Partisanship of State Primary Election Systems

No updates required since October 30, 2023

**Background**

- State primary elections determine the candidates that will be on the ballot for the general election. States primary election systems vary widely, with some elections only open to voters registered with a particular party, while other states allow non-affiliated voters to participate as well. While most state primary systems are partisan, a few states have adopted nonpartisan primaries, in which voters cast a ballot in a single primary with all candidates on the same ballot. The top two or four candidates, depending on the state, then advance to the general election. Note: MAP relied on data from the Unite America Institute and their State of Reform report for this document.

**Scoring**

- State primary system is nonpartisan, 1 point
- State primary system is open to Independents, 1/2 point
- State primary system is completely closed to Independents, 0 points

**Summary Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State primary system is nonpartisan</td>
<td>4 states</td>
<td>Alaska, California, Louisiana, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State primary system is open to Independents</td>
<td>37 states</td>
<td>Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State primary system is completely closed to Independents</td>
<td>9 states &amp; D.C.</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware, D.C., Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State-by-State Sources and More Detail**

**Alabama (1/2)**
- State primary system is open to Independents.

**Alaska (1)**
- State primary system is nonpartisan.

**Arizona (1/2)**
- State primary system is open to Independents.
Arkansas (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

California (1)
  • State primary system is nonpartisan.

Colorado (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Connecticut (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Delaware (0)
  • State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

D.C. (0)
  • State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

Florida (0)
  • State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

Georgia (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Hawaii (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Idaho (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Illinois (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Indiana (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Iowa (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.
Kansas (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Kentucky (0)
  • State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

Louisiana (1)
  • State primary system is nonpartisan.

Maine (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Maryland (0)
  • State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

Massachusetts (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Michigan (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Minnesota (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Mississippi (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Missouri (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Montana (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Nebraska (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Nevada (0)
  • State primary system is completely closed to Independents.
New Hampshire (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

New Jersey (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

New Mexico (0)
- State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

New York (0)
- State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

North Carolina (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

North Dakota (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

Ohio (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

Oklahoma (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

Oregon (0)
- State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

Pennsylvania (0)
- State primary system is completely closed to Independents.

Rhode Island (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

South Carolina (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.

South Dakota (1/2)
- State primary system is open to Independents.
Tennessee (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Texas (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Utah (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Vermont (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Virginia (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Washington (1)
  • State primary system is nonpartisan.

West Virginia (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Wisconsin (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.

Wyoming (1/2)
  • State primary system is open to Independents.