

OPEN PRIMARIES

Unlike New York, close to 20 states have open primaries, including Virginia, in which Eric Cantor just lost the Republican primary. Other than Maine, most states with open primaries are in the South, the Midwest or the West.

DEFINITION: An open primary is one in which a registered voter does not have to be registered with a party in order to vote in a primary although, of course, a voter may vote in only one primary per election. The different types of open primary systems include those in which:

- A. Voters registered with a party may only vote in that party's primary but unaffiliated voters may vote in any party's primary
- B. Any registered voter may vote in any primary.

A variety of ballot types can be used in an open primary, including the type of ballot with which we are familiar in New York as well as other types.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

Arguments in Favor

- More voters eligible to vote
- Greater voter turnout
- More moderate candidates tend to be selected
- Members of minor parties can vote on major party candidates

Arguments Against

- Allows nominations inconsistent with party platform
- Encourages "strategic voting" or cross voting for weaker candidate
- Reduces distinctive ideological choices
- Allows for less transparent influences