

Title:

**An initiated amendment to the South Dakota Constitution
establishing open primary elections.**

South Dakota Attorney General's Statement:

Currently, in order to appear on the general election ballot as a political party's nominee, candidates for the following offices must participate in a partisan primary election: Governor, State Legislature, U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and elected county offices. On the primary ballot, each candidate is listed with a party designation. Only registered members of the candidate's chosen party may vote for that candidate unless the political party has also opened the primary to voters with no party affiliation.

Under current law, candidates unaffiliated with a political party (independents) do not participate in the primary election. Rather, they appear on the general election ballot by filing proper nominating petitions.

For the above offices, this amendment establishes an open primary election for candidates, including independents. All registered voters may vote for any candidate. The two candidates with the most votes advance to the general election. For some offices, more than one candidate is to be elected at the general election. In those instances, two candidates will advance to the general election for each position to be filled.

If this amendment is adopted, State election laws will need to be changed or be subject to challenge under the U.S. Constitution.

Sponsor:

De Knudson 605.310.4367 knudson1@sio.midco.net

*This petition circulator is a volunteer and is not receiving
payment to circulate this petition.*

RECEIVED
AUG 23 2017

S.D. SEC. OF STATE

FACTS from Open Primaries South Dakota

- **All Voters Can Vote** – With top two open primaries all candidates for an office run against each other in the primary and all registered voters get to vote. The two candidates who get the most votes move on to the general election in November.
- **Independent Voter Numbers Increasing** - In South Dakota over 120,000 registered voters are excluded from voting in the primary. The number of independent or unaffiliated voters in the US has jumped. In polls, 46% identify themselves as independent.
- **Open Primary States** - About half the states in the U.S. have one form or another of open primaries. Three states have top two open primaries.
- **Public Funds Pay for the Primary** – Our primary elections are conducted with taxpayer money. Everyone must pay even if they can't vote!
- **Primary Elections Are Often More Important Than the General Election** - Most legislative elections in South Dakota are decided in the primary. Fewer than one-third are decided in a competitive general election contest.
- **Party-run Closed Primaries Incite Partisanship** – They only reward party loyalty. Closed primaries also result in very low voter turnout.
- **Support for Open Primaries in South Dakota** - In 2016, South Dakota voted 45% in favor of Amendment V, which combined open primaries with removing party labels on the ballot. This measure does not remove party labels from the ballot.
- **Open Primaries Being Considered** - The open primary concept is a hot topic now. South Dakota received national coverage during the 2016 election for a similar measure. Such bills have been introduced in 2017 in 9 states: Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina and Virginia. Other states, including Florida, are examining it.
- **Positive Change** - History suggests that top two open primaries do not change political leanings in a state. Red states stay red, and blue states blue. But all voters get to vote.

"Open primaries let all voters vote!"

Paid for by Open Primaries South Dakota

opspd2018@gmail.com <https://www.facebook.com/openprimariessouthdakota>

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This petition circulator is a paid petition circulator and is receiving a salary of \$10 per hour to circulate this petition.

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- **Primary Elections Are ~~More~~ Important Than the General Election** - Most legislative elections in South Dakota are decided in the primary. Fewer than 10% are decided in a competitive general election contest.
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