026.](#)

**NAVs are now the largest group of voters in Oregon (36%), exceeding Democrats (32%) and Republicans (23.7%).** [Oregon Secretary of State Elections Division, January 2026.](#)

**Nonaffiliated voters are now the largest voting bloc in 21 of Oregon's 36 counties and 5 of 6 U.S. Congressional districts but they cannot vote in primary elections.** [Stapilus: Oregon open primary initiative would let all participate | Oregon Capital Insider](#)

**83% of Oregonians who registered via Motor Voter in 2020 are nonaffiliated voters.**

Nonaffiliated voters have grown 4x the rate of major parties since 2014, when Oregon adopted Motor Voter. Oregon 360 Media (2021) [Reforming our elections: Oregon registers, but does not empower all voters \(substack.com\).](#)

**More than half of young Oregon voters (18-34) and growing are nonaffiliated and are disenfranchised under the current system.** [Reforming our elections: Oregon registers, but does not empower all voters \(substack.com\).](#)

**Closed primaries disproportionately suppress young, diverse voters and Veterans.**

69% of Hispanic voters under 40 in Oregon are independent. [Unite America, p.20.](#)

59% of younger voters are independent. [Unite America, fn 19.](#)

59% of Veterans identify as independent or unaffiliated. [Veterans for All Voters](#)

“Closed primaries have large demobilizing impacts on Asian American and Latinx voters” [University of Southern California, “The Demobilizing Effect of Primary Electoral Institutions on Voters of Color” \(6/3/21\)](#)

“Asian American voters are twice as likely to identify as purely independent.” AAPI Data, [NYT, “Asian American Voters Could be Key Swing Voters of 2024” 8/13/24](#)

### ***Improved Voter Turnout, Fair Representation, Reduced Polarization***

A small percentage of voters are deciding Oregonians' choices in the general election. Open primaries boost participation in lower-turnout primaries and help ensure a broader set of Oregonians are shaping the November ballot. [The Oregonian 4/10/24 “Editorial: Join a major party, just for the primary”](#) [The Oregonian 10/27/19 “Editorial, Opening Oregon’s primaries would give voice to people, not parties.”](#)

“When states allow unaffiliated voters to participate in primaries for the first time, voter turnout increases, and the electorate grows more demographically and politically representative.” [The Effect of Open Primaries on Turnout and Representation | Bipartisan Policy Center](#) (opening primaries to NAVs increases NAV share of the electorate by 12%)

“[J]ust 8% of the U.S. voting age population effectively elected 83% of the U.S. House in partisan primaries. The result is that elected officials are not accountable to the vast majority of voters, which rewards extremism, fuels division, and distorts representation.” [Unite America Institute, Not Invited to the Party Primary](#),

Reducing Legislative Polarization: Open Primaries are Associated with More Moderate Legislators. [Christian Grose, USC Schwarzenegger Institute](#) (2020)

“Closed party primaries are force multipliers for the polarization that afflicts the United States . . . Fear among moderate, measured or mainstream candidates of being “primaried” moved them away from bipartisan cooperation and edged their politics further to the extremes.” [Compare Cheney and Murkowski’s Political Fates—It’s All About the Primary - Sightline Institute](#) 8/19/22

<https://voterfairness.com>