



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on November 20, 2023

Open Primaries Touted as Way to Promote “Moderate” Republicans

A recent fundraiser in Oklahoma illustrates that the goal of opening political party primaries to non-members of the party is to move Republican officeholders more to the left — or as they put it, more “moderate.” Three political personalities prominent in Oklahoma were featured in the Monday edition of the *Oklahoman* newspaper. (The *Oklahoman* itself was once a conservative daily newspaper, but since the passing of its founding family, and its becoming part of the left-wing USA Today network, it regularly slants its so-called news articles to favor progressive and Democrat positions).



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Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt, who in 2017 was rated a mere 13 percent on the Conservative Index published by the *Oklahoma Constitution* newspaper, was among the participants advocating ending the state’s closed primary system. Holt was registered as a Republican while in the state Senate.

A closed primary is a method of choosing the candidates to represent the political party in the general election in which only registered party members can participate. This would seem to make sense, as one would not think Baptists should choose the pope in the Catholic Church or that Methodists should select deacons at a local Baptist congregation.

An open primary, on the other hand, allows any registered voter to vote in any political party’s primary. Tulsa Mayor G. T. Bynum, another well-known RINO (Republican in Name Only) in the Sooner State, explained why he supports the open primary system, arguing that it leads “to more effective government by reducing the potential for partisanship in office.” Of course, a government can be quite *effective*, without being a *good* government — Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, and Joseph Stalin ran pretty *effective* governments. Our nation was founded on the idea that the role of government is to protect our God-given liberties, not just be “effective.”

The *Oklahoman* article, which chose not to quote anyone who had a problem with the open primaries, factually erred when it said that participant Mickey Edwards was a “prominent” Republican, along with Holt and Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Leslie Osborn. While Holt and Osborn — both of whom previously served in the Oklahoma Legislature, with low conservative ratings — are certainly still *registered* as Republicans, Mickey Edwards is *not* a Republican. It is true that Edwards was once a registered Republican, but he formally left the party a few years ago.

Before exiting the party, Edwards had drifted away from the strongly conservative stance that he took early in his political career when he represented an Oklahoma congressional district from 1977-1993. Edwards won election in 1976 as a staunch conservative Republican, and during his tenure in Congress, he voted mostly conservative. He even publicly converted from Judaism to Christianity in the mid-70s, proclaiming himself a “born-again” Christian. But, not long after leaving Congress, Edwards renounced



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that conversion, and returned to the Jewish faith.

Edwards not only renounced Christianity, but he abandoned the public conservative stance he had taken when he was running for office, and eventually even left the Republican Party. He joined the left-leaning Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations, an organization dedicated to globalism. He voted for Barack Obama in 2008, and endorsed Joe Biden in 2020. At a book signing held at the University of Oklahoma a few years ago for his book *The Parties vs. The People*, Edwards lamented that Utah residents had chosen Mike Lee (a staunch conservative) as their U.S. senator to replace a “moderate” Republican.

In the *Oklahoman* article, Edwards explained that the closed primary “doesn’t encourage the selection of candidates who might have more moderate or centrist views.”

This is clearly all about moving the Republican Party closer to the Democratic Party. In Oklahoma — a state with an overwhelmingly Republican legislature that has not voted Democrat for president since 1964 — it has become obvious that politicians who are Democrats at heart often run as Republicans. Matt Hindman, a political science professor at the University of Tulsa, was quoted as saying that many voters are “working within the system, registering as Republicans to try and elect more moderate GOP candidates at the primary stage.”

The name of the group promoting the open primary in Oklahoma is Oklahomans United for Progress, and its goal is to get the idea on the ballot through Oklahoma’s initiative petition process.

Other schemes designed to push U.S. politics to the left include the “ranked-choice” voting system or “jungle primary.” In ranked-choice, voters are asked to vote for their second choice as well as their first choice. This has tended to help more “moderate” candidates, as was the case in a recent election in Alaska, in which all candidates, regardless of political party, run in one giant “jungle” primary.

The Oklahoma effort is part of a national effort, partnering with other organizations, such as the USC Schwarzenegger Institute. (Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was a prime example of a RINO who used the “jungle primary” to get elected). On the Open Primary site, a photograph has a woman holding a sign reading “Closed Primary = Voter Suppression.” Of course, “voter suppression” is a charge leveled quite often by Democrats such as Stacey Abrams in Georgia. In other words, this is all about electing more Democrats and Republicans who will vote like Democrats.

Those who believe that we need a limited government through the constitutional republic established by the Founders, rather than the so-called “effective” government promoted by these anti-conservative supporters of the “open” primary need to be aware of this devious movement and be prepared to oppose it.



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