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NEW NATIONAL OPEN PRIMARIES ORGANIZATION LAUNCHED

WILL PARTICIPATE IN CAMPAIGN TO ENACT BALLOT MEASURE 90 IN OREGON

Open Primaries Inc., a new national 501 (c) (4) nonprofit political reform organization, opened its doors on September 4, 2014.

The organization is being led by independent activist **John Opdycke** and was launched with support from philanthropists **Laura and John Arnold**.

The mission of Open Primaries is to advocate for open and nonpartisan primary systems, educate the public about the benefits of open primaries, train and support spokespeople, and participate in the building of local, state and national open primaries coalitions.

According to Opdycke, "The issue of primary reform is entering the mainstream. The conversation started at the grassroots, among independents and progressive reformers, and has slowly expanded into the pages of our major newspapers and the halls of Congress. As a longtime activist in the political reform arena, I'm proud to be leading a new effort to further popularize open primaries and build support among voters and policy makers alike."

During the progressive era, partisan primary elections were enacted to curb the power of party bosses and bring voters into the process of selecting party nominees. Today, 40% of voters do not wish to enroll in a political party, and closed primaries bar them from voting. Open Primaries believes that every American should be allowed to vote in every round of elections, regardless of party affiliation. Closed primaries are fundamentally unfair as they bar millions of Americans from voting, increase partisanship in state legislatures and in Congress, and make it more difficult for Americans--both voters and elected officials--to come together across ideological lines.

"The country needs primary reform," says philanthropist **John Arnold**, who provided initial funding to launch Open Primaries. "Exclusionary primary systems hurt the voters and make it difficult for elected officials to solve complicated issues. Open primaries create the possibility of new policy ideas and new conversations. If more members of Congress are accountable to all of their constituents, not just their partisan supporters, I think we could see a change of tone in Washington."

The organization is getting involved in Oregon, where a coalition of progressive independents and local business leaders has come together to support a ballot measure (BM 90) to enact **Top Two nonpartisan primaries**. Top Two nonpartisan primaries were enacted in California and Washington, while attempts to enact them in New York City (2003), Oregon (2008) and Arizona (2012) came up short. Top Two replaces partisan primaries with a single nonpartisan primary open to all voters, with the top two vote getters, regardless of party, moving forward to the general election.

For more information, visit Openprimaries.org or contact John Opdycke at (646) 567-8674.