



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 1, 2022

Why Are Democrats Voting in Republican Primaries?

With Republican turnout far outpacing that of the Democrats so far in the 2022 primaries, different views are being offered as to why this is happening. Yahoo News, for example, is arguing that, at least in part, this is due to Democrats voting in Republican primaries to vote against Trump-backed Republicans in those primaries.

Perhaps.

In Georgia, for example, incumbent Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a Republican, was on the receiving end of the hostility of former President Donald Trump, due to what Trump and many of his supporters believe was a failure on the part of Raffensperger to oppose Democrats in that state from committing widespread fraud in the 2020 presidential election.

Trump supported an opponent in the Republican primary against Raffensperger, but Raffensperger won anyway, with 27,000 votes over the 50 percent of the vote needed to avoid a runoff. But over 37,000 Democrats voted in the *Republican* primary, in what is called “crossover” voting. In many states, like Georgia, citizens can cast their primary vote in either party’s primary. These are called “open” primaries. In “closed” primary states, one must be a registered voter in the party before voting in that party’s primary.

Open primaries certainly can lead to mischief. This not just done by Democrats voting in Republican primaries, either. In 2008, conservative radio commentator Rush Limbaugh urged Republicans in open primary states to vote in Democratic Party primaries for Hillary Clinton, in what he called “Operation Chaos.” It was not that Limbaugh preferred Clinton over then-Senator Barack Obama, but with the Republican nomination mostly settled, he thought it would cause “chaos” in the Democratic ranks if Obama were denied seeking the nomination early.

Regardless of the merits of Limbaugh’s effort, this sort of thing does happen. It is a particular problem in presidential contests in years when a party has an incumbent running for reelection. For example, in 2020, with Trump facing no serious opposition within the Republican Party for renomination, there is little doubt that some Republicans crossed over to vote for Senator Bernie Sanders, thinking the avowed socialist would be easier to beat in the general election. Democrats no doubt did the same thing in 2012 when Obama was running for reelection.

Those who oppose such chicanery on principle will make reasonable arguments that only real Republicans should be voting in Republican primaries, and only real Democrats should be voting in Democratic primaries. After all, the argument goes, why should a Methodist be picking the deacons in the local Baptist church?



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But it is difficult to divine the intent of all of the hundreds of thousands of voters who do cross over in primaries. In Georgia, it is possible that many of the nearly 40,000 Democrats who cast votes in the Republican primary are disenchanted with their Democratic Party. One would hope so.

In fact, Republican primaries are drawing many more voters than the Democratic primaries this year — by a wide margin. In Texas, for example, while Democratic participation was up over 30,000 over 2018 (the last midterm election year), Republican participation was up over 400,000! Similar results could be cited across the country.

While the Democrats now hold the White House, the House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate (by virtue of having Vice President Kamala Harris available to break the 50-50 Senate tie), Republicans actually *gained* seats in the 2020 election, and President Trump received millions more votes in 2020 than he garnered in 2016.

Republicans have actually been gaining more registered voters in several states, such as Pennsylvania, which helps explain Trump's surprising victory there in 2016. And, of course, the 2020 results in Pennsylvania are still a point of great controversy, as anyone who has seen Dinesh D'Souza's documentary *2000 Mules* can understand.

Since 2014, Republicans have added around 450,000 more registered voters in Pennsylvania, while Democrats have actually *lost* nearly 100,000. There is certainly a realignment taking place in the two major political parties, and Trump was both a cause and a beneficiary of this realignment. In North Carolina, Democrats once outnumbered Republicans by nearly 600,000, but that lead has now declined to less than 300,000.

A Monmouth poll has found a 12-point shift away from the Democrats to Republicans in the short time that Joe Biden has been president. Republicans now lead in all of the generic congressional polls (in which pollsters do not ask about specific races, but simply ask which political party respondents favor in this year's congressional contests).

Still, there is opportunity for mischief, and some of it is pushed by Establishment RINO Republicans like Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, who has actually worked to defeat "pro-Trump" Republicans around the country. Kinzinger, who voted to impeach Trump, has formed an organization calling itself Country First, which directed mailers and text messages to Georgia Democrats asking them to support Raffensperger for the sake of "democracy."

Kinzinger is actually considering opposing former Governor Sarah Palin's bid to win a seat in the House of Representatives from Alaska. Palin was the running mate of the late Senator John McCain in 2008. McCain's failed presidential run illustrates what I call the "McCain Syndrome." McCain was the darling of the liberal media in 2008 — until he won the Republican nomination. The media then began to trash him so as to support the bid of Obama. This is also not new — the media supporting so-called moderate Republicans in the primaries, then turning on them in the general election. The same thing happened to Mitt Romney in 2012. For that matter, the media actually gave Donald Trump decent coverage until he won the nomination — no doubt thinking he would be easier to beat in the general election (boy, were they surprised!).

"Donald Trump came in and took over the Republican Party with nationalism," Kinzinger said in an apparent explanation as to why he is putting more into defeating conservative Republicans in primaries than into defeating liberal Democrats. But criticism of Trump's "America First" campaign with a "Country First" effort seems rather hypocritical.



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Republicans must be on guard in the 2024 primaries. If Biden is running unopposed for the Democratic Party nomination, it would not be surprising if there are thousands of voters who will try to create chaos in the Republican primaries — which is a reason that all states should have closed primaries.

Steve Byas is a university instructor of history and government, and the author of History's Greatest Libels. He may be contacted at byassteve@yahoo.com.



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