

Note in both of these cases that the top two candidates did not receive a majority of the votes within their political party. What mattered was finishing in one of the top two positions. Hypothetically, a six-candidate race in which the candidates evenly split the votes could produce a result in which the top two candidates move on to the general election having received no more than 16 or 17 percent of the vote. Compare this with Texas's semi-open system in which the Republican and Democratic candidates moving on to the general election must have received a majority of the votes in their respective political party's primary.

The 2015 election of Louisiana's current governor, John Bel Edwards, offers another example. Edwards, who is unrelated to Edwin Edwards mentioned previously, won 40 percent of the primary vote as a centrist Democratic with a proven bipartisan record. Second place went to Republican David Vitter, a U.S. senator whose voting record in state and national office placed him on the far right. Vitter received 23 percent of the vote. Vitter also faced a scandal involving his past association with a Washington, D.C., prostitution madam. Two more moderate Republicans than Vitter finished in third and fourth place with 19 percent and 15 percent of the vote. In the runoff election, Edwards

won with 56 percent of the vote to Vitter's 44 percent. The fourth place primary finisher, Jay Dardenne, ultimately endorsed Edwards, not fellow Republican Vitter.

THINKING *Critically*

- ★ What are the advantages to Louisiana's nonpartisan blanket primary?
- ★ Why do you think people in California or Texas might be attracted to this system?
- ★ What are the advantages to Texas's current semi-open system? (See text for details on Texas's system.)
- ★ Which system do you prefer?

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- i. John Howard, "Voters Approve Prop. 14, 'Open Primary,'" *Sacramento Capitol Weekly*, June 8, 2010, <http://capitolweekly.net/voters-approve-prop-14-open-primary> (accessed August 9, 2016).
 - ii. Louisiana Secretary of State, "Election Results," <https://voterportal.sos.la.gov/Graphical> (accessed August 9, 2016).
 - iii. Ibid.