

OPEN PRIMARIES

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Nonpartisan Open Primaries Protect Republicans Who Voted To Impeach Renewed Attention Brought to Primary Election Reform

New York, NY – Eleven Republicans who voted to impeach Trump were up for reelection this year — 10 in the House plus Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. Of the seven whose states have traditional partisan primaries, not one has survived — four bowed out without even trying. Most famously, Rep. Liz Cheney lost her primary in Wyoming this past week by 37 points.

But the three pro-impeachment Republicans that survived all come from states that have ditched the partisan primary — California and Washington which employ open “top two” primaries, and Alaska, which employs an open “top four” primary. These states allow all voters, regardless of party, to determine which candidates advance from the primary to the general election. In those three states, Republican Reps. Dan Newhouse, David Valadao, and Sen. Lisa Murkowski are progressing to the November general election.

These results may have come down to the significant differences in these states’ primary systems.

Incentives matter. Open primaries change more than who votes and wins — they change how winners govern. By design, open primaries encourage candidates to speak to the broadest spectrum of voters – not just the sliver that happens to vote in one party’s primary — and to emphasize issues of greatest concern in the district or state.

The nonpartisan open primary allowed these candidates to buck party orthodoxy — and not only with their impeachment vote. Newhouse and Valadao have both championed thoughtful bipartisan immigration reform. Murkowski is legendary in her independence from her party’s policy agenda on everything from climate change to Supreme Court nominations.

The success of all three candidates has brought renewed attention on the nonpartisan open primary and its ability to incentivize independence in political leadership during a time when politics in America has become deeply partisan. Critics from the [LA Times](#) to the [Washington Post](#) are starting to reconsider their past opposition and explore the contrast between nonpartisan open primaries and traditional partisan primary systems.

Open Primaries is the nation’s preeminent experts on open and nonpartisan primary elections. We are supporting and developing campaigns for them all across the country. As the conversation on reforming our democracy heats up, we are available to discuss the implications of this important political reform.

Available for interview:

John Opdycke, President Open Primaries (New York, NY)
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Open Primaries is a national, nonprofit organization. More information can be found at
www.openprimaries.org