

Top Two Primary

Non-Partisan Elections in Oregon

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1 NON-PARTISAN OFFICES

In Oregon, the Legislature has adopted not one, but two separate processes for the nomination and election of public officials. In contrast to positions defined as “Partisan”, where its de-facto illegal to qualify for the general election ballot independent of a political party, many publicly elected positions are defined as “Non-Partisan”. For these positions, no candidate advances to the general election based solely on party affiliation.

2 TOP-TWO PRIMARY

For Non-Partisan office, any candidate may qualify for the primary election ballot by paying a small filing fee. Every candidate is allowed space in the primary “Voter’s Pamphlet” and all candidates are allowed to file on the exact same schedule. Democrats and Republicans are not allowed to start months earlier than Minor Party and Independent candidates.

Rather than separate, closed political party primaries, all candidates for the same office run in a single “Top-Two” primary. All voters, regardless of party affiliation or non-affiliation are allowed to vote in this primary – and only two candidates advance to the general election.

There is no possibility of a third party candidate sabotaging either of the two candidates during the general election. “Spoilers” are eliminated in the primary because no candidate is guaranteed a spot on the general election ballot based on political party membership.

3 POLITICAL PARTY ENDORSEMENTS

Oregon’s Top-Two primary isn’t perfect. All candidates appear on the ballot with the word “Nonpartisan”. (Why isn’t the name of a political party allowed?) Nonetheless, the statutes do allow for political party involvement.

Any candidate may claim the endorsement of a political party in their Voters’ Pamphlet statement by filing a form “SEL 400”. This form must be signed by both an authorized representative of the political party and the candidate. In this fashion, political parties may protect their “brand” and individual candidates are free to associate or disassociate themselves from political groups. A single candidate may be indorsed by multiple political parties as well.

4 WHY PARTISAN PRIMARIES AND A TOP-TWO PRIMARY?

The Top-Two Primary allows for full and equal participation by all voters and candidates – so why not conduct Non-Partisan elections for all offices?

Because Partisan elections provide both the opportunity to subsidize major party candidates and a convenient mechanism to stifle political opposition with unreasonable filing requirements and late filing dates. Most importantly, Partisan elections guarantee general election ballot placement for major party candidates.

Democrats and Republicans have controlled the Legislature and Courts for decades. They may disagree and fight on every other issue, but they cooperate to disenfranchise Independent and Minor Party voters.

State Voters' Pamphlet		SEL 400
Statement of Endorsement		REV 03/16 ORS 251.049
Warning Submitting a false signature on this statement is a violation of ORS 251.049, subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1000.		
Filing Information This Statement of Endorsement is only valid for the election indicated below.		
Election Date <input type="checkbox"/> Primary 2016 <input type="checkbox"/> General 2016 <input type="checkbox"/> Special Election provide date		
Statement or Argument Filing Name and Filing Type		
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate Statement	Candidate Name	
<input type="checkbox"/> Political Party Statement	Political Party Name	
<input type="checkbox"/> Assembly of Electors Statement	Assembly of Electors Name	
<input type="checkbox"/> Measure Argument Provide number	Name of Person Who Furnished Argument	
Endorsement Information		
→ You must select a method for endorsement information. Choose only one option. Option 1 allows the filer to determine how your name, the name of the organization you represent, if any, and other information about you will appear in the statement or argument. Option 2 requires the filer to reproduce your name, the name of the organization you represent, if any, and other information about you exactly as you specify in the space provided.		
Option 1		
Endorser Name		
Consent		
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to the use of my name, applicable title, the name of the organization I am authorized to represent, if any, and other biographical information about me in a statement or argument submitted by the filer listed above.		
Signature		Date Signed
Option 2		
Endorser Name		
Required Reproduction		
→ In the white space below, type your name and/or the name of the organization you are authorized to represent exactly as it should appear in the voters' pamphlet statement or argument. Your organization's name should be used only if the organization is endorsing the argument or statement. Your title must also be listed in this section if it is to appear in the voters' pamphlet statement or argument.		
Consent		
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to the use of my name, applicable title, the name of the organization I am authorized to represent, if any, and other biographical information about me, exactly as it appears in the Required Reproduction box, in a statement or argument submitted by the filer listed above.		
Signature		Date Signed