

Federal Court Dismisses Key Challenges to California's 'Top-Two' Primary System

Following dismissal of core constitutional claims, the Libertarian Party of California signals intent to pursue further electoral reform initiatives.

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES,
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U.S. District Judge Maxine M. Chesney

has issued a ruling in the federal lawsuit *Peace and Freedom Party, et al. v. Weber* ([Case No. 3:24-cv-08308-MMC](#)), dismissing the core claims seeking to overturn California's "top-two" primary structure. The lawsuit, brought by the Libertarian Party of California (LPC) and other plaintiffs, argued that the current system creates unconstitutional barriers to ballot access.



Every voter in California deserves the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidate in November."

Loren Dean, LPC Chair

In the 26-page ruling issued April 13, 2026, the court maintained the existing primary structure based on prior legal precedents. While the court dismissed the primary challenge to the system's overall framework, it allowed two narrow issues to proceed regarding the timing of March primaries and the "Party Preference: None" label on ballots. The full text of the ruling is available via

[Courthouse News](#).

"This ruling is a significant blow to democratic competition in California," said Loren Dean, Libertarian Party of California Chairperson. "The court's decision to follow prior rulings ignores the lived experience of voters who are routinely forced to choose between two candidates from the same major party in the general election. This is not 'choice'; it is a pre-selected outcome that protects the political establishment at the expense of the people."

The LPC expressed concerns that the decision leaves several electoral issues unaddressed, including:

Voter Participation: Primary participation often remains significantly lower than general election turnout, meaning a small percentage of the electorate determines the final two options for all voters.

Candidate Diversity: In many districts, the system results in general election ballots featuring two candidates from the same political party.

Write-In Limitations: The current prohibition on write-in candidates for the general election remains in place.

“This is not just a Libertarian issue—it’s an issue of democracy itself,” Dean added. “Every voter in California deserves the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidate in November.”

The Libertarian Party of California indicated it remains committed to pursuing electoral reform, including potential ballot initiatives aimed at restoring partisan primaries. For further context on the legal proceedings, see report by [IVN News](#).

Legal Reference and Representation:

The Libertarian Party of California is represented in this matter by Soyeun D. Choi, Esq. (SBN 211344) of Soyeun D. Choi, Esq., PC. Legal inquiries regarding Case No. 3:24-cv-08308-MMC may be directed to:

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About the Libertarian Party of California:

The Libertarian Party of California is the state affiliate of the nation's third-largest political party. For more information, visit www.ca.lp.org.

“This is not just a Libertarian issue—it’s an issue of democracy itself,” added Dean. “Every voter in California deserves the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidate in November.”

Despite this legal setback, the Libertarian Party of California remains committed to pursuing all avenues for reform, including potential ballot initiatives to restore partisan primaries. For more independent context on the ruling, see the recent report by IVN News.

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The Libertarian Party of California is the state affiliate of the nation's third-largest political party. The LP was founded in 1971 on the principles of individual liberty and limited government. For more information, visit www.ca.lp.org.

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