



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>