

# In Defense of Caucuses as Harbingers of Democracy

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The first time I voted I caucused. Caucusing is “a meeting of members of a political party for the purpose of choosing candidates for an election”, but more so caucuses facilitate the dissection of policy. Caucuses are a time honored tradition but face strong headwinds from righteous advocates who desire more genuine representation from our government(s). A yearning for electoral reform speaks to those issues paramount in society, but abandoning the one structure which provides space for such important democratic functions, respectfully, misses the point. This debate obscures the fight between capitalism and democracy which is central to the identity of America. This is exemplified by The American Civil War which can reasonably be described as a labor dispute, albeit reductively. Native Americans have forcibly endured unquantifiable cruelty so that the value of their land could be extracted to the benefit of homesteaders and railroad barons. Instead of focusing on that which frames the context of American institutions, critics become myopic in presenting caucuses as unwieldy. They accuse caucuses of “taking too long” and producing “low turnout” but primaries are not sterling in regards to turnout and suffer similar wait times, all without the democratic benefit of group discussion foundational to caucuses. Efficiencies to our electoral system must be made, but the time spent debating policy at a caucus is a singular act in our society and should be preserved and expanded. Our democracy is straining and primaries with secret ballots do nothing to change the “fear of confrontation” which prevents necessary discussion of topics which directly affect our everyday lives . Caucuses encourage the proliferation of politics as a norm to be engaged in and considering we functionally live in an Oligarchy, it's desperately needed.

### Citations

1. Gabriel, Bryan. “Pros and Cons of Elections By Caucus”. *Classroom*. N.d.

2. Burtin, Adrian. "Why don't Americans talk about politics?". *Vox*. 12 March 2020.
3. *Encyclopedia Britannica* - Caucuses.