It is easy to understand how veterans might have a tough time declaring allegiance to one of the warring political parties. There is disdain in our ranks for the divisiveness and posturing. About 37% of recent war veterans have not declared party affiliation nationally. In Maine, those individuals can’t vote in primaries. I think that needs to change.

—Zach Bornstein, former Marine

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER. THEY DESERVE OPEN PRIMARIES.

In America today, 40% of legislators run unopposed in the general election. Unopposed! Primaries are often the only elections that matter. But not everyone is allowed to participate. Many states bar independents from voting in primary elections. That includes growing numbers of military veterans who fought to protect our country but are disenfranchised.

POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION
IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS OF AMERICA 2019 MEMBER SURVEY

Veterans are more likely to be politically independent than the general population. Nearly half (49%) of all U.S. veterans and 44.5% of recent war veterans do not identify with a major party.

—PEW Research Center

VETERANS SHARE A STRONG BELIEF IN THE COMMON GOOD

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“I came home from a combat warzone to a political warzone, and as an independent I don’t have a voice.”

—Justin Otoski, U.S. Army

Veterans tend to share a strong belief in the common good—country over party. They enlist not to serve a Republican America or a Democratic America, but a United States of America. With their experience working in diverse teams that pursue common goals under great stress, they are uniquely distanced from the partisan hostilities in Washington and around the country. As a result, more and more veterans are choosing not to affiliate with a political party.

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