

Op-Ed: Challenging the tradition of the county line in NJ's primary elections is a 'hopeless' task

'The tenacity of those who seek the demise of the county line is to be admired, but ... the way is rocky, and the walls manned by fierce and determined opponents'

The effort to prohibit the awarding of county line and favored position on primary election ballots to party-endorsed candidates took a hit — perhaps a mortal one — in Tuesday's balloting by guaranteeing that anyone running off line will fail before the first ballot is cast.

Carl Golden

The equally unmistakable subtext: The system won't change anytime soon, or ever. Save your money, time and energy, is the clear and discouraging message; the die is cast and it's better to avoid the embarrassment of ali

With all due respect to the groups and individuals challenging the primary ballot makeup, the task is hopeless.

A 'jungle primary'

Eliminating the organizational role in the process would, line supporters argue, produce what in other states is referred to as a "jungle primary" with potentially dozens of individuals packing the ballot, confusing voters and, in the worst case, nominating unqualified and underfunded candidates with no hope of success.

Historically, primary elections have been accepted as largely a party function, and a tilted playing field is a small price to pay to remain competitive by choq

goos" — derisive shorthand for "good government" types.

Changes in the political climate, though, have brought increased attention to instances of autocratic boss rule and breathed life into various reform movements.

The fundamental historical question is, to what extent have the