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- 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?

