

Voting alone

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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I voted this morning.

I live in the fifth congressional district of Illinois, which Rahm Emanuel represented until he joined the merry band of Chicagoans now running the country. So we're having a [special election](#) to replace him, and the primary is today.

I went early so that even if it took awhile I wouldn't be late to work. I needn't have worried: I was the only voter there.

A campaign worker keeping warm in his car got out to hand me a flyer. Five bored poll workers collaborated in assisting me. I felt awkward, out of place—perhaps partly because my polling place is a women-only gym. But that aside, it was prime time for nine-to-fivers. Where was everybody?

I voted at around the same time in November and waited in line for a solid hour. Neither then-Rep. Emanuel nor Sen. Dick Durbin had a serious challenger, and Obama certainly wasn't sweating his blue home state. If I had persuaded all of the people at my polling place to tear up their ballots and have a dance party instead—I might have pulled it off; the gym was already cranking the Abba—the Democrats still would have won big.

Today, there are 13 Democrats, six Republicans and five Greens on their respective ballots. Several are compelling candidates, and there are some real differences among them. And it's quite possible that the outcome will be close—far more likely than in next month's general election.

Why don't more people vote in primaries?