

1999 SENATE JUDICIARY

SB 2322

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB2322

Senate Judiciary Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date February 3, 1999

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
2	x		1640 - 4512
2-15-99 2		x	300 - 400
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Jackie Follmer</i>			

Minutes:

SB2322 relates to the conduct of the presidential preference contest.

SENATOR STENEHJEM opened the hearing on SB2322 at 11:45 a.m.

All were present.

SENATOR NELSON testified in support of SB2322. Testimony attached.

KELLY HORNSTEIN, Richland County Director of Finance, sent written testimony on SB2322.

Testimony attached.

MICHAEL MONTPHIZER, Cass County Auditor, testified in support of SB2322. We view the February contest as an unnecessary expense. The state pays the expense but the county pays the staff time.

SENATOR STENEHJEM asked if we had a caucus like Iowa had and 11,000 people in Cass County were to come, wouldn't we count that as an enormous success.

Page 2
Senate Judiciary Committee
Bill/Resolution Number SB2322
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MIKE MONTPHIZER stated that yes, I think we would.

GARY PORTER, NDRP, testified in opposition of SB2322. Testimony attached.

REPRESENTATIVE THORESON testified in opposition of SB2322. I believe the attention to candidates brings attention to our state.

KEVIN CRAMER, Director of Economic Development and Finance, testified in opposition of SB2322. Political involvement, economic development, and political clout is necessary for our state. It also enhances political involvement. I am also representing Governor Schaffer on this.

February 15, 1999 Tape 2, Side B

Discussion. We will not need this bill with the incorporation of amendments on SB2121.

Senator Nelson will withdraw this bill on the floor.

FISCAL NOTE

(Return original and 10 copies)

/Resolution No.: SB 2322 Amendment to: _____

Requested by Legislative Council Date of Request: January 20, 1999

1. Please estimate the fiscal impact (in dollar amounts) of the above measure for state general or special funds, counties, cities, and school districts. Please provide breakdowns, if appropriate, showing salaries and wages, operating expenses, equipment, or other details to assist in the budget process. In a word processing format, add lines or space as needed or attach a supplemental sheet to adequately address the fiscal impact of the measure.

Narrative: The content of this bill by itself has no fiscal impact. However, if it were adopted, the \$250,000 appropriation included (as of the date of this fiscal note) in the Secretary of State's budget (SB 2002) would no longer be needed.

2. **State** fiscal effect in dollar amounts:

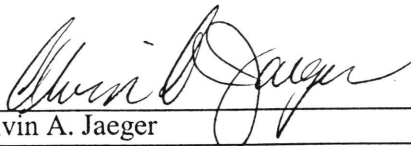
	1997-99 Biennium		1999-2001 Biennium		2001-03 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues	None	None	None	None	None	None
Expenditures	None	None	None	None	None	None

3. What, if any, is the effect of this measure on the budget for your agency or department:

- a. For rest of 1997-99 biennium: None
(Indicate the portion of this amount included in the 1999-2001 executive budget:)
- b. For the 1999-2001 biennium: None
(Indicate the portion of this amount included in the 1999-2001 executive budget:)
- c. For the 2001-03 biennium: None

4. **County, city, and school district** fiscal effect in dollar amounts:

1997-99 Biennium			1999-2001 Biennium			2001-03 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Signed: 
 Typed Name: Alvin A. Jaeger
 Department: Secretary of State
 Phone Number: 328-2900
 Date Prepared: January 22, 1999

90663.0101
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
Senator C. Nelson
February 2, 1999

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2322

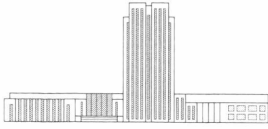
Page 1, line 11, after "~~year~~" insert "primary"

Page 3, line 5, replace "palce" with "place"

Renumber accordingly

1999 TESTIMONY

SB 2322



Senator Carolyn Nelson
District 21
1125 College Street
Fargo, ND 58102-3433

NORTH DAKOTA SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



COMMITTEES:
Judiciary
Political Subdivisions

SB 2322 moves the presidential primary contest back to the June primary from whence it came. The easiest description of the bill is that "this is the way it was" before the experiment 2 years ago. The candidates didn't come, the press didn't follow; the economic development failed to materialize. So, why continue it?

If our desire is to become the first state to have a primary, it will never happen. New Hampshire law states that their primary is the 2nd Tuesday in March or 1 week earlier than any other similar primary. The Iowa caucuses are also held in mid-February. The proposed date for the ND presidential primary contest is February 29, 2000. The West Coast and New England primaries involving 7-9 states are the next week. When those states include California and New York, take a guess where the candidates will be. The following two weeks show primaries in Florida, Texas, Illinois and Wisconsin. Those states have far more delegates than North Dakota.

In an article in a recent CSG publication, Illinois Secretary of State Ron Thornburg stated that in the Midwest region "Only Wisconsin has enough delegates to attract major candidates." The 600 delegates from the 7-state area about equal the number California delegates.

In looking at the statistics from the 1996 "contest", total votes cast were 72,530. The total expense was \$202, 835.03 making the approximate cost per vote \$2.80. For that election there were 463,415 eligible voters; 13.65% voted. We must remember that that election was primarily by mail with limited polling places open on Election Day (a day when the weather did not cooperate).

If we compare election statistics from recent years, we see that in the June 1996 primary, 123,131 people voted (26%); 271,861 people (57%) voted in the 1996 general election. In prior presidential election year primaries, voter turnouts were 133,911, 29%, (1990); 133,465, 29%, (1986); and 103,875, 22%, (1982). The cost/vote of regular primaries is much higher than the cost/vote of the general election – almost 3:1 indicating an apparent lack of interest in the primary process.

My political party's delegates to the national endorsing convention are not bound by the primary election no matter when it's held. Since the incumbent president did not file a petition for election before the presidential contest, and write-ins were not counted, there was no reason for us to vote in 1996 unless, of course, we wanted to sway the GOP selection process.

Our state primary can use this contest; it will give people an additional primary election item – who is their choice for president? Yes, perhaps the big states have already provided an apparent "lock" for a particular candidate, but strange things happen in politics between New Hampshire and convention time. 29 percent turnout is not good enough for North Dakota; our citizens have the responsibility to select the candidates for the general election ballot. That's where they really have an impact.

In conclusion, a presidential primary may entice a few more people to the polls in June and there are much better places to spend \$200,000.. Please give this bill a positive recommendation.

Attachments: repealer
Amendments
Forum article

16.1-11-02.1. Presidential preference contest conduct - Mail ballot election.

As applicable and except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the presidential preference contest must be governed by the requirements of this title applicable to primary elections, including deadlines for ballot preparation and election official appointments. The presidential preference contest may be conducted pursuant to the mail ballot election procedures established by chapter 16.1-11.1. The cost of the contest must be paid in the same manner as provided for a statewide special election under section 16.1-01-02.3.

Source: S.L. 1995, ch. 209, § 3.

BRIEFS

N.D. falls to all-time low for drilling rigs

Houston (AP)

The number of rigs actively exploring for oil and natural gas in the United States plummeted by 26 to an all-time low of 562 Friday. It's the second consecutive week for the energy industry yardstick to reach a record low.

Until Houston-based Baker Hughes Inc. reported 588 working rigs last Friday, the company's lowest rig count was 596, reported June 12, 1992.

North Dakota also is at all-time lows for drilling rigs. Lowell Ridge-way, director of the North Dakota Petroleum Council, said this week that the state might not have any operating rigs next week — something that hasn't happened since oil was discovered in North Dakota in the 1950s.

Baker Hughes has kept track of the count since 1944.

Two N.D. schools sign articulation agreement

Technology students who graduate from North Dakota State College of Science now can transfer to Moorhead State University more easily.

The two schools signed an articulation agreement this week.

That means NDSCS graduates who want a four-year degree from MSU have to take only an additional two years of classes.

Previously, each graduate was evaluated individually.

The College of Science is Moorhead State's No. 2 source of transfer students. Now 223 NDSCS students are there, with most in the business program.

Public legislative agenda meeting set for Feb. 13

The public is invited to attend a meeting in Moorhead Feb. 13 at which Minnesota state legislators will discuss this year's legislative agenda.

Primary has broad opposition

April presidential primary lacks support from key Minnesota leaders

By Rochelle Olson

Associated Press

ST. PAUL — An April presidential primary in Minnesota looked unlikely Friday even though a

MINNESOTA '99 LEGISLATURE
Miami-based draft committee is working to pull Gov. Jesse Ventura into the race.

The primary lacks support from other key leaders including GOP Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, and Senate Elections Chairman John Marty, DFL-Roseville.

"The basic feeling here is that this expenditure for a primary that is merely a popularity contest is just not a good investment," Ventura spokesman John Wodele said.

The Legislature first approved the April primary in 1988. The state held the 1992 primary, but not the 1996 one when the Legislature specifically postponed it.

State Elections Director Joe Mansky said that to avoid a primary in 2000, the Legislature would either need to repeal the law or postpone the primary. Otherwise local governments would be forced to pay for the primary.

Kiffmeyer said she doesn't like the primary because, "it's non-binding and it costs a lot of money." It would cost at least \$3.5 million.

Sviggum said he would be open to passing a bill to avoid a primary because he definitely doesn't want to force counties to pay for it.

Marty also supports Ventura's opposition.

"I say more power to him. Since that thing first came in, it's been a sham," Marty said.

Despite the draft effort by a Miami businessman, the Reform Party governor repeatedly has said he isn't interested in running for president.

In place of a primary, Kiffmeyer would prefer to hold straw polls at the March precinct caucuses. The

polls would cost about \$50,000.

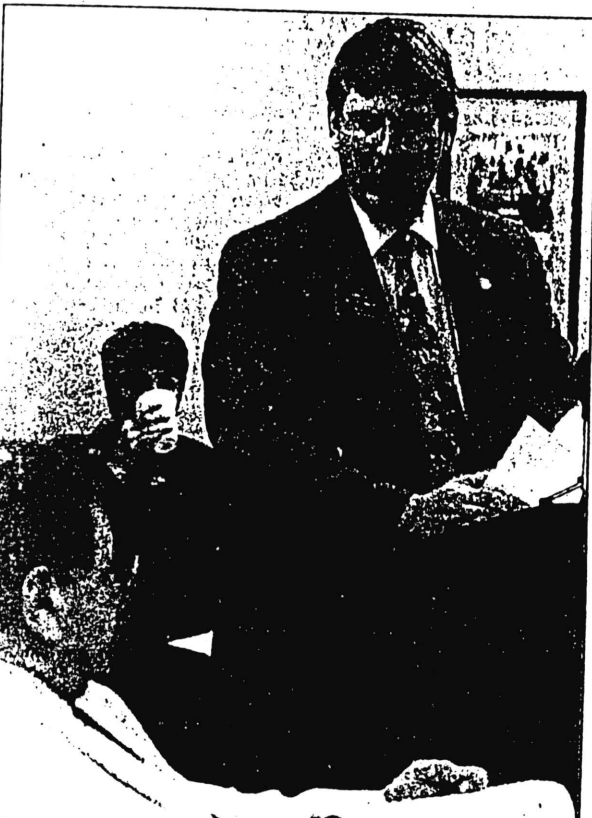
Political parties are not legally bound to assign delegates to their national conventions based on their primary votes. Courts have held states cannot dictate to political parties how they choose their delegates.

Marty said, "It's meaningless. It's absolutely meaningless."

The state could join as many as a half-dozen states to create a Midwest regional presidential primary election on April 4, 2000. Kansas, Missouri and Wisconsin also are scheduled to conduct their primaries in April.

If Nebraska and South Dakota passed bills, six Midwestern states could hold an April primary. Nebraska's secretary of state is seeking introduction of a bill to do it, and South Dakota's Legislature and secretary of state are interested.

Mountain and western states also are arranging regional primaries.



Associated Press

North Dakota state Sen. Rod St. Aubyn, R-Grand Forks, testifies before the Senate Political Subdivision Committee Friday in Bismarck.

Senator wants voter registration required

By Josh Hoffner
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — A Grand Forks legislator wants to require voter registration in North Dakota, but that would leave state and county officials with an enormous bur-

”
Just because North Dakota is the only state without voter registration does not make us wrong.

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THE CASE FOR NORTH DAKOTA'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

1. By having our primary a week after the New Hampshire Primary gives us an opportunity to be a major player.
 - A. After Sen. Bob Dole lost the New Hampshire Primary in 1996 one of his first stops was Fargo, North Dakota to try and revive his campaign. As a result of that trip, North Dakota was on the front page of many of the nation's newspapers. The front page of USA Today had a picture of Sen Dole's Aunt from Fargo giving him a bag of cookies.
 - B. The results of the 1996 campaign kept Sen. Bob Dole's campaign alive. Had he lost both North and South Dakota along with Arizona his campaign more than likely would have been over.
 - C. As a result of the 1996 campaign we have already seen more candidates coming to North Dakota. Steve Forbes has made one trip into the state and Lamar Alexander has been to North Dakota twice and is talking about making North Dakota a part of his announcing tour when the time comes. On the Democrat side Vice-President Al Gore has visited our state. Now the Democrats may say he only came to speak at their convention. But rest assured our early primary was in the back of his mind.
2. Turnout:
 - A. Because the Democrats choose not to participate in the Primary on the surface a turnout of 70,000 looks poor.
 - B. When you analyze the figures the turnout was actually higher than normal.. As a rule in the June Primary about 45,000 Republican voters participate in the primary. In the 1996 Presidential Primary we had a turnout of 60,000 Republican voters. A significant increase over the June Primary.
 - C. Had the Democrats participated overall there would have been a significant turnout for the Presidential Primary.
3. Conclusion:
 - A. As a result of the 1996 Primary we had 3 major candidates visit the State, Sen. Bob Dole, Sen. Phil Gramm, and Former Ambassador Allen Keyes.
 - B. As mentioned above we have already had 3 major candidates visit the state in anticipation of the 2000 primary. Our office has already had feelers out from other potential campaigns.
 - C. As a result of the primary we had increased participation in the political process. Many new people wanted to participate because of the presidential candidates they were supporting.

February 3, 1999

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee

FR: Kelly Hornstein, Richland County Director of Finance

Please accept my apology for not being able to attend this important hearing this morning.

SB 2322 Presidential Preference Contest Bill

Hearing: Wednesday, February 3, 1999 11:00 AM Ft. Lincoln Room

Mr. or Madam Chairman, and members of the Committee, my name is Kelly Hornstein, Richland County Director of Finance/Auditor from Wahpeton. Richland County is in favor of this bill. The presidential preference contest held in February, 1996 caused voter confusion, as many were wondering why they were not voting for President when they voted at the June Primary Election. Staff workload was sharply increased during the peak tax collection season. I would request you vote YES on this bill to allow counties to concentrate on the intricacies of the Primary Election in June and the General Election in November.

Post-it* Fax Note	7671	Date	2/2/99	# of pages	1
To	Judiciary Committee	From	Kelly Hornstein		
Co./Dept.	Bismarck	Co.	Richland		
Phone #	RECALL	Phone #			
Fax #	1-701-328-2872	Fax #	1-701-642-7701		

Senate Judiciary Committee

Edward R. McGough
4th St. NW
Valley City, ND 58072

RE: Senate Bill # 2322 - Presidential Primary Contest

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am the Barnes County Auditor and I was present at your committee hearing yesterday (2-3-99). (I was the man in the wheelchair.) I'm writing in regards to SB # 2322. I had some things that I wanted to say in favor of this bill, but, since I am not a public speaker in the first place, I allowed myself to be intimidated by the articulate political speakers that we heard yesterday. I would appreciate it if you would consider the following when your committee votes on a recommendation to the entire ND Senate.

As county auditor, I've been in many discussions with the other county auditors in the state and I believe that 99%, if not 100%, of county auditors feel that the presidential contest election held in '96 was not only a waste of tax payers' dollars, but also created a great deal of extra work for North Dakota County Employees. I personally and professionally couldn't explain to the many Barnes County voters who questioned the election just what was gained for their \$200,000.00 (tax dollars) spent to perform the contest. When their insurance costs rise; cost of living expenses increases at high percentages each year; some residents jobless; and farming profits are nearly non-existent; the tax payers are not afraid to reprimand us at the local level for increasing taxes just to turn around and spend tax dollars to have a presidential contest so that our Governor and other high-profile politicians can rub shoulders with Washington politicians. These Washington politicians are not going to come to our small counties and cities to spend money and help our economy's growth: with the possible exception of Fargo seeing their dollars. I can honestly say that at my local level, I have never heard anyone say they were pleased that we had a presidential contest. This contest is highly politically motivated and the tax payers want tax relief, not tax waste.

And, by the way, our North Dakota military bases were not saved by the 1996 presidential contest, as was stated by one of yesterday's speakers, but by the hard work and dedication of our representatives in Washington, D.C.

I ask that you send this bill to the North Dakota Senate with a Do Pass recommendation.

Sincerely yours in Government,


Edward R McGough
Barnes County Auditor



SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

February 8, 1999

TO: Senator Wayne Stenehjem and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
FR: Al Jaeger, Secretary of State 
RE: Alternatives to Presidential Preference Primary/Contest

In an effort to provide you and your committee with some ideas and options to consider when discussing the merits of conducting a presidential preference contest/primary in North Dakota, I am including a memo that was prepared by Cory Fong, Elections Director.

In summary, the memo offers a presidential caucus process as an alternative to the present presidential preference contest/primary. The suggested alternatives provide for a single date or a weeklong window for North Dakota's political parties to conduct presidential caucuses in hopes of meeting the needs, requirements and goals of North Dakota's major political parties.

Beginning tomorrow, February 9, I will be out of the office attending the Annual Winter Meeting of the National Association of Secretaries of State. If you need to make contact with me while I am away, please leave a message with my Administrative Assistant, Kim Shaw, at 8-3664. I will be checking in regularly for messages.

I also encourage you to make contact with Cory up until Wednesday afternoon if you have questions about his memo or need additional information concerning these matters. Beginning Thursday, he will also be out of the office attending the Annual Winter Meeting of the National Association of State Election Directors. If you need to make contact with Cory while he is away, please leave a message with the Elections Assistant, Lee Ann Oliver, at 8-4146. Cory will be checking in regularly for messages as well.

ALVIN A. JAEGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
600 E BOULEVARD AVE DEPT 108
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

E-MAIL sos@state.nd.us
HOME PAGE <http://www.state.nd.us/sec>




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ELECTIONS DIVISION (701) 328-4146
LICENSING DIVISION (701) 328-3665

GENERAL INFORMATION (701) 328-2900
ND TOLL FREE 1-800-352-0867
FAX (701) 328-2992

SECRETARY OF STATE

February 8, 1999

TO: Al Jaeger, Secretary of State
FR: Cory Fong, Elections Director 
RE: Presidential Primaries, Caucuses and National Party Rules

Senate Bill 2322 intends to move the date of the Presidential Preference Primary/Contest back to coincide with the state's June Primary Election. In discussing alternatives to a February Presidential Preference Primary/Contest in North Dakota, I have taken the opportunity to research some of the topics and questions that always seem to surface when discussing the presidential selection process.

What is a caucus and how does one work?

As I understand, a caucus is purely a function of the political party even though state laws may provide for a basic framework. In the state of North Dakota for example, the provisions found in Chapter 16.1-03 of the NDCC loosely govern the party caucus. A caucus can be a rather informal gathering where people of a like political party gather to conduct a variety of party-related business. Such business may include electing precinct committeemen, electing delegates to the district conventions/state conventions, discussing party or platform business, party building, etc.

In the state of Iowa, a party's caucus is also used as a means of gauging the party's support for presidential candidates during presidential election years. Since each caucus is confined to members of the political party, the caucus, while informal compared to an election or primary/contest, provides a controlled setting for members to express their will.

At the various caucuses held in Iowa, the process is as formal as casting makeshift ballots or as informal and open as having a simple show of hands. I also learned through discussions with members of the Iowa political parties that caucuses are also subject to be interactive. Party members in some cases have the opportunity to persuade other members to vote for the candidate(s) of their choice. Representatives or spokespersons for the candidates may also be present to give a "pitch" for their candidate at the caucuses. After visiting with members of the Iowa political parties, using the caucus to show support for presidential candidates seems to provide a tremendous opportunity for grass roots party building while at the same time bringing great attention to the state and its political parties.

The role of the State of Iowa, specifically the Secretary of State's office who oversees the election process in Iowa, is very limited, if non-existent. While the state may promote general involvement in the caucus or provide general information to citizens, the state does not play a role in tallying, canvassing, or posting the results of the caucus. As I understand, the role of tallying, canvassing, or posting the results of the caucus is left to the individual political parties.

National Party Rules Offer Restrictions

In discussing the February Presidential Preference Contest of 1996, the point is often raised that the North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party did not officially participate in the contest even though the Democratic-NPL Party was listed on the ballot. Some like to point out that the party chose not to participate while others like to point out that the party was prevented from participating because "national party rules" prevented the party from participating.

It is worth noting that the North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party was not directly prevented or prohibited from participating in the 1996 contest by the national party or its rules. The North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party chose not to participate. However, it is critical to point out that the party's choice not to participate was likely based upon the reality that the results of their participation would not have been binding, and in many ways, would have been meaningless for the party.

As I understand from visiting with a representative from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the national party's rules don't recognize state delegate selection processes that take place earlier than the first Tuesday in March of the presidential election year (with the exception of New Hampshire's Primary and Iowa's Caucus). In the case of the 1996 Presidential Election Year, that date would have been one week after North Dakota's February 27 Presidential Preference Contest on March 5. In the case of the 2000 Presidential Election Year, that date will be one week after North Dakota's February 29 Presidential Preference Contest on March 7. Therefore, the results of such a contest would be meaningless for the North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party if they chose to participate.

In addition, the National Democratic Party's Rules only recognize or sanction state delegate selection processes where voters publicly indicate in some fashion that they wish to participate in the Democrat's process and are recorded as having participated as a Democrat. This is to prevent the kind of mischievous "party flopping" that is often referred to. Consequently, these rules exclude delegate selection processes that are conducted through primary/contest elections where voters are not registered by party affiliation or where voters are allowed to choose their party preference in the privacy of the voting booth. North Dakota does not register voters by party and voters are allowed to choose their party preference in the privacy of the voting booth. Therefore, the results of such a contest would again be meaningless for the North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party if they chose to participate.

Present North Dakota law governing the presidential preference contest acknowledges and recognizes the authority of political party national party rules. Section 16.1-11-04 of the NDCC states, "Unless specifically forbidden by national party rules" delegates to a party's national convention are bound proportionally to the results of the presidential preference contest on the first round of balloting.

Summary – Caucus Week

Even if a presidential preference primary/contest were held in North Dakota after the first Tuesday in March, the results would not be recognized since North Dakota's primary/contest

format does not conform to National Democratic Party Rules. The ramifications of North Dakota changing the format of its primary/contest in order to conform to National Democratic Party Rules (e.g. either registering voters by party and/or forcing voters to choose a specific party ballot before entering the voting booth) are far reaching and likely more controversial than the presidential primary/contest itself. Therefore, in a sense maintaining or preserving the present form of North Dakota's presidential primary/contest (in February, March, April, June, or otherwise) implies that it really is a Republican Party function.

Another alternative to consider is the caucus process that the State of Iowa uses. Designating the last Tuesday in February as caucus night offers an alternative to the present presidential preference primary/contest. However, as with a primary/contest, the results would not be binding for the North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party since the date of the caucus night would be prior to the first Tuesday in March and the beginning date recognized by National Democratic Party Rules.

To address this concern, North Dakota could establish by law an extended window of time, as narrow as a week and as wide as a month, for North Dakota's political parties to conduct their presidential caucuses. That may offer the most flexible and viable alternative to conducting the current presidential preference primary/contest. Keeping the window as narrow as a week and requiring that each party caucus on one set date within that week might offer the most advantages. For example, this would allow the North Dakota Republican Party to hold its presidential caucus on the last Tuesday in February while the North Dakota Democratic-NPL party would have the option of holding its presidential caucus a week later on the first Tuesday in March.

Either way, establishing by law one single date or a window for North Dakota's political parties to conduct their respective presidential caucuses, it would bring the necessary level of state commitment and legitimacy to these presidential caucuses. Without statutory recognition and legal legitimacy, North Dakota's presidential caucuses may not achieve national credibility or be given the kind of attention that is being sought, intended, and hoped for. This holds true for the State of Iowa as well. What started out as purely a function of the Iowa political parties in the early the 1970s has become a function of Iowa State law.

The benefits and advantages of a North Dakota presidential caucus week could be significant.

1. Both of North Dakota's political parties would be holding their respective presidential caucuses within a week's time, focuses the interest and "hoopla" into a narrow and manageable timeframe.
2. National credibility and attention due to statutory legitimacy.
3. The presidential caucuses would be early enough for attracting the attention of presidential candidates, the public and the media.
4. The presidential caucuses would promote the active participation of both major political parties in North Dakota and their followers rather than just one.

5. The presidential caucuses would promote the kind of "old fashioned" grass-roots party building that would likely be very healthy for North Dakota's political parties.
6. The presidential caucuses would provide an opportunity to recruit active newcomers into North Dakota's political parties.
7. The presidential caucuses would provide a viable and fiscally responsible alternative to the presidential preference primary/contest. Currently \$250,000 has been included in the Secretary of State's 1999-2001 Budget Allocation to cover the cost of the 2000 Presidential Preference Primary/Contest.
8. The presidential caucuses would not interfere with regular county auditor business during the heart of their busiest season.

If you wish to visit about these points and topics covered in this memo, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sources

- Marilyn Monroe, Deputy Secretary of State for Elections, State of Iowa
- Dee Stewart, Executive Director, Iowa Republican Party
- John Delsacato, Iowa Democrat Party
- Rick Boylan, Democratic National Committee

Appendix

- The Republican Caucus Process (provided by Iowa Republican Party)

The Republican Caucus Process

The Iowa Caucus to Convention system has been a part of the Iowa political scene since statehood was granted in 1846. The caucus, held every two years, is not only the "grass roots" meeting for the party faithful but since 1963 has been the point at which delegates to the county convention are elected. The 'first in the nation status' of the Iowa caucuses has evolved over time, but is now primarily a function of Iowa state law, which states that "precinct caucuses must be held no later than the fourth Monday in February of each even-numbered year..... and shall be at least eight days earlier than the scheduled date of any meeting, caucus or primary which constitutes the first determining stage of the presidential nominating process in any other state..."(Iowa Code Section 43.3).

A further enhancement to the caucus system - the Republican presidential straw poll - has been attracting national media attention since 1976. The Republican caucus straw poll is used as a barometer of presidential strength among Iowa Republicans likely to vote in the November general election. The poll is the first order of business after the caucus elects a permanent chairperson. The ballot is secret, and caucus attendees will either indicate their preference on a blank sheet of paper or circle their preference on a preprinted ballot. After voting is complete, the precinct chairperson will direct one or more persons to tally the results. The results are then reported to the caucus and the precinct chairman moves on to the next order of business.

Each precinct caucus will also have a designated straw poll reporter and an alternate. This person will be responsible for reporting the results of the precinct caucuses to a central reporting unit. The Republican Party of Iowa, in a cooperative effort with the New York based News Election Service, will compile the results from all 2, 142 precincts. The results will then be released to the State Party and the media.

Although the national focus will be on the straw poll, the election of precinct committeepeople, county convention delegates and the discussion of platform issues are the "real business" of the caucus process. Individuals who wish to represent Iowa at the Republican National Convention must first be elected a delegate to their county convention at the precinct caucus. In addition, persons wishing to represent their precinct on the county central committee - the governing body of the county Republican organization - are elected at the precinct caucus. Platform issues representing a range of topics from agricultural subsidies to education issues are also discussed in a neighbor-to-neighbor environment at the caucus level.

The Republican Party of Iowa's Constitution states that in order to participate in a caucus, one must be a Republican, be eligible to vote in the next election and

be a resident of that precinct. The Republican State Central Committee has interpreted that provision to mean that a caucus participant need only express a Republican affiliation and that it is ;up to the individuals in a particular caucus to determine their eligibility.

Iowans have the unique opportunity to meet and question candidates for the office of President of the United States. This opportunity is also a responsibility to attend the caucuses and make an informed decision. It is not a responsibility to be taken lightly.

Amendment to let N.D. join Powerball fails

DALE WETZEL
Associated Press Writer

Lottery foes prevailed in the state House on Friday, soundly defeating a constitutional amendment that sought to allow North Dakota to take part in the multistate Powerball game.

North Dakotans have defeated lottery amendment three times since 1986, and it would be "a slap in the face" to ask them again, said Rep. Kim Koppelman, R-West Fargo.

"It's an exercise in arrogance, in my view," Koppelman said. "We are the folks that they send to Bismarck to represent them, not the folks they send to Bismarck to second-guess them."

Said Rep. Pam Gulleson, D-Rutland: "What part of 'No' don't we understand?"

Representatives voted 75-22 to reject the proposed amendment, which was introduced by an interim legislative committee that reviewed whether North Dakota should join the Powerball lottery.

North Dakotans often cross the border to play the game, which is available in Minnesota and South Dakota. North Dakotans should make it legal here, so the state treasury can reap the benefits, argued Rep. Andy Maragos, R-Minot.

"This is not rocket science," Maragos said. "We know those expenditures are being made, but we seem to be holding our nose up and saying, 'Make them in the other states, to the benefit of the other states.'"

North Dakota already has a substantial charitable gambling industry, as well as gambling casinos on five Indian reservations within the

Election officials approve primary plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — A regional presidential primary system that would spread out the process for picking nominees — and give different parts of the country a chance to lead off the process — was approved Friday by state election officials.

The nation's secretaries of state would like to have their plan in place by 2004, but they face a formidable task in getting approval of 48 states and both major political parties. Many states have pushed their primaries earlier for 2000 so they will have a bigger say in the selection process.

Under the plan, Iowa and New Hampshire would retain their leading positions in the presidential selection process.

The rest of the country would be divided into four regions: East, South, Midwest and West. North Dakota's primary would be held in the Midwest region. Many of the states in the regional groupings have already started to hold primaries on the same dates.

'As we sit here today, the presidential primary selection process will probably be all but completed about 13 months from now.'

William F. Galvin

Primaries in each state of a given region would be held on or soon after the first Tuesday of March, April, May and June of presidential election years. Not all states would necessarily hold their contest on the same day.

After the voting, the region that goes first would go last the next election cycle, and the second region would move up.

Officials said the current system

has become almost unworkable and has jammed too many primaries into the opening few weeks in late February and early March 2000.

"As we sit here today, the presidential primary selection process will probably be all but completed about 13 months from now," said William F. Galvin, secretary of the commonwealth of Massachusetts. "This will come at a time when most people in this country have not thought about the election."

Galvin said the quick primary schedule hurts lesser-known candidates, forces candidates to declare their intentions too early and hurts voter turnout.

The plan was adopted by the National Association of Secretaries of State with a handful of dissenting votes.

States to be grouped by region

Associated Press

Regional groupings from National Secretaries of State's proposal to start a rotating regional primary system in the 2004 election:

EAST
Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

SOUTH
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana,

Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

MIDWEST

Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

WEST

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and Guam.



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