

Position: Primary Election Systems

(Adopted March 2017)

LWVO supports open primary election systems that narrow the field of candidates for the general election and permit all registered voters, regardless of political party membership, to participate.

In general, League members believe that nonpartisan primaries are more appropriate at the more administrative county and local government levels, while partisan primaries are more appropriate for state and national policy-making offices.

Any proposal to restructure primary elections in Ohio should have as its goals, in order of importance:

1. To increase voter participation;
2. To lead to more competitive general elections;
3. To enfranchise the largest number of registered voters; and
4. To lessen partisan polarization.

League members overwhelmingly support replacing Ohio's current primary election system with a more open alternative, in which any registered voter may choose to vote any party's ballot without having to be a member of that party. To meet this goal, statutes permitting or requiring challenges and declarations of party allegiance should be eliminated. Local and county governments that employ nonpartisan, "top-two" primaries already meet this goal.