I. Introduction: The national primary as an idea
   a. National primary is an old idea
   b. Simple, straightforward, majoritarian idea
      i. Better than a frontloaded system?
   c. People say they’d like it in polls
   d. It’s a bad idea. Thesis: “Upon closer examination, its supposed advantages prove to be largely illusory, and its disadvantages are serious indeed.”

II. A national primary is supposed to be simple.
   a. Our whole system is complex
      i. Separation of powers
      ii. Checks and balances
      iii. Bicameralism
      iv. Federalism
      v. Electoral college
      vi. Compound republic of both unitary and confederation best suits needs of a diverse nation
   b. Simplicity hasn’t “turned out well” in nominating processes
      i. Congressional caucus simple
         1. but didn’t represent party voters
         2. also breakdown of separation of powers
         3. system collapsed among factions
      ii. Convention system decentralized and complex
         1. served the nation well until more complexity with added primaries
         2. these complex systems were more democratic than the caucus system
         3. no evidence that simplicity is inherently better
      iii. National primary threatens to undermine central features of the complex and balanced American political system.
         1. weaken federalism by reducing the importance of states in the selection process
         2. reduce deliberation within the nominating process
         3. strengthen the presidency by adding power to the president’s claim of possessing an unmediated popular mandate
         4. to succeed, the public would have to be persuaded that simplicity itself is a virtue, which could have negative consequences if applied to other policies
            a. electoral college
         5. simplicity and uniformity drive political centralization

III. It wouldn’t actually be simple.
   a. (Nice transition)
   b. Just trade one set of complexities for another.
   c. Conflict between the simplicity of the plan and its democratic nature.
      i. What if the primary winner doesn’t get a majority? Will there be a majority rule?
      ii. Plurality rule diminishes the democratic element of the plan
      iii. Runoff diminishes the plan’s simplicity
         1. Runoffs draw fewer voters
         2. Even a runoff does not ensure that a fringe candidate doesn’t win
   d. What about novel or complicated forms of voting?
      i. Approval voting, cumulative voting
         1. voters vote for all candidates they find acceptable, indicate ordered preferences, or allocate multiple votes
         2. complicated, never used in the United States
   e. Really a single, unified election, or 51 state primaries?
      i. Still delegates at a convention?
ii. Allocating delegates from national primary still might result in a deadlocked convention, be dominated by unseemly dealmaking
   1. Who would broker a convention?

iii. A brokered convention definitely not what national primary supporters have in mind.

IV. Proponents argue it is better than frontloading, but frontloading supplies some of the strongest arguments against the national primary.
   a. Frontloading has been done by states—extreme in 2004
   b. “universally decried”
      i. Enhanced importance of invisible primary
      ii. Need a lot of money
      iii. Insiders have regained advantage
   c. Few opportunities for second thoughts or deliberation
   d. Candidates don’t have time for face to face politicking, rely on tv
   e. Later primaries are irrelevant
   f. National primary would worsen all but the last of these.
      i. Iowa and NH wouldn’t matter
      ii. No state left out
      iii. BUT
         1. money would be more important
         2. longshots will have no chance
         3. NO retail politicking
         4. all mass media
         5. No second thoughts

V. Hard to enact anyway
   a. Federal legislation can’t bring it about
      i. Party nominations not in the constitution
      ii. Court decisions have not interpreted the Constitution that Congress has a right to regulate presidential elections
         1. Have increasingly recognized parties as private associations
         2. would have to have constitutional amendment
   b. Even national parties can’t really do it
      i. Primary elections run by state laws
      ii. Would have to threaten state parties to go along, and that’s not always a good idea

VI. National primary is worse than the status quo.
   a. Might be able to mitigate effects of frontloading
      i. Spread out the primaries more
      ii. Reform campaign finance rules
      iii. PR in all early primaries
      iv. Negotiate calendar adjustments

VII. The national primary should be rejected.
    a. “It offers a simplicity that is both illusory and undesirable.”
    b. Would solve one problem with frontloading—lack of meaningful participation by later states
    c. Would make other frontloading problems worse
    d. No way to bring about the reform.