

Open Primaries July 2023 Newsletter

Campaign Launched to Close Florida's Corrupt Write-In Loophole

SINCE 1998

**OVER 8.2 MILLION
FLORIDIANS**

**HAVE BEEN DISENFRANCHISED BY
FLORIDA'S WRITE-IN LOOPHOLE**

This impacts Democrats, Republicans AND Independents--
and it's time we put and end to it!



In 1998, Florida voters passed [Amendment 11](#) with 64% support. It declared that if all the candidates for a given office are from the same party, then the primary changes from a partisan closed primary to a general election and all voters can participate. Since enacted, Democratic and Republican operatives have recruited phony write-in candidates for no reason other than to subvert the law and shut out voters. Courts have refused to intervene. It's called the "write-in loophole" and it's one of the most corrupt election practices anywhere in the country; used to disenfranchise millions of Democrats, Republicans and independents for 20+ years.

[Florida Open Primaries](#)-a coalition of local and national activists- has [launched a campaign](#) to document the full extent that write-in candidates have been used to trigger a closed primary election and pressure the legislature to close the write-in loophole.

[Watch OP President John Opdycke speak with NBC News about the campaign launch and the fight against voter fraud.](#)

We looked just at races for state legislature and Congress and found [massive fraud](#) across the state.

- 114 legislative and Congressional primaries that should have been open to all voters were closed by write-in candidates.
- **A total of 8,204,603 voters were disenfranchised by the application of the write-in loophole.**
- Phony write-in candidates were deployed by Democratic and Republican actors alike. **1,297,802 Republicans, 3,217,279 Democrats, and 3,689,522 independent voters were shut out of these primary elections.**

These are not legitimate candidates. Their names never appear on the ballot. Most have no staff, spend no money and do nothing more than file paperwork. Many have direct connections to the political operatives that recruited them (family, business partners, friends etc). They file for no reason other than to shut out voters.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. The campaign is just starting to look at other types of races—from statewide to county elections. [Florida Open Primaries](#) is calling on ALL Floridians—Republicans, Democrats, and independents—to join the campaign to fix this fraud and outlaw the write-in loophole. If you're a Florida voter, join today by:

- [Visiting the campaign page](#) and easily sending a note to your legislator in 30 seconds.
- Share our campaign with your friends, family and co-workers—we need millions of Floridians to be talking about this!
- [Make a donation to the campaign](#) to ensure we can get this in front of as many Floridians as possible.

If you're interested in getting even more involved (and we could really use the help!), reach out to the Campaign Director Doug Balder directly at dbalder@openprimaries.org.

PA House Holds Hearing on Open Primaries



As we've mentioned in our last newsletter, the fight to repeal closed primaries in Pennsylvania continues to gain momentum.

Most recently, the [PA House heard testimony](#) from supporters and opponents of new legislation to open primaries to unaffiliated and independent Pennsylvanians.

Ballot PA Chair David Thornburgh, OP Senior VP Jeremy Gruber and [4 time Super Bowl Champion & Vietnam Veteran Rocky Bleier](#) all gave powerful testimonials in support of legislation that would be inclusive of every Pennsylvanian.

[OP Senior VP Jeremy Gruber testified:](#) *"There's 1.2 million independents that are shut out of Pennsylvania's primaries. They are the fastest growing group of voters in the state. Forty-one states have open primaries, from Montana to Texas, to Massachusetts to California. If they can do it, why can't Pennsylvania?"*

Veteran & Super Bowl Champion Rocky Bleier: *"I believe it's a travesty that the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to defend democracy are denied the fundamental right to vote. We have an opportunity right now, in this moment, to correct*

this injustice on behalf of Pennsylvania’s brave veterans, and the rest of the 1.2 million people who are currently unable to fully participate in that democracy.”

Watch the [full hearing here](#) or [read Gruber’s testimony here](#).

We’ll keep you posted as the campaign continues to make major inroads in the legislature.

Ohio GOP is Trying to Close Primaries & Force Voters to Join Party—Locking 5.7 Million Independent Ohioans Out

[Republicans in Ohio have filed two measures](#) that would establish a closed primary system ahead of the 2024 Presidential primaries. This would mean only voters who previously declared a party affiliation would be allowed to vote in partisan primary elections.

Unaffiliated voters make up the vast majority of the electorate—there are 5.7 million Unaffiliated voters compared to 1.3 million registered Republicans and 1 million registered Democrats—meaning there’s over 5 times the number of independents than either major party.

As the [Editorial Board of](#) the Cleveland Plain Dealer put it: *“These bills would eliminate a right to open primaries Ohioans have had for 111 years. The reality is that closed primaries tip the scales toward party bosses, not voters, in deciding party nominees.”*

We’re doing everything we can to shut the legislation down. We’ll keep you updated!

Two Upcoming Events



Tuesday July 11th—Oklahoma United hosts a Burger Night & Town Hall in Oklahoma City

Oklahoma United is working tirelessly to bring open primaries to Oklahoma and today they’re hosting a town hall for folks in Oklahoma to hear more about what they’re doing and why open primaries would be a good thing for

Oklahoma from a panel of experts including: Open Primaries SVP Jeremy Gruber, Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum, Oklahoma Commissioner of Labor Leslie Osborn and moderated by the Potts Family Foundation CEO AJ Griffin.

If you're in Oklahoma and tired of the divisiveness in Oklahoma politics, you don't want to miss this.

[Register here.](#)

Friday July 14th—Open Primaries Next Virtual Discussion: *What it Takes to Deliver Fair Representation for the American People: A Conversation with Kent Thiry*

Kent Thiry wears many hats: business leader, political independent, patriot, consensus builder and political reform innovator are just a few. He has waged four successful election-reform ballot-initiative campaigns in Colorado: Opening primaries to unaffiliated voters (Prop 107 in 2016), restoring the state's presidential primary (Prop 108 in 2016), banning political gerrymandering and establishing independent redistricting commissions for the state's political maps (Amendments Y&Z in 2018). Prior to his work in Colorado, he co-authored the legislative redistricting measure in California.

Kent is not one to rest on his accomplishments. He continues to advocate for pro-democracy reform in Colorado and across the country as Co-Chair of Unite America. He has learned how to build reform coalitions that span the ideological spectrum, activate independent voters, connect with the grassroots - and win!

On Friday July 14th at 1pm ET, we'll host our next virtual discussion with Thiry as our special guest: What it takes to deliver fair representation for the American People: A conversation with Kent Thiry We'll be diving deep into his work in Colorado, and how he views the future of the democracy reform movement nationally. He'll also be available for a Q & A with all our zoom participants—so bring your questions.

[Register here!](#)