

Public Abstract

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This study aims to address questions regarding the rules of the direct primary in the states. It explores the history of these rules and their relationships with parties, voters, and candidates. By developing a new way to classify and categorize state primary systems, new relationships emerge that suggest how primaries may be organized to best give clarity to our political processes. Additionally, the dissertation discusses recent political developments such as campaign finance rulings in the courts and Tea Party emergence in light of primary election rules.