



R Sheet On Texas Primaries

Background

Texas operates an [open primary system](#) in which voters are not required to register with a specific party. When voters arrive at the polls, they choose which party's primary they wish to vote in and are limited to that primary for the remainder of the election cycle.

Current Debate

Recently, some Republican officials have called for Texas to [close its primaries](#) so that only individuals registered with a party can participate in that party's primary system.

At the 2024 Texas GOP convention, Republican delegates [passed a resolution](#) urging the state legislature to adopt closed primaries.

Proponents argue that open primaries allow political opponents and non-party members to influence candidate selection, which they believe undermines party values and harms party unity.

Opponents of the move [maintain](#) that closing the primary would turn over control of the Republican Party to passionate partisans whose views would not reflect the party's broader interests. Furthermore, they [argue](#) that closed primaries would disenfranchise Texas voters who do not wish to publicly or officially align with a specific party and eliminate the incentive for politicians to broaden their appeal beyond their base.

Action Items

- **Keep Texas Primaries Open to All Voters**

Closing Texas primaries would be a step backward. With taxpayers footing the bill for these elections, it is fundamentally unfair to restrict access based on party affiliation. A public election paid for with public dollars should serve the public, regardless of party registration. Preserving open primaries ensures that all eligible voters, including unaffiliated and minor-party supporters, have opportunities to shape their representation at every stage of the process.

- **Protect the Rights of Independent Voters**

An estimated [3 million Texas voters](#) are not affiliated with a major party. For many of them, the open primary is their only chance to meaningfully influence elections—especially in areas where one party's primary effectively decides the outcome. As of 2022, only about [5 percent of Texans](#) lived in districts with competitive races for the U.S. House, Texas House, or Texas Senate. Requiring party registration would create a needless barrier to participation and disenfranchise a significant segment of the electorate while also requiring [mass re-registration](#) of all voters. Texas should strive to expand access, not curtail it.

- **Strengthen Party Engagement**

Open primaries allow political parties to connect with a wider range of voters. Candidates in open primaries must appeal beyond their party's base, thereby increasing the likelihood that the eventual nominee will effectively represent the electorate. Not only does this benefit voters, it also strengthens the party by [broadening its coalition](#). Allowing voters to engage with a party's candidates in the primary may increase the possibility that they will support those candidates in the general election.

Summary

- Texas operates an open primary system that allows all voters to participate without registering with a party.
- Some Republican leaders have called for closing the primaries to limit participation to party-affiliated voters.
- Closing primaries would limit voter choice, reduce political engagement, and misuse public funds.

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