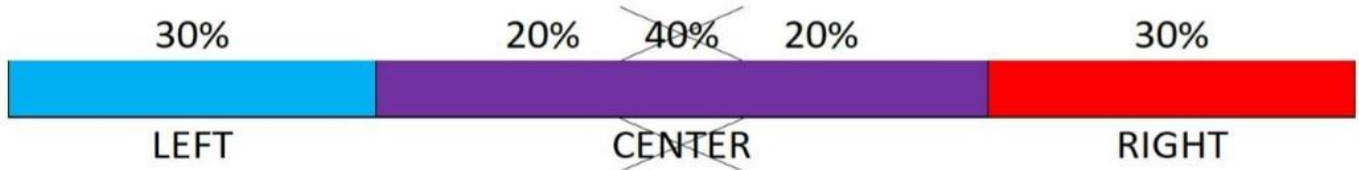


We can fix this mess!



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FOREWORD

I have tried to keep this paper as short as possible; my thoughts go far beyond this, so keep in mind this is just an overview of a few of the most important election fixes, and not a review of all the problems.

The changes I discuss here need to be applied to all elections; national, state, local and even in private organizations.

There are a lot of ways to do the mechanics of holding an election, different types of voting systems, many ways to count votes, and lots of different styles of governments. I started this paper so I can figure out for myself which voting system best supports my belief in the principal of majority consensus with respect for minority rights. In other words- truly democratic elections.

I encourage everyone to dig as deep as you can into this, there are a lot of resources out there. I believe the more you look into how we are doing elections and the problems with them, the closer your opinions will come to mine.

If you want to give arguments, for or against, let me know so these ideas can be better refined and improved. *This is what this paper is all about*; it is to work through some issues, do a little research, and to fix this mess.

Please remember, this is not about me, this project is to find the best way to ***improve your say, to make your voice louder***, on how the government should run. You don't have to like everything I am proposing here, but if you find just one thing that's makes you say "hey, he's right" please help me get the word out. Together we can get a few things fixed.

“Complaining about a problem without proposing a solution is called whining.” – Teddy Roosevelt

A SUMMARY OF WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Establish a nation-wide National General Election Day using Plurality Voting on the first Tuesday of November on even numbered years. All final elections- local, state, and national (and ballot measures), are to be on this date with a few weeks of early voting. General Elections on odd years and on oddball months are voter suppression. I don't cover that in this paper.

Establish a nation-wide Nonpartisan Top Two Primary Day using Score Voting or Approval Voting sometime before the National General Election Day. This has to be an open primary- my definition of an open primary. All Top Two Primary elections- local, state, and national, are to be on this date with a few weeks of early voting. All ballot measures must be on these primaries also, as a non-binding vote. The Nonpartisan Top Two Primary should be mail-in only.

We need a nonpartisan unbiased system that encourages everyone to run for election who want to and cuts the number of candidates down to a manageable size before the Top Two Primary. I don't cover that in this paper.

Eliminate the (Political Party) on all ballots for all elections. All elections have to be nonpartisan.

Require a NO PREFERENCE option on all ballots for all elections for all elected positions and all ballot measures (the Score Voting ballot has this built in).

We need an extensive election auditing system for each election, to prove there was no cheating during the whole process. This auditing system must be well-advertised, so everyone has confidence in the results. I don't cover that in this paper.

We need to end gerrymandering. I don't cover that in this paper.

Change campaign contribution laws (**we need a constitutional amendment**) so that candidates for public office can only take campaign contributions from those people (and only real people, not any organizations) that live in the voting district the candidate seeks to represent, so elected officials only listen to the wishes of the people they represent. The only exception would be public financing. I don't cover that in this paper (but isn't this self-explanatory?).

FIRST THOUGHTS

As you dig into election reform, you will often hear some people say we need to have more political parties so all voters can find a party that better represents their political views. I agree elections must be designed so any candidate, from any party, that has the most voter support can win. Our politicians have to represent the voters and political parties have to represent the voters.

It is obvious that a lot of politicians don't really represent the wishes of their voters, and the political parties don't represent their voters very well either. I suspect if someone would put in the work to list out: a) what voters want in a politician; b) what the parties say their platform is; c) and what the politicians actually do, you would find that politicians and political parties don't really represent and serve their voters.

For you Republicans, and you Democrats, **election reforms are not a threat to your party** or your ideas on how this country should be run. These reforms will make your politicians and political party accountable to you; they will actually represent you. As we fix our election systems, we will end up with politicians and parties that listen to you. We don't need forty political parties; we need the ones we do have, to listen to us.

Wouldn't that be nice?

WHY DOESN'T ANYONE UNDERSTAND THIS?

On election night 2012 I was watching TV and the commentators were discussing how Congress has gotten to be so politically divided over the

past few decades. Tom Brokaw made a comment to the effect “I don’t understand why the only people in Congress are the extreme left and the extreme right and only a few moderates are left. I don’t understand how the government got so divided.”

Really? At first I thought he had to be joking (because how could anyone not know?) but seeing the look on his face I think it was an honest statement. Tom, of all people, should know why government, at all levels, is: a) so divided and so dysfunctional; b) is reduced to just screaming and yelling and playing games; c) and does not reflect the will of the people, because the answer is so simple.

When something is designed to give a certain result, no one should be surprised by the result.

Whether you like to look at every poll you come across or over your lifetime you have talked to thousands of people about politics, you know the largest bloc of people call themselves moderates- there are more moderates than liberals, there are more moderates than conservatives. If you don’t believe me, I challenge you to look up the thousands of polls for yourself, or go talk to your neighbors.

In most polls I have seen lately, moderates get close to *being more than* liberals and conservatives COMBINED. And the percent of Americans that consider themselves moderates is growing every election cycle.

As with any political discussion, whether someone is left, right, or centrist, depends on how you define the blocs you are trying to identify and which political positions you put in which camp when you do the poll and analyze the results.

For my discussion, I will use 30% are left wing, 40% are moderates and 30% are right wing (304030), mostly because it makes for easy-to-understand math. I don’t want to over-state the size of the centrist/moderate voting bloc if someone has a problem with the way a survey was done, so I will be conservative. But keep in mind the political center may not just be the largest voting bloc at 40%; it probably is the majority.

- (i) *When it comes to holding elections, it does not matter what percent of voters are conservative.*
- (ii) *When it comes to holding elections, it does not matter what percent of voters are liberal.*
- (iii) *When it comes to holding elections, it does not matter what percent of voters are centrists.*

What does matter, is each voter has an equal chance to have their voice heard on Election Day. Everyone's vote has to matter. All voters must have equal say in their country.

If we fix the civics education system and truth in political advertising and money's influence on elections and legislation, the fact that only minorities can win elections will not change.

Our election system is rigged against the majority.

WHERE DO WE START?

The first rule on holding elections that reflect majority consensus, is never, never, never have more than two candidates on the ballot for the General Election. **The first rule on holding elections that reflect majority consensus, is never, never, never have more than two candidates on the ballot for the General Election.**

Yes, I know this sentence is repeated, but the issue is far too important to be over-stated. As an example, let's say a politician is running for re-election and 60% really hate him and would never vote for him. If there are two candidates running against him in the General Election and each get 30% of the vote, the incumbent- that 60% hates- will win the election with 40% of the vote and the will of 60% of the voters that really hate him is denied.

To take this further, who would win an election with ten Republicans and one Democrat on the ticket? Who would win in an election with one Republican and ten Democrats on the ticket?

Even candidates that get just a few percent of the vote can change election results from the will of the majority, to the minority winning an

election. Look at what would happen in an election where one candidate gets 49.0% of the vote, another gets 48.0% of the vote and a third gets 3.0%. Think about what the results would have been if the politician that got 3.0% of the vote, wasn't running, and these 3% votes would have gone to the candidate that got 48.0%. Majority consensus is eliminated when more than 2 candidates are on the General Election ballot using our current voting method!

Sometimes conservatives try to get a second liberal to run as an independent in the General Election to split the other side's vote, and sometimes liberals try to get a second conservative to run as an independent in the General Election to split the other side's votes. Vote splitting is a dirty trick that eliminates majority rule and CANNOT BE ALLOWED.

In the General Election, there can never be more than two candidates on the ballot, so our leaders reflect who the majority of us want to hold that job.

We have to have Nonpartisan Top Two Primaries using Score or Approval Voting so only the two most generally acceptable candidates move on to the General Election.

USING PLURALITY VOTING IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

The Plurality Voting method is the only voting method acceptable in the General Election.

Plurality is the most common method we use for Primary and General Elections; each voter gets one vote for each position. The top voter getter wins. Very simple!!!

If you talk to hundreds of people about politics and you will find out Plurality Voting is the simplest voting method to understand. And for the General Election, we cannot use any method more complicated. This makes Score Voting, STAR Voting, Ranked Choice Voting, Borda Count and Approval Voting unacceptable methods to use in the General Election.

If voters cannot see at a glance how the voting system works, some will not accept the results. If it takes a lot of digging to figure out how “they” (the computers and faceless bureaucrats) came up with the results, we have an unacceptable problem. Even if it takes just a little effort to understand how the system works, this leaves a big window open for conspiracy theories.

Think about the disaster we would have had after the 2020 presidential election if we had used Ranked Choice Voting like we did for the June 2021 New York City Mayoral Democratic Primary. Even in a small election like this, it took a month to determine the winner. Do you think many voters can explain the math behind how THAT winner was determined?

We can only use Plurality Voting in the General Election since it is the simplest to understand and the least susceptible to conspiracy theories making the results obvious to everyone. Plurality Voting is the best method there is when there are two candidates, *but it is the worst voting method when there are three or more candidates*. This means we can only have Nonpartisan Top Two Primaries because we can only have two candidates in the General Election.

An unacceptably high percent of Democrats did not believe the results of the 2016 presidential election and an unacceptably high percent of Republicans did not believe the results of the 2020 presidential election.

Apparently, we have entered “The Age of Conspiracy Theories”; our voting method in the General Election cannot contribute to this mess.

This makes Plurality Voting the only acceptable voting method to use in the General Election. It is so simple and so obvious who won. Simple, simple, simple. No one can dispute the results based on this voting method, because the process is so clear.

We can't use any voting method that would introduce any confusion. **We just can't leave room for doubt. WE. JUST. CAN'T.**

NONPARTISAN TOP TWO PRIMARIES

In Montana, when you go to the polls for the Primary Election, you will be handed ballots divided by party. On one ballot are all the elected positions that are up for election with all the Republicans, and only the Republicans, that are running for these positions, on it. On another ballot are all the elected positions that are up for election and this ballot has just the Democrats that are running for these positions on it. On rare occasions there are ballots for other parties. There are no ballots for independent candidates.

When you register to vote in Montana, you do not declare which political party you belong to (because it is not any of the government's business), or if you do not belong to any party. Everyone can vote during the primary regardless of party affiliation, or lack thereof. When you go into the booth, you fill out the ballot of the party you choose and leave the ballot(s) of the parties that you do not want to vote blank. At the end of the day the voted ballots are counted, by party, and the unvoted ballots are obviously not counted.

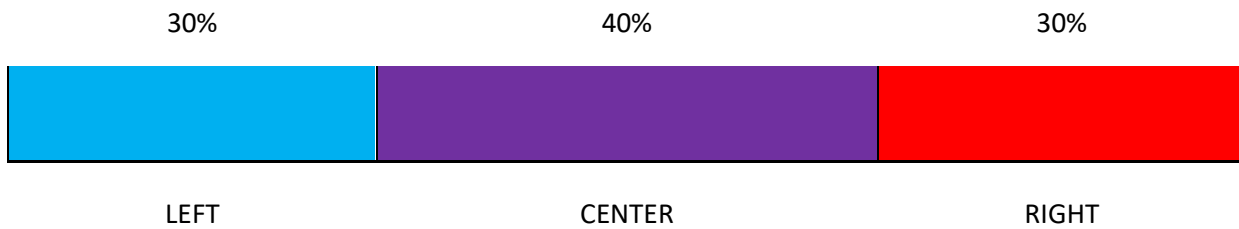
In Montana you will hear the term "open primary" tossed around describing this system because everyone can vote in the primary. **This is not an open primary!** When I call a primary "open" I will be meaning something different described later.

Montana, like almost every state, has divided partisan Primary elections.

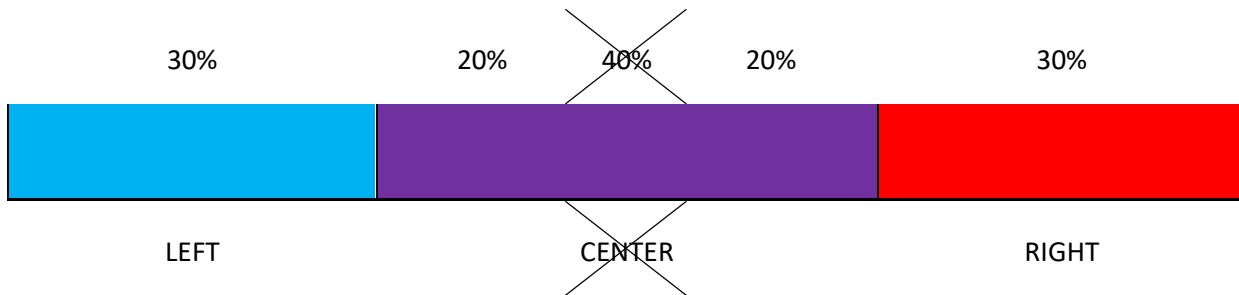
The term I call the primary system in Montana is "an absolute disaster".

I can't tell you how many times I have wanted to vote in the primary for a presidential candidate from one party, a gubernatorial candidate from another party, then switch on some others as I go. But I can't. *Somebody has hijacked our voting system and has decided who I can vote for and who I can't vote for (hint---political parties) in the Primary Election.* We have fought wars (yes we really have) and we spend trillions of dollars to fight wars against governments that decide who their voters can or can't vote for. Russia and Iran do it this way. *Why is it ok if your government tells you who you can't vote for?*

Let's take a look at the voting public using a bar chart. Assuming 30% of voters are left wing, 40% are moderates, and 30% are right wing, this is what the American voters look like.



Now let's give every voter two ballots, force them to fill out only one ballot, split the vote like we do in Montana (and everywhere) and see what happens.



You do see it, right? The left overwhelms the moderates that choose the "left" ballot, and the right overwhelms the moderates that choose the "right" ballot.

By splitting the centrist/moderate vote, small minorities have high-jacked our country. It is almost impossible for any candidate to appeal to the largest bloc of voters (the moderates), win the primary, and get on the General Election ballot. **The way we do primary elections eliminates majority consensus and forces the winners of elections to the extreme ends.**

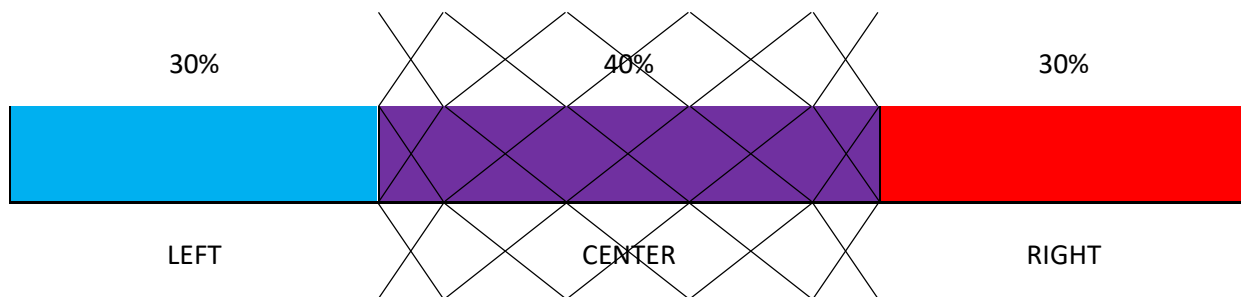
We are getting the results the system is designed to give.

Remember when you told your kids "this country is a democracy, the majority rules"? **You were lying to them.**

But wait, it gets worse. In this country, since its founding, there have been plenty of political fights over who can vote (actually it began with the founding of democracy in Ancient Greece and Rome). It started when only

property owners were allowed to vote; white, male, property owners. Lately the big issue is whether it is legal to require state-issued identification before someone can vote. We are currently fighting over a couple percent of voters and this gets lots of news coverage, generates heated arguments, several lawsuits and is happening in several states. These couple-of-percent voters can have an impact on who wins elections.

In several states, voters have to declare their political party when they register to vote (even though my politics is none of the government's business). Then when these states hold primaries, *only those who register as a political party member can vote* in that party's primary. The voters in these primaries look like this.



Wow! So it's big deal if we ban a couple percent from voting because they don't have a state issued ID, but it is ok if we eliminate the wishes of 40% of voters from making it on the General Election ballot? Really? Who pays for these elections? Who pays for the government- the political parties or do all taxpayers? **Isn't the government supposed to represent all of us?** These 40% are getting taxed to finance an election (and a government) they have no say in!

Don't we want a government that reflects the will of the majority? Don't you want a say in how the government is run? Don't we want all levels of government, local, state and federal, to represent all of us?

Whenever voters get split during an election, majority rule gets thrown out.

In the United States, it is ILLEGAL for over 40% of us to have any say in who our leaders are!

We are sending the left and the right to Washington (and state capitals, local school boards etc.) and telling them to get along, work together,

pass good legislation, and solve our problems. **Of course they are not going to get along!** Are you really surprised Congress is tied up by partisan bickering and gridlock and Congress's approval numbers are around 20%? I would have to guess Congress is not the only legislative body with such poor approval numbers.

When you watch the news, have you noticed, when politicians are being interviewed, they only talk to their 30%? They know they can safely ignore the other 70% of voters because if they can jack up their "base" and get a big turnout on election day they win. Is that what we want? A system where 70% of us can be ignored?

You know all that screaming and yelling and name calling and tribalism and fights and never talking to family members ever again???

This is not the fault of voters. It is not the fault of politicians. It is not the fault of the news media. It is 100% the fault on how we hold **PRIMARY ELECTIONS.**

The only way to hear the true voice of the majority, is to hold **Nonpartisan Top Two Primary Elections**, where **ALL office seekers for each position are all together on ONE ballot and let all the voters choose the two most acceptable candidates to advance to the General Election.**

This is my definition of an open primary.

In a Nonpartisan Top Two Primary, even if the two-top vote-getters are from the same party, the General Election result will reflect which candidate can get the most votes from all voters, (left, right, and centrist). These contests will more accurately reflect not only the majority of all voters, but it will give a bigger say to the political minority voters as their votes will actually mean something to the candidates in the Primary and General elections.

Not having Nonpartisan Top Two Primaries is the number one problem we need to fix if we are "to secure these rights" and have a government that reflects a true majority of all of us.

NONPARTISAN TOP TWO PRIMARIES- LET'S KEEP GOING

Sometimes, for elected positions I don't know much about, and where there are people running I don't know much about, only after an election do I know who is on the ballot and the talk around the water cooler gives me some feedback on who the job seekers are and what they stand for.

And I watch the news a lot. Think of all the people that walk into a voting booth "cold". **We cannot have just one general election with no primaries and expect informed decisions.** You know that a large majority of the voters in a primary election with several candidates (sometimes more than 20 for President) haven't followed the career of more than a couple candidates very well and can't even name several of them.

Let's say 10 of us decide to go out to get some ice cream. The place we go to has a sign on the door that says, "Groups over 5 all get the same flavor". If we use plurality voting the vote will be 40% Moose Tracks, 40% Mint Chocolate Chip and 20% Maple Nut (4, 4 and 2). Those who favor Ranked Choice Voting (or many other methods) without runoff elections (primaries) will tell you this voting method will sort out the jam we are in.

But here in the real world, people who want to eliminate primaries are forgetting something.

- (i) 3 of the 4 people that want Moose Tracks have never tasted Mint Chocolate Chip or Maple Nut.
- (ii) 2 of the 4 that want Mint Chocolate Chip have never tasted Moose Tracks.
- (iii) And all 4 of the Mint Chocolate Chip people have never tasted Maple Nut.

We need a series of elections over time where we eliminate the least popular flavors, with time in between elections so people have time to do some taste testing.

For these primary elections, we need Score Voting, which *leaves in play the most popular flavors and some of the flavors some people have not tasted yet*, but eliminates the flavors a lot of people don't like. **Primary**

Elections are not about eliminating unknown flavors, they are for eliminating flavors most people don't like.

It should be obvious, in a lot of elections, over 50% of the voters don't really know the top candidate(s) very well. Without primaries, when the General Election is over, there is a big chance that the majority of voters won't know anything, or at least very little, about the winner, because a lot of voters were following another candidate, or haven't been following any candidate yet.

This is the same reasoning why ballot measures need to be on the Nonpartisan Top Two Primary ballots even if this vote doesn't count. This gives voters a look at what is being proposed and gives them time to think about a decision that can be changed later (in the General Election) after discussions with family and friends.

*You know a large percent of voters read a ballot measure **for the first time** or have never heard of the ballot measure when they get to the voting booth* and don't know any of the pro and con arguments. The final vote for ballot measures will then be on the General Election after having time for discussions and research and not just a shoot-from-the-hip-I-hope-I-get-it-right-but-I-really-don't-have-a-clue vote.

In primary elections that are divided by political party, politicians can ignore the voters of the other parties and the independents (independents can be up to half the population). Candidates never face these voters in the primary election. And since most General Election races are uncompetitive, candidates can safely ignore large groups of General Election voters, not just Primary voters. This is why politicians with more than 50% disapproval can keep winning reelection. Nonpartisan Top Two Primaries using Score Voting makes it so candidates can't ignore any voters.

The idea that **every candidate has to face every voter** not once, but **twice**, is a big enough reason to make nonpartisan primaries absolutely necessary. And using Score Voting in the Primary where voters use the most expressive voting method there is, seals the argument for Nonpartisan Top Two Primaries using Score Voting.

VOTING METHODS AND NONPARTISAN TOP TWO PRIMARIES

(A quick note. You will notice I say in a few places that we need to use Score Voting or Approval Voting in the Nonpartisan Top Two Primary. Score Voting is far superior to other methods and Approval Voting is second best.)

Saying the writers of the constitution knew the best way to hold an election is like saying they knew as much about space travel then as we do today. The establishment of the Electoral College is an example of the Founding Fathers trying to figure out how to make Plurality Voting work when Plurality really doesn't work when there are more than two candidates.

One way to understand how different voting systems work is to look at their impact on the outcome of Nonpartisan Top Two Primaries. We will look at Plurality, Ranked Choice, Approval and Score Voting.

To keep it simple we will use only three candidates in this primary.

A) Candidate #1 is well-liked by 75% of the voters.

B) Candidate #2 is disliked by 75% of the voters.

C) Candidate #3 is mostly unknown.

Candidate #1 is obviously well known because the way someone gets to be well liked, is voters have to know this candidate. #2 is also well known for the same reason, to be this disliked the candidate has to be known by a lot of voters.

Plurality Voting

In a Nonpartisan Top Two Primary using Plurality Voting, voters can only pick one candidate to vote for and the two candidates with the most votes go on to the General Election. It should be obvious that Candidate #1, who is liked by 75% of the voters, should get 75% of the votes and Candidate #2, who is disliked by 75% of the voters, should get 25% of the

votes. The votes could easily be 75% to 25% to 0% for the three candidates.

As a result of this vote, Candidates #1 and #2 both qualify for the General Election. I'll repeat-- the most hated candidate goes on to the General Election using Plurality Voting.

Approval Voting

The next simplest voting method after Plurality is Approval Voting. Approval Voting is where you vote for as many candidates as you approve of in the list of candidates. If there are several candidates, and you only approve of one, you vote for just that one. If you like two, you vote for those two. If you like three, four or five, you vote for those three, four or five. You can vote for as many as you want. Very simple.

APPROVAL VOTING

Vote for all you approve of.

Presidential Candidate	
CANDIDATE 1	
CANDIDATE 2	
CANDIDATE 3	
CANDIDATE 4	
CANDIDATE 5	
CANDIDATE 6	
CANDIDATE 7	
CANDIDATE 8	
CANDIDATE 9	
CANDIDATE 10	

Approval works very well when there are several people running for one position, such as in a primary. This very simple voting method gets rid of vote splitting and allows voters to express their views on who is running more completely than Plurality.

Fargo and St Louis use this voting method, and the voters are very happy with the results.

Think of yourself going in to vote and there are a bunch of candidates, such as in the early stages of the presidential primaries. With Plurality Voting, where you only get one vote, who do you vote for? Do you vote for your favorite that has no chance of winning, but you want to show support? Or do you vote for the candidate you think has the best chance of winning but you really don't like much or know much about? What if there are 10 candidates you like equally well for various reasons? When you only get one vote using Plurality Voting, when the results are added up, no one knows how much support any candidate really has because the votes are split and watered down between so many candidates.

With Approval Voting, the results show the approval of each candidate by all the voters with no vote splitting.

Approval Voting does work good in a multiple candidate Nonpartisan Top Two Primary. Next to Score Voting, it is the second best method there is for primaries.

In a Nonpartisan Top Two Primary using Approval Voting, voters can vote for as many candidates as they want. The vote totals with this system will start out somewhat the same as with Plurality Voting. 75% of the voters will vote for Candidate #1 and 25% will vote for Candidate #2 and candidate #3 shouldn't receive many votes. And, since voters can pick more than one candidate, there will be some voters that like both #1 and #2 and will vote for both. In an election with 100 voters, #1 could end up with 80 votes and #2 could get 30 votes. Although the vote totals in this election add up to 110 votes in an election of only 100 voters, this is the beauty of this system, voters are not forced to vote for just one candidate if the voter likes 2 candidates.

Candidates #1 and #2 will go on to the General Election. I'll repeat-- the most hated candidate goes on to the General Election using Approval Voting.

Ranked Choice Voting

In a Nonpartisan Top Two Primary using Ranked Choice Voting, each voter ranks the candidates in the order the voter prefers to have each candidate win the election. 75% of the voters should rank the candidates in the order of #1, then #2, then #3. 25% of the voters should rank the candidates as #2, then #1 then #3. Candidate #3 should come in last because voters don't know anything about #3. Candidates #1 and #2 will go on to the General Election.

I'll repeat-- the most hated candidate goes on to the General Election using Ranked Choice Voting.

Here is an example of what a Ranked Choice Voting Ballot looks like.

RANKED CHOICE VOTING

Rank the candidates as you prefer, 1-10

Presidential Candidate	
CANDIDATE 1	
CANDIDATE 2	
CANDIDATE 3	
CANDIDATE 4	
CANDIDATE 5	
CANDIDATE 6	
CANDIDATE 7	
CANDIDATE 8	
CANDIDATE 9	
CANDIDATE 10	

Score Voting

The best voting method is Score Voting. With Approval Voting you can show your support for as many candidates as you want. Score Voting is more expressive, in that you can show **two** different levels of support. Maybe you really like one candidate and want to give full support to that

candidate but you also kind of like some others and want to show a little support to them too. With Score Voting you can do that! Score Voting also has a third built in option if you don't know or you are neutral on a candidate.

With Plurality and Approval Voting you are limited to only showing either full support for a candidate, by voting for a candidate, or no support at all by not voting for a candidate. We can see immediately that Score Voting allows you to show a more complete range of your thoughts on candidates, this bigger range is going to capture your thoughts more completely than Plurality or Approval by giving different scores to each candidate.

But wait, there's more! Score Voting gives you the ability to express yourself during the election with *two more levels*, not just the three mentioned above. You can also show your somewhat disapproval or a lot of disapproval for candidates. You can give candidates you really dislike a less score than those candidates you don't even know!

Let me say that again. With Score Voting you can actually vote against politicians you don't like.

Here is an example of what a Score Voting Ballot looks like.

SCORE VOTING

Give your opinion of EACH candidate

Presidential Candidate	VERY FAVORABLE	SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE	NEUTRAL/NO OPINION	SOMEWHAT UNFAVORABLE	VERY UNFAVORABLE
John Smith	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jane Doe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joe Barowner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sue Jones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bob Baker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carol Brown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

See? It's really simple.

During the election, each voter will give his opinion for every candidate. In other words, you score each candidate.

How the Score Voting rating works:

- i) a vote for very favorable gets 2 points
- ii) somewhat favorable gets 1 point
- iii) neutral/no opinion gets zero points
- iv) somewhat unfavorable gets -1 (minus 1) points
- v) very unfavorable gets -2 (minus 2) points.

All ballots from all voters are then added together to give each candidate a total score. This score reflects everyone's complete thoughts about every candidate.

Score Voting lets you express your opinion of EVERY candidate. With Score Voting, how you score EVERY candidate has an impact on the final score of EVERY candidate and affects how EVERY candidate scores versus ALL other candidates. Score Voting is simple to use and understand.

What more could you possibly want in a voting system?

In a Nonpartisan Top Two Primary using Score Voting, each voter gives a score to every candidate (it's as easy as checking a box) and voters' scores are added together for an overall score for each candidate.

In our 3 candidate example:

- i) Candidate #1 should get very favorable and somewhat favorable scores from 75% of the voters and should get somewhat unfavorable and very unfavorable for the rest of the 25% of voters.
- ii) Candidate #2 will score the opposite with 75% unfavorable and 25% favorable. Most voters should score Candidate #3 as unknown.

In an election of 100 voters, Candidate #1's combined score could be **80 points**, Candidate #2 could have a score of **minus 70** and Candidate #3 should have a combined score around **zero**.

Candidates #1 and #3 will go on to the General Election. **We have just eliminated the most unpopular candidate** instead of pushing them through to the next round! **THIS. IS. WHAT. WE. HAVE. TO. DO!** And only Score Voting does it.

By using Score Voting we are going to see more politicians with poor approval rating **lose elections**. The "new" candidates that are somewhat unknown will have a better chance of beating unpopular politicians and they could get more time for us to get to know them before the General Election, if they are in the Top Two.

As a politician becomes disliked by more people, the more likely he is to lose with Score Voting. This is what we want. This is as it should be.

Getting rid of candidates with high disapproval numbers is just as important (if not more important) as finding the candidate with the highest approval numbers. The candidates that win primaries must be generally acceptable to the greatest number of voters and not just have really high appeal to some voters, and at the same time, scare the hell out of others.

Part of what makes voting and the election results personally satisfying is feeling you really made a difference. This is also what keeps turnout higher. I can't wait to give a "very unfavorable" score to a politician that really pisses me off!

With using Score Voting in the primary elections, we will get two candidates in the General Election that are mostly liked by a majority of people rather than having two candidates that are rabidly followed by 49-51% of the voters and are hated and/or feared by 49-51% of the voters. Score Voting is the best method for eliminating candidates with high disapproval numbers.

Do you see what I'm saying? Let's get rid of "underwater" politicians and let the new candidates have a shot. This is why we need runoff elections spread out over at least a few months, so we get rid of bad politicians early in the election season and give the airtime to somebody else who may not be as well-known.

One other important feature of Score Voting, these ballots can be hand counted (either on election day or during an audit) or read by standard vote counting machines without expensive upgrades.

ONE MORE ARGUMENT FOR SCORE VOTING

In discussions about voting methods, you will hear many say that Score Voting is never used and is unproven. I call BS. **Score Voting is the most used voting method in politics today!** Anyone who answers their phone has used Score Voting several times a year. As I write this, the most recent phone poll I took started out "Are you (1) almost certain to vote, (2) probably will vote, (3) 50/50 might vote, (4) probably won't vote, or (5) almost certainly won't vote?" There it is--- Score Voting in action. Even the company I work for, when they really want to know what us workers think of the place, uses Score Voting in surveys.

I suspect that most people use Score Voting several times a year, and we only use Plurality Voting twice every two years when voting for politicians.

Private companies are not stuck with hundreds of years of old traditions (bad voting methods), they are free to find the best, most expressive voting method there is. When someone or some company or some private group REALLY wants to know what people are thinking, they use Score Voting.

When pollsters have a choice, Score Voting is the most widely used voting method there is.

WHY A NO PREFERENCE OPTION

When I vote I usually have done some research and know my choices for each position or ballot measure, but this is not always possible.

Sometimes, especially for elected positions or candidates that never get any press coverage, I have no idea which candidate to vote for, and sometimes I have not heard of some candidates. There are times I don't think any choice I have is who I want.

In cases like this I leave the ovals blank. *I would hate to give my vote to someone who would be either bad at the job or worse yet, work against what I would like to see done.* Every voter should know that they do not have to vote for every position or ballot measure on the ballot.

We all went to school and we were told over and over again to answer every multiple-choice question because sometimes your guess will be right and you end up with a better score. The wrong choice is no worse than leaving the answer blank.

It is not that way when voting. *If you vote for someone who is not who you would vote for, if you really knew who you were voting for, your "test score" goes down.* If we all are habitualized to vote in every opportunity and very few of us always know who the best candidate is for each job, there has to be a () NO OPINION/NONE OF THE ABOVE/DON'T KNOW/NOT A CLUE for every elected position and every ballot measure on the ballot.

Elections are about getting the open position filled by the candidate that the majority of voters want, if the voters know who they want. Voters cannot be pressured into casting a vote if they are not sure who to vote for. Without a "no preference" option this is not happening (as an election official, I have a lot of stories about this). I often wonder how many election results would have been different if this option would have been on the ballot.

WHY NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS

Self-identified members of political parties have dropped drastically over my lifetime with more and more people becoming Independents. With what is going on with the parties, this trend will continue.

R's and D's COMBINED hardly make up half of Americans. I know the battles between political parties makes for better TV news ratings, but it is now so bad it has screwed up our representation in government. Or let me say it this way, we no longer have a majority consensus democracy.

People need to understand that ***political parties do not have some etched-in-stone right to have their preferences for which candidates they like on the ballot.***

Think about it, why do political parties get to have their preferences on the ballots? Political parties are private organizations just like Walmart, Apple, General Motors and Joe's Bar. Political parties have no more rights to have their name behind their preferred choice on the ballot than Joe's Bar (I can see it now... () Glen Burbidge (Joe's Bar)).

So why do private organizations get millions of taxpayer dollars (billions?) to hold primaries to see which candidate the party is going to back in the general election, when just as many political arguments happen at Joe's and my tax dollars don't go to Joe's?

Why are taxpayers financing the process that private non-governmental organizations use to determine the leadership of private non-governmental organizations? Do the tax receipts from Ohio gas sales pay for the conventions the Catholic Church use to pick a new Pope? Do tobacco taxes pay for the interviews to see who gets to be the next CEO of Microsoft?

I have no problem with political parties having their own elections as long as they don't use any taxpayer owned buildings and equipment, no public employees and it doesn't cost me anything. The Supreme Court said in 2008 the primaries do not have to serve the interests of the parties. The court should have said any taxpayer funds cannot serve the interest of any political party.

The reason why the political parties' preferences are on the ballot is somewhere in the past, in a huge power grab, party bosses from the political machines realized that *if they could tell people who to vote for, they could take control of the government* and take the power of the will of the people, away from the people.

These bosses knew *quite a few voters don't really understand who they are voting for* and what the candidate stands for, **and they wanted to keep it that way**, but still get their voting power. Party preference on the ballots is a left-over artifact from when political machines ran this country (*and still do*). By getting the party's preference on the ballot and making sure there is not a "NO PREFERENCE" option on the ballot, the political parties assured themselves millions of votes from people who do not know who to vote for.

Can you imagine the impact on the outcome of an election if the choices look like this?

- () John Doe
- () Jim Smith
- () No Preference

Verses this?

- () John Doe (Democrat)
- () Jim Smith (Republican)

Voters would have to do some work to figure out who to vote for. Politicians will have to get out and tell the voting public who they are and why they deserve the job, and if they don't, they cannot expect any votes.

Independent voters and Independent politicians cannot be shut out of elections just because they choose not to belong to a party. Minor parties cannot be shut out of elections just because they are not one of the two major parties. ALL voters and ALL votes have to be equal!

Once *political parties are in control, they change election laws to favor the survival of the party and this is not what is good for the county. These divisions become "institutionalized tribalism", and this reinforces the*

divisions we see in today's politics. *I challenge you to travel to Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and see what happens when political and cultural differences are institutionalized in a permanently divided electorate and government.*

To any politician that represents or seeks to represent a political district that I live in → You are on notice right now. You do not have my permission to publicly finance any partisan election or any election where political parties' preferences are listed on the ballot.

ONE MORE THING....

The way our system is now, each of the major parties seems locked into a side on the issues and they can't get out of that stance, even when less than a majority of its members agree with that party's platform. Some days it seems that if one party would put in their platform that all babies are cute, the other party would immediately put out a statement that all babies are ugly.

Don't get me wrong. I am all for having passionate debates on policy. Someone losing their temper will always happen and it is not the end of the world when strong words are used (and sometimes are needed) to make a point. There are policies I can get worked up about, such as fixing the problems with our election system (why else did I write all this down?). *But in policy discussions, we have to have less name calling and more convincing, rational debates about which policies are best for this country.*

Politicians (and voters) are going to have to sharpen their debate skills because screaming and name calling will no longer work once we fix our election systems.

LAST THOUGHTS

I am not running for office, I just want to be able to vote for someone who best represents my views on public policies, not someone predetermined by someone else. I refuse to let someone try to make my vote mean less than everyone else's.

The ideas contained here outline some steps that will greatly expand the voice of the majority of the people (yes, that's you) in all levels of government within the country, and at the same time ensure the voices of the political minorities (that's you also if we are split 304030, there is no majority) are heard and paid attention to.

Everyone needs to understand how our voting power has been taken away from us and what we need to do to regain control of our governments if we are to fix this mess. Everyone needs to read this paper. Without understanding what's wrong, our election results are not going to get better and are probably going to get worse.

Everyone in Montana needs to read this. Everyone in America needs to read this. What would happen if everyone in Iran, Russia and China read this paper?

The big question is, who would oppose these changes and why? Do you really think those who oppose making the government and those in office more reflective of the will of all of us have your best interests in mind? Only together can we take our country back. The vast majority of election system fixes will have to be done by ballot measure; we have to vote them in. That requires getting the word out to everyone.

There are two things you can do. Accept the mess we have and quit whining or **DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!**

If you chose to do something about it, join me...

For the rest of my life I will no longer vote for any candidate for any position that does not endorse changes to our election system to make it more reflective of the will of ALL the people.

Thank you very much for reading through this, and for all your help!

AND SPREAD THE WORD!