



JUNE 2022

MAINE, MIDTERMS & MOMENTUM IN PA

June 10, 2022:

It's been an exciting month here at Open Primaries: a big win for democracy making waves across the country, growing momentum in state campaigns, new research emerging and an explosion of local and national media coverage on the critical need for primary reform.

Here is a snapshot of what's happening across the country right now!

State by State

Maine Celebrates Open Primaries Victory- 350,000 Independents Now Able to Vote!

In case you missed it: Maine has officially enacted open primaries—**32% of all Maine voters (previously disenfranchised) will now have the right to participate in semi-open primary elections** for the very first time in 2024. The legislation, which received bipartisan majority support, was championed by Senators Chloe Maxmin (D) and Matthew Pouliot (R) –if you missed our recent virtual discussion between Senator Maxmin and OP President John Opdycke [you can watch the whole conversation here.](#)

This is a major win for voters and democracy and the news has made headlines both [in Maine](#) and [across the country.](#)

On Monday, the Open Primaries team celebrated the victory with campaign leaders, legislators and supporters who made it all happen!

Now begins the hard work of running an effective education campaign to voters and candidates leading up to the 2024 primaries. We're also supporting a critically important campaign finance reform effort – the Protect Maine Elections campaign. On Tuesday, June 14, hundreds of volunteers will be collecting signatures at polling locations around the state of Maine in support of this effort. If you're a Maine resident and can volunteer: please [click here](#) to sign up to collect signatures on June 14, and organizers will be in touch with the details.

We learned a lot about winning a reform campaign, and our new report *Success Story: What it Took to Bring Open Primaries to Maine* is helping activists working on reforms across the country to understand that the “How” is as important as the “What” in successfully passing political reform.

VICTORY IN MAINE!

L.D. 231, “An Act to Establish Semi-Open Primaries,” has become public law!

Important note: Semi-open primaries will take effect January 1, 2024

OPEN PRIMARIES



THE FIGHT TO OPEN PA'S PRIMARIES



Effort to REPEAL Closed Primaries Picks Up Momentum in PA

On May 17th, Pennsylvania held primaries and over 1,200,000 PA voters were barred from participating. Only 12 states in America run fully closed primaries and PA is one of them. But the tide is changing and the coalition and movement to break down this barrier of suppression is expanding exponentially.

On primary day, Open Primaries Senior VP Jeremy Gruber joined local leaders and activists with Ballot PA & Independent Pennsylvanians at an event raising awareness for the effort to enact legislation and repeal PA's exclusionary, divisive primary process. There was a palpable energy and immediacy in how voters and leaders are speaking on this and it's clear: something is happening in PA.

Every week we're seeing more and more local and national media outlets (CNN) talking about PA's primary problem. A new poll found that 64% of PA voters now favor open primaries over the current system.

OP President John Opdycke and Ballot PA Chair David Thornburgh recently teamed up for a new piece in The Fulcrum on the rise of independent voters, how both parties silence them and why it's well past time Pennsylvania repeal closed primaries and fully enfranchise every voter.

But as Opdycke stated in his interview with Erie News Now, the main reason and impetus to repeal closed primaries in PA "is genuinely about letting all voters vote."

We're proud to be a founding supporter of this effort and are confident we'll be bringing you more updates very soon—Stay tuned!

Millions of Americans SHUT OUT of Midterm Primaries Across the U.S.

We're right in the middle of the 2022 primary season—and that means that millions of Americans are actively being shut out from primaries their taxes pay for. Here's a quick roundup of states that have recently held closed primaries and how many of Americans were disenfranchised:

May 17, 2022:

- Idaho: **320,000 voters**
- Kentucky: **320,000 voters**
- Oregon: **1,000,000 voters**
- Pennsylvania: **1,200,000 voters**

June 7, 2022:

- New Jersey: **2,400,000 voters**
- New Mexico: **300,000 voters**
- South Dakota: **140,000 voters**

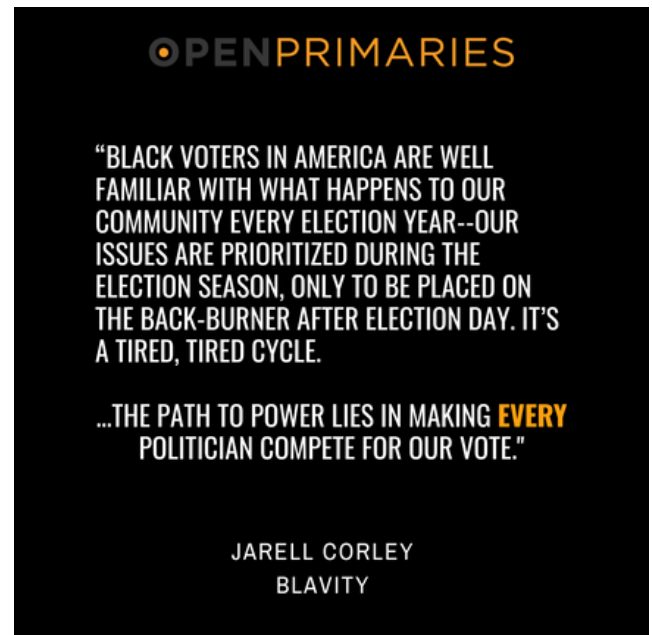
That's 5,680,000 Americans who had no say in the all-important first round of elections. Every year our elections become less representative—in 2020, only 10% of voters effectively elected 83% of Congress. And we're not the only ones covering this—take a look at Unite America's recent report they've been updating in real time based on 2022 results.

Over the course of the 2022 primaries we expect there to be over 30,000,000 Americans who will not be able to vote in these elections. this is not acceptable—no voter should be disenfranchised, let alone 30,000,000. We'll continue doing everything we can to chip away at the party leaders and special interests that cling to the status quo so firmly until we fully let all voters vote.

YOUNG LEADERS AT WORK

Open Primaries Spokesperson Jarell Corley (Illinois) has made some waves in his new op-ed in Blavity (and later picked up by Yahoo and Afro News) calling out the Democratic Party for taking black voters for granted. Corley thinks it's high time black Americans embrace political independence and force candidates (and both major parties) to actually compete for their vote.

We're thrilled and inspired every day to work with local leaders across the country like Jarell to build this movement—to read more about Jarell & our National Spokesperson Committee visit "Our Team" page [HERE](#).





New Research Emerges

10 years ago California enacted nonpartisan, Top Two open primaries as a response to a broken, dysfunctional state government that couldn't pass a budget and had a 9% approval rate from the voters of CA. Since then, the reform has consistently enjoyed over 60% voter support and approval of the state legislature is now regularly three times higher than what it was when politicians were elected in a partisan system. Yet, there's still much debate about whether the system has been successful.

The New York Times most recently covered California's unique system and the potential model it could be for other states looking to take on hyperpartisanship.

Now, just this week, new research has come out from J. Andrew Sinclair and the Rose Institute of State & Local Government at Claremont Mckenna College that shows top two has had a significant impact.

Here are the topline:

- Voters like the top two system
- Approval of the legislature has risen from 10% to 50% in 10 years
- The inclusion of independent voters in both rounds has been positive.
- California has the most competitive general elections of any state in the union.
- Studying the "moderating" impact on elected officials is tricky. Some studies show significant moderating effects, others show a more modest impact.

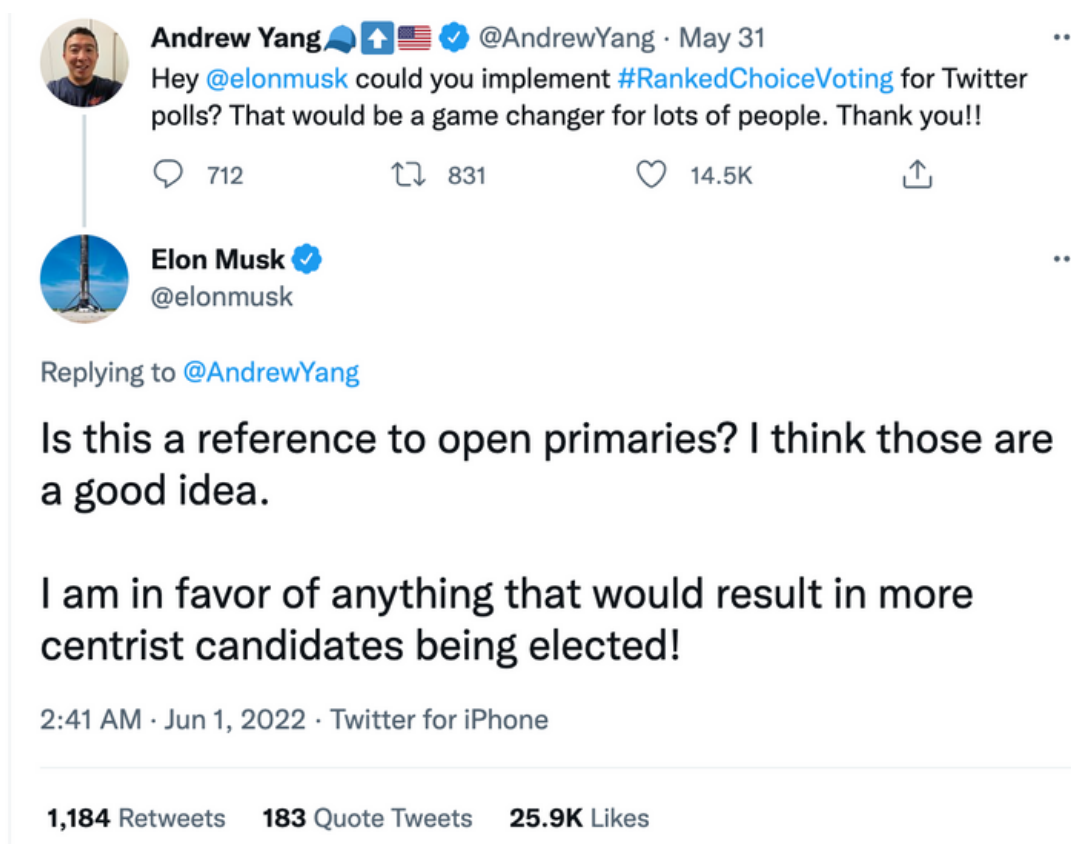
With a few exceptions, the dominant posture towards California within the structural reform movement has been "California bad, Alaska good." This is a narrative we'd like to change, and we'd like your help.

Our interest is not in replacing that narrative with a “California good, Alaska bad” narrative but rather to challenge the reform community to stop thinking that different forms of nonpartisan primaries are in competition with one another! Our collective efforts to enact top four and final five nonpartisan primaries with RCV general elections will be enhanced by embracing the success of California and other states with top two. We believe that a more healthy, growth oriented, and frankly democratic narrative should allow for the specific policy to emerge from local organizing. Reform is a collaborative process, not a predetermined product.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Elon Musk Comes Out in Support of Opening the Primaries

You know you’ve made it when you log onto twitter and see that Elon Musk is talking about you and publicly endorsing open primaries:



Love him or hate him, you know primary reform has reached the mainstream when Musk starts paying attention.