**What?**

***Our Goal: Have laws enacted by Maryland’s legislators which implement Open Primaries in Maryland.***

Either:

*Fully* Open Primaries” allow Unaffiliated voters to select either the Democratic or Republican primary and vote in it. It does not allow Democrats to vote in Republican primaries or Republicans to vote in Democratic primaries.

or

*Nonpartisan* Open Primaries allow all voters to vote in in a single combined primary that has all candidates. Democratic, Republican, Unaffiliated, and 3rd Party voters can vote for the candidate of their choice, regardless of the voter’s party or the candidate’s party.

**Why?**

1. In most places, **primaries are more important than the general election in deciding who represents us**.
2. Open Primaries result in a ***stronger, less partisan, more inclusive, and more effective democracy***, one that gets things done.
3. Open Primaries ***expand voting rights and freedom***.
4. Open Primaries ***upgrade and modernize Maryland’s election system*** to one already used in most of our Nation.
5. Open Primaries ***end taxation without representation*** in primaries.

**Why? … More Detail**

1. In most places, **primaries are more important than the general election in deciding who represents us**.

(Source: League of Women Voters of Maryland study, page 7. https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lwvmaryland/pages/127/attachments/original/1505509988/Primary\_Study\_Background\_Materials)

1. Open Primaries result in a **stronger, less partisan, more inclusive, and more effective democracy**, one that gets things done.
	1. Open Primaries incent candidates to appeal to … and work for … all the voters they represent, not just partisans.

(Source: https://issuu.com/robquigley/docs/schwarzinst\_policy\_report-c\_grose\_-)

* 1. Open Primaries allow voters to support the individual candidate they think will best serve them and their fellow Marylanders, rather than being limited to the ones chosen by their party.
1. Open Primaries **expand voting rights and freedom**. Open Primaries give more voting rights to Unaffiliated (independent) and 3rd Party voters, who today can’t vote in primaries at all. Open Primaries give more voting freedom to Democratic, Republicans, and 3rd Party voters, who today can only vote in their party’s primary.
	1. A large number of Maryland voters are already Unaffiliated. According to the Maryland State Board of Elections there are over 831 thousand Unaffiliated voters in our state. That’s 20% or 1 in 5 of all registered voters.

Across our Nation, 42% of Americans consider themselves independent.

(Source: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx>)

Among millennials, 50% consider themselves independent.

(Source: Pew Research, 2014)

* 1. Unaffiliated voters are a growing portion of all voters. It is projected that, by 2035, Unaffiliated voters will be the second largest group of voters in Maryland.

(Source: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/openprimaries/pages/4575/attachments/original/1637687269/ROI\_Report\_R1-1-compressed.pdf?1637687269)

* 1. The current system of closed primaries in Maryland coerces many independent-minded voters to register as Democrats or Republicans only so they can have a voice in primaries. No citizen should be forced to join a political party simply to exercise their right to vote.
1. Open Primaries **upgrade and modernize Maryland’s election system** to one already used in most of our Nation.
	1. Maryland is one of only 16 states and DC which do not have some form of Open Primaries for congressional and state elections.

(Source: [https://www.openprimaries.org/rules-in-your-state/](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.openprimaries.org%2Frules-in-your-state%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ca9ee02cac43b4652478908da4b06b0a6%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637904789354922088%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Wogm9PFThXVtAlr4C6kJpUOfuaDIklo2s4RC20EBMWc%3D&reserved=0))

1. Open Primaries **end taxation without representation** in primaries.
	1. All Taxpayers, including those who are Unaffiliated, pay the cost of primaries. But Unaffiliated voters can’t vote in primaries. It’s only fair that Unaffiliated voters be allowed to vote in the primaries that their tax dollars pay for.

(Source: https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/election-costs.aspx)