

Alan Novak

Thank you for allowing me to testify today on repealing closed primaries and allowing Independents to vote in our primary elections.

From 1996 to 2005, I served as the chair of the Pennsylvania Republican Party. I am the former chair of the Pennsylvania Republican Party. Before that, I was the former Chester County Republican Committee chair. I care a lot about the electoral process and ensuring candidates and party committees are prepared to win elections and responsive to their electorate.

As someone who has spent many years thinking about the operations of campaigns, it is the smart thing to do to let Independents vote in primaries. It was my job to recruit candidates, make our party's case to voters, and get out the vote for our party. I know that the earlier you can communicate with and organize voters, the better positioned you are as a candidate or party committee.

While there is a perception that closed primaries help political parties, closed primaries make it more difficult for parties by limiting the pool of potential candidates, voters, and resources for primaries and later in general elections.

Parties and candidates should seek to draw votes from the largest possible pool of voters, and repealing closed primaries will allow candidates and parties to talk with more voters earlier in the process.

Independents are the fastest-growing bloc of registered voters. Nearly half of millennials and Gen Z voters describe themselves as independents. By cutting themselves off from this growing group of Pennsylvanians in the primary, candidates and parties risk alienating large swaths of the commonwealth while making it more challenging to communicate with these voters in the short time between the primary and general election.

By repealing closed primaries, candidates and parties can tap into this emerging bloc of voters. They will be able to strengthen their coalitions and provide candidates and parties with access to more engaged and active voters. It will make the parties more relevant and the candidates stronger.

Repealing closed primaries is also fair for taxpayers. Each primary election costs taxpayers approximately \$25 million. Whether you are Republican, Democratic, Independent, or unaffiliated, you help pay for primary elections, but unless you are a Republican or Democrat, you cannot participate. This is effectively taxation without representation. The fair thing to do is open the primaries to all voters.