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Do Republicans select their Candidate for President?

It should be no surprise that non- or pseudo-Republican candidates did well in New Hampshire, since CNN reports that roughly half of those who voted were not Republicans. Why there's a difference between "Party ID" and "Party Registration," but non-Republicans were 53 percent of the "Vote By Party ID" and were 47 percent of the "Vote By Party Registration." It is preposterous that these people played a major role in the selection of the Republican candidate!

New Hampshire's 47 percent is far greater than in Iowa, where 25 percent of the people participating in the caucuses were non-Republicans. Also, since we must assume that most or almost all of the non-Republican votes went to Huntsman and Paul, and since Huntsman and Paul together got 40 percent of the vote, it follows that virtually ALL of Huntsman and Paul's votes came from non-Republicans.

Who allowed New Hampshire's primary to continue as an open primary, despite the mess made by past open primaries (e.g., McCain winning New Hampshire with non-Republican votes in 2008)? The Republican party! Neither the party, nor the candidates as far as I know, did anything to protest or change this absurdity.

And even now, how many Republican candidates and politicians are pointing out that the results in New Hampshire, particularly Paul and Huntsman's second and third place finishes, are not indicative of what Republicans desire, since half the total votes came from non-Republicans?

New Hampshire Republican Primary

2012 Primary Process

Delegate Allocation: The 12 at-large delegates at stake represent nearly half of the original total, due to penalties imposed by the Republican National Committee for scheduling the primary in January. Delegates are allocated proportionally based on statewide results, with the state's three Republican National Committee members remaining as not pledged to any candidate.

Eligibility: New Hampshire residents who are registered Republicans or non-Republicans who register as Republicans on or before the day of the primary may vote in the Republican primary.

Open primaries in the United States

From Wikipedia – Last modified on 16 December 2011, at 16:01

An open primary is a primary election that does not require voters to be affiliated with a political party in order to vote for partisan candidates. In a traditional open primary, voters may select one party's ballot and vote for that party's nomination. As in a closed primary, the highest voted candidate in each party then proceeds to the runoff election. In a nonpartisan blanket primary, all candidates appear on the same ballot and the two highest voted candidates proceed to the runoff, regardless of party affiliation. The constitutionality of this system was affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States in 2008, whereas a partisan blanket primary was previously ruled to be unconstitutional in 2000.

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Pros and cons

Voter participation

The open primary could be seen as good for voter participation. First, the open primary allows nonpartisan or independent voters to participate in the nominating process. If these voters are allowed to help select the nominees then they may be more likely to vote in the general election, since one of the candidates could be someone the non-partisan voter voted for. Also, a moderate member of one party may agree more with a candidate for the nomination of another party. This voter will have more of an incentive to participate in the general election if there is a nominee whom he or she agrees with.

The open primary could also be viewed as bad for voter participation. Statistics show that voter participation in the United States was higher when people could only vote in the primary for their own party. In Hawaii, primary voter turnout fell from 74.6% in 1978 to 42.2% in 2006 after changing to open primaries. The closed primary system had more of an incentive for people to join one of the major parties. This led to people being more involved in the voting process. With the open primary, some argue, more voters become independent and are less likely to participate in the nominating or election processes.

Manipulation and dilution

Opponents of the open primary believe that the open primary leaves the party nominations vulnerable to manipulation and dilution. First, one party could organize its voters to vote in the other party's primary and choose the candidate that they most agree with or that they think their party could most easily defeat. Secondly, in the open primary moderates and independent voters can vote in either party. This occurrence may dilute the vote of a particular party and lead to a nominee who does not represent the views of his particular party.

For example, in the 2008 presidential primaries, exit polls say John McCain failed to win a single race among Republican voters, up to Super Tuesday, yet during that same period he went from also-ran to front runner, because most non-Republicans who crossed over voted for him. In New Hampshire, Mitt Romney won among registered Republicans, but John McCain won overall. Likewise, in South Carolina, Mike Huckabee won among self-identified Republicans, but John McCain won the state.

Similarly, some Republican advocates called for Republicans to cross over and vote in the Democratic race, to help Hillary Clinton win, on the premise that Obama had a better chance of beating their candidate. The Rush Limbaugh Show's "Operation Chaos" is the best known of these movements.

Open Primary Effects

John McCain did not win a single primary, among registered Republicans, up to Super Tuesday, but because of open primaries, won the nomination.

		NEW HAMPSHIRE	SOUTH CAROLINA	FLORIDA	MISSOURI
REGISTERED REPUBLICANS	McCain	34	29	33	29
	Romney	35	15	33	33
	Huckabee	13	32	15	34
DEMOCRATS AND OTHERS	McCain	40	35	44	35
	Romney	27	26	23	26
	Huckabee	9	23	11	23

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States with an open presidential primary

Alabama

Arizona – (Semi-closed, with primaries open only to unaffiliated or unrepresented voters, except for the Libertarian primary.)

Arkansas

Georgia

Hawaii – (Open primary for state, local, and congressional races; caucus system for presidential races.)

Idaho

Massachusetts – (All races' primaries open for "unenrolled"/unaffiliated voters only)

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

New Hampshire

North Dakota

South Carolina

Tennessee

Texas

Vermont

Virginia

Wisconsin