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Independent Voters Excluded, Frustrated Heading Into Florida Primaries, Finds Survey

New York, NY – *March 07, 2016* – Open Primaries, a national leader on election reform, released today the results of a statewide survey of Florida’s independent voters leading up to the state’s presidential primary on March 15th. The survey finds that independent voters in Florida are deeply frustrated by the lack of inclusion and the level of dysfunction in government, with the vast majority (87%) indicating they would support a Top Two Nonpartisan Primary ballot initiative.

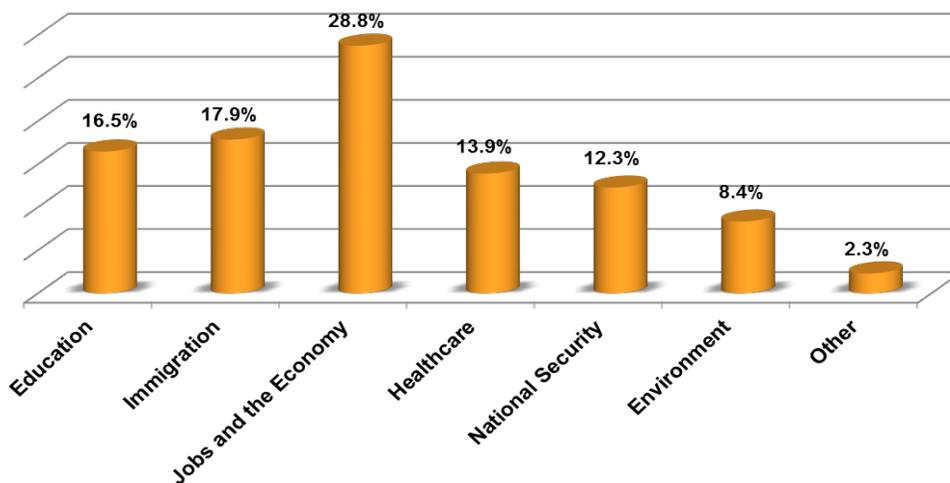
Under Florida’s closed primary system, voters must join a political party to vote in the primaries. This current system bars Florida’s 3.2 million independent voters – well over a quarter of registered voters in the state -- from casting their vote for a presidential candidate.

Florida independents feel excluded from the current political debate. 73% of respondents stated they do not feel represented in either party. Independents believe their exclusion from the Presidential Primary is unfair and consider it disingenuous to be required to register with a party to have a say in choosing which presidential contenders make the cut for the general election. Overall, independents in Florida are motivated to make change and are actively looking for new ways to empower voters over parties and special interests.

Key survey findings include:

- 95% of respondents view identifying as an independent as a way to focus on the candidates and the issues, regardless of the candidates’ party affiliation.
- 93% prefer a truly independent redistricting commission.
- 87% think Florida needs a more inclusive political process in order to empower voters and support a shift to nonpartisan primaries.
- 85% do not feel Florida’s current voting system is fair to independent voters.

TOP CONCERNS OF VOTERS



"It is an outrage that Florida independents are excluded from the political conversation at a time when there is so much turmoil in our country. Voters are becoming independent because both parties are unstable and ineffective at translating the dreams and aspirations of the American people into reality. We need new ways for people to come together that are not based on political parties. That's what independents, and many Democrats and Republicans, want to see happen in Florida and across the country.

-John Opdycke, President of Open Primaries

*"This poll is further confirmation that independent voters are unhappy with a system that excludes them from voting in elections that matter," said Glenn Burhans an attorney with Stearns Weaver Miller and the Chair of [All Voters Vote](#), a group that is considering an amendment to Florida's constitution that will allow all voters the opportunity to vote in all state elections. Burhans added, "I am especially buoyed by the findings which show that independent voters **care** about politics and **want** to vote in elections. The sad fact is that the vast majority of them feel the political parties do not represent their values and we believe that should not prevent them from participating in our electoral process."*

- Glenn Burhans, Chair of All Voters Vote

Florida has 3.25 million or 27% of its registered voters that are No-Party-Affiliation/Independents - this survey supports that they are not pleased with their exclusion from primaries via the political parties' antics and Florida's closed primary system! [Florida Fair And Open Primaries](#) supports the [All Voters Vote](#) initiative #14-18 for the Top Two Open Primaries for Florida!

-Duane E. Pike, Florida Fair and Open Primaries

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Open Primaries conducted a statewide phone survey of 428 Independent voters from January 5, 2016 - January 30, 2016, in an effort to gauge Independent voters' opinions on the political environment in Florida, learn their views on the upcoming Presidential Primary and provide voter education about nonpartisan election reform. The full survey findings can be found on the http://www.openprimaries.org/research_florida_independent_voter_attitude_survey.

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Available for Interview

John Opdycke, President of Open Primaries (based in New York City)

Glenn Burhans, Chair of All Voters Vote (based in Miami, FL.)

Duane E. Pike, Florida Fair and Open Primaries (based in Tampa, FL.)

About Open Primaries

Open Primaries is a national, nonprofit 501(c)(4) organization working to enact open and nonpartisan primary systems, counter efforts to impose closed primaries, educate voters, train and support spokespeople, and participate in the building of local, state and national open primaries coalitions. Open Primaries is a movement of diverse Americans who believe in a simple, yet radical idea: no American should be required to join a political party to exercise their right to vote. More information about Open Primaries, its mission and work, can be found at www.openprimaries.org