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**Choosing the Nominee:
How Presidential Primaries Came To Be and Their Future in
American Politics**

Undergraduate Honors Thesis

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Introduction

Choosing the Nominee:

How Presidential Primaries Came To Be and Their Future in American Politics

The presidential primary is an event that is crucial to determining potential presidents. It allows the public to see how these politicians stack up against one another and how they conduct a campaign. While the general public has a basic idea of how presidential primaries work, very few know the history and details of them. That is what this thesis will do. In part one, the early history of presidential primaries and how nominees were first chosen will be covered. Also in this section, the different reforms that the Democratic Party has undertaken in order to reform the primary and national convention process will be analyzed. In part two, the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary, which have traditionally held the first in the nation contests, will be discussed as well as how they became the first and what significance they hold to candidates. Section three will cover the 2008 primary season. The primary battle between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, as well as the path John McCain took to win his nomination will be

outlined. In part four, the future of national conventions and presidential primaries will be discussed. In part five, a number of proposed reforms to the presidential primaries will be analyzed. The idea is to show what the future holds for the conventions and primaries and to look at potential improvements to the process. The overall goal of this thesis is to present a better understanding of what it takes to even be a candidate for president.

Part I

A History of the Presidential Primary

The presidential primary system has a rich and interesting history in American politics. From the nominations by caucus, in the days of the Founding Fathers, to the most recent contests, we have seen the electoral process go through a dramatic change. In order to understand how it changed to our current system, it is important to understand the history of the presidential primary and see the evolution of it. It is the method by which we, the American people, not only choose our leader but the leader of the free world.

Politicians who hope to seek their party's presidential nomination have to make a compromise between two different things, the first being finding common ground with intraparty groups on priorities and policy as well as common ground between the preferences of the party groups and the preferences of the voters (Cohen et al. 81). In other words, a viable candidate for president has to not only appease their own party, but also do so in a way in which the party and the voters will be satisfied. Failure to find this compromise will lead the party and the voters to not fully stand behind the candidate (as in picking the lesser of two evils) or standing behind a different candidate. We will see how these processes had a hand in creating the history of our presidential primary elections.

Nominations for president date back to the founding of the United States. After having won the Revolutionary War, George Washington was the clear favorite to be president for both of his terms. However, when he announced that he would not seek a third term, we see the first emergences of a nomination process. It was time to pick Washington's successor. At that time, two candidates were nominated; Federalist John Adams and Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson (Davis 9). The two men were not picked by the way we are used to selecting them today. Instead, they were chosen by their respective parties in Congress. Back in that time, it was the newly emerging party caucuses in Congress who would pick the nominees as their choice for president as opposed to having primary elections like we do today. The nominee's running mate was also chosen by party caucus (Davis 9).

Choosing a candidate by way of party caucus was the method that the Democratic-Republicans used to nominate Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe as candidates for president. It was not until 1832 that the use of a national party convention was used to nominate candidates. The old system of party caucus nominations was starting to die out due to increasing social pressure and intraparty rivalries as well as growing sectionalism in the United States (Davis 11). Before that, in 1828, state party conventions and state legislatures were used to nominate Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams. Since the Congressional caucus method was now defunct, the national party convention was used to fill that gap. The reason why it worked so well was because it gave the people a greater voice in picking the president as well as giving the presidential nominee more independence from Congress (Davis 11).

By 1840, the national nominating conventions had become the standard for presidential candidate selection, replacing the old congressional caucus method. It was a way for the party to become unified and stand behind one candidate rather than have factional divisions within a

party that had multiple candidates (Davis 11). While the national party convention system was thought to be better than the former caucus system, it also was showing some flaws. These flaws came in the form of how the nominee was chosen at the party convention. State party bosses had tremendous amounts of power over the state delegates as to whom the nominee would be for their party. If you as a state delegate did not vote the way your state party boss wanted you to, you could lose your job.

It can be said that this was an era of “smoke-filled room” nominations. That is exactly what state party bosses would do. They would meet in these smoke-filled rooms to negotiate who they would pick as their nominee for president. During this time, there could be many ballots cast for a nominee with adjournments so the party bosses could negotiate. We also see the emergence of the bandwagon effect during this time. This is where delegates would get behind a “dark horse” candidate. Warren G. Harding was chosen as the nominee in 1920 by being the dark horse candidate the delegates came to support (Cohen et. al 94).

As was stated earlier, there is a long history on how we choose our nominees for president that has undergone some major changes over this period of time. Author James W. Davis identifies four distinctive periods of time in the history of presidential primaries, starting in the early 1900s (Davis 12). These periods in order are the early period, the ebb tide period, the period of reawakened interest in primaries and the system of popular appeal, which is also known as the post reform period (Davis 12). We will discuss these in detail to see what effect each time period had on the primary and what changed during that time.

Early Period (1901-1906)

This is the time period in which many states started experimenting with or implementing the new primary system. This was done by passing a combination of laws that would allow for

the direct election of delegates to the convention, a presidential preference primary or a combination of both (Davis 13). Florida claimed to be the first state to enact a law like this in 1901. Wisconsin was soon to follow, having come to the realization that directly electing delegates to the national party convention was the way to go. They passed their own law allowing this in 1905 (Davis 14). This is also where we see the emergence of the preferential primary, which is also called a “beauty contest.” In this system, a voter can vote for his or her favorite candidate which would be separated from that of a vote for a delegate to the national party convention. Oregon was the first to pass a law that allowed this, which also provided that the elected delegates are legally pledged to support the candidate that won the beauty contest and still uses it in modified form today (Davis 15). By 1912, almost all states had some mix of laws that would allow for a preferential primary and/or a direct election of delegates to the convention. This idea was taking off so fast that Woodrow Wilson called for a national primary law in 1913 and by 1916, twenty five states had passed some sort of presidential primary law, but there was no national law set in place as of that date (Davis 15). While this new system of primaries seemed to be taking off, it would soon enter a lull period that was to last for over a quarter of a century.

The Ebb tide Period (1917-1945)

What was once a movement sweeping the nation, this period saw a near reversal of the primary movement, and can be seen as a setback as to what had been progressing in the years before. Only the state of Alabama passed a presidential primary law during this time. It saw abandonment of laws and some states repealed the laws entirely, including Iowa, Montana, Indiana and Michigan, among others (Davis 16). This was due to several factors. One was the high cost that came with hosting a primary. Another was low voter participation as well as

candidates ignoring them all together. All of that, combined with the Roaring Twenties, The Great Depression and WWII put political reform on the back burner. It would take until 1944 for presidential primaries to regain the interest of the people once more (Davis 16).

Reawakened Interest Period (1948-1968)

More progressive changes started taking place after WWII. We see this with the Democratic Senator from Tennessee, Estes Kefauver, in 1952. Kefauver held the belief that if he did well enough in the primary contests that he could convince the party bosses to stand behind him and pick him as the party candidate for president (Davis 17). However, despite the fact that Kefauver had won twelve out of fourteen contests, it still did not convince the party bosses and they ended up picking another candidate. While it was an unsuccessful time for Kefauver, it was much more so for the primary system in general. Voter participation more than doubled in 1952 to 12.7 million (up from 4.8 million in 1948) (Davis 17). State party bosses still had power, but the public was gaining an increasing interest in the primary process.

A Time for Reform

In order to better understand how our current primary system came to be, one has to know the history from which it came. It is also equally important to know the actual process that went into creating the system that we have. This process starts with the Democratic Party. After a debated nomination during the 1968 convention, it was time that a serious look went into the rebuilding of the nomination process. These new rules would set the stage to totally transform the way presidential candidates were nominated.

The process of restructuring the nomination process started with the appointment of several commissions to look at all aspects of the nominating process. A large part of these commissions was to review the selection of delegates and the rules of the national party

convention, which in modern times is the culmination of an over half a year primary system. These commissions, often referred to by the name of the person heading them, transformed the rules of delegates, conventions, and primary process in its entirety to attempt to fix what had become a broken system.

Post Reform Period and the Reform Commissions (1969-1986)

Beginning with the contentious 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago the Democratic Party set out to change the rules on how their candidates would be nominated for the presidential election. Senator Eugene J. McCarthy argued that the Democratic nomination was stolen from him by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey because he had never entered a primary contest. McCarthy, on the other hand, had shown a very strong performance in the primaries and cried “foul” when Humphrey won the nomination (Davis 20). What happened after this was the formation of several committees that were set out to re-examine the nomination rules used by the Democratic Party and set in place reforms for the nomination process. All in all, the six commissions spanned nearly twenty years and changed the way Democrats would pick their presidential contender.

Early Reform Commission (1968)

This was the first commission that was set up, before the period of the six others appointed by the party. It was led by McCarthy supporter Harold Hughes, the Democratic Governor of Iowa. Also known as the Hughes Commission, officially titled the Commission on the Democratic Selection of Presidential Nominees, discovered a long list of abuses state party leaders were practicing in the nominations process. For instance, they found that the national convention delegate selection was virtually nonexistent or very limited in more than twenty states (Davis 21). Also, delegate candidates would run without indicating which candidate they

supported for the party nomination. The Hughes Commission said the following in the conclusion of their report: “State systems for selecting delegates to the National Convention display considerably less fidelity to the basic democratic principles than a nation which claims to govern itself can safely tolerate” (Davis 21). This report led to the other commissions to a closer examination of the party nomination process and the reformation of those nomination rules.

McGovern-Fraser Commission (1969-1970)

Each of the six commissions set out to reform a different aspect of the Democratic Party’s nomination process, with the McGovern-Fraser Commission being the first. Officially titled the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection (many of the commissions were commonly nicknamed after the people who ran them) this commission released a set of eighteen guidelines that would end up reforming the entire Democratic presidential nomination process (Davis 21). These new polices included banning the practice of granting senators, governors, and other high ranking state officials automatic delegate seats (later they would become known as superdelegates which will be analyzed later). The elimination of proxy voting, banning slate making for the convention (where party leaders would present votes on a take-it-or-leave-it basis) and the elimination of *ex officio* members appointed to the state delegation were also put in place (Davis 22). On the same day this report was released, a new commission was appointed.

O’Hara Commission (1969-1972)

Comprised of twenty-seven members and led by Michigan Congressman James O’Hara, this commission set out to examine and streamline the rules for the national convention. The biggest goal that was achieved for the commission was the modification of allocating delegates to the national convention (Davis 23). With regards to the first 1,614 delegates (out of 3,000 total), would be based on state population, with the remaining 1,386 allocated on the basis of the

1960, 1964 and 1968 Democratic presidential vote. The commission also allowed for the increase in the minimum number of state delegates to twenty.

The O'Hara Commission also enacted other important reforms, including the randomized seating of state delegates on the convention floor, eliminating the bias of preferred seating by national committee members. They limited nominating and seconding speeches to fifteen minutes, discarded alphabetical roll call for state delegate votes, and imposed a twelve hour interval between nominating a presidential and vice presidential candidate (Davis 24). Ultimately, the O'Hara Commission tidied up the running of the national convention, thus creating a fair and uniform system for nominating a candidate for president.

Mikulski Commission (1972-1973)

This commission focused on giving fair representation to minorities in primaries by banning open crossover primaries and eliminating stringent quotas on blacks, women and youth by way of an affirmative action program (Davis 25). Her commission also established a 15 percent threshold for voters to ensure minority representation on state, congressional, and county level. Additionally, the commission put in place a requirement that stated that all delegates running on behalf of a presidential candidate must be sanctioned by that candidate (Davis 25). This allowed for people voting in the minority to still have representation when it came time for the national convention nomination for the general election.

Winograd Commission (1974-1978)

Led by the chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party, this commission worked to alter the timing and length of the primary season, close delegate winning loopholes, and instituted party declaration. Officially known as the Commission on Presidential Nomination and Party Structure, one of the things that they accomplished was closing the loophole that allowed a

presidential candidate to sweep all the state convention delegates within a congressional district, despite the threshold rule established by the previous commission (Davis 25). Additionally, the commission decided that participation in selecting delegates to the national convention would be restricted to Democratic voters who publicly declared their party preference. States would have to use an alternate party run caucus system to select delegates if they did not allow for the use of a closed primary system (Davis 25). Essentially, under this rule, you would have to openly declare your party preference in order to be a part of the delegate selection process.

The Winograd Commission also established a time frame for which delegates could be selected and for when the primary season can be held, but only for the 1980 election. Delegates had to be selected by June 22 and the period of time for primaries and caucuses were to be between March 11 and June 10 of that same year. This excluded Iowa and New Hampshire, which typically held the earliest caucus and primary, and still do today (more on this will be discussed later) (Davis 26). Lastly, the commission put into place a “faithful delegate” rule that stated that all delegates to the national convention were bound to vote for the presidential candidate that they (the delegate) were voted to support, and could be replaced if they did not vote for that candidate. Coincidentally, the commission was comprised of many Carter supporters, and this faithful delegate rule was said to be favored by his re-election team (Davis 25).

Hunt Commission (1980-1982)

The goal of this commission was to find a way to create more party input into the nomination process after many state party bosses complained that they and other officials did not have enough of a voice in selecting a nominee. In response, the Hunt Commission (officially the Commission on Presidential Nomination) created a new category of delegates that is still used

today, called the superdelegates (Davis 26). This group of newly created delegates was comprised of at least 14 percent of the total convention delegates and included state governors, U.S. Senate and House members, as well as other elected state and party officials. The Democratic National Convention approved 585 superdelegates for the 1984 convention (Davis 26).

While the creation of the superdelegates was a major accomplishment, the Hunt Commission did not stop there. They revised many of the policies that were enacted by previous commissions as well as keeping some in place. For instance, they upheld the three month time frame, supported by the Winograd Commission, for presidential primaries and allowed for the candidates to retain their right to approve their delegates won from the primaries and caucuses but reversed the faithful delegate rule enacted by the previous commission (Davis 27). They also ended the “loophole” primary and upheld the equal representation rule that said at least 50 percent of each delegation from the prescient level be women to the state convention (Davis 27).

Fairness Commission (1985-1986)

The Fairness Commission was established for the reason for which it was named; to determine if the rules of the convention were fair. It was the last of the commissions established to review Democratic Party rules (Davis 28). It came from the complaints of Jesse Jackson and Gary Hart, two candidates who lost their bid for nomination and stated that the rules set up for the 1984 convention were discriminatory to their campaigns (Davis 27). Their supporters claimed that the winner-take-all policy and the superdelegate rule distorted the popular vote, of which Jackson and Hart received a combined 55 percent. The Commission abolished the winner-take-all and put in its place a 15 percent threshold rule, but rejected their calls for an elimination of the superdelegate rule (Davis 27). They actually increased the number of superdelegates for

the 1988 convention. This allowed for 80 percent of all Democratic House and Senate members, as well as all Democratic governors and all Democratic National Committee members to be guaranteed delegate spots at the convention (Davis 27).

What about the Republicans?

While the Democrats were busy implementing their own reforms for delegate selection and the running of primaries and conventions, one might ask what the GOP was doing during this time. They were planning their own reform committees, but not with the same zeal as their Democratic counterparts. After a heated 1964 GOP National Convention, the republicans realized that they needed to take a more critical look at their own process. The person at the head of the reform movement was former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who became appalled at the “vulgar demeanor” he saw GOP delegates displaying towards each other, all while watching it on television (Davis 29). The GOP would then go on to form three committees to review their own procedures, but with interestingly different goals than the Democrats

Committee on Convention Reform (1968)

This first committee was organized in early 1966 and consisted of eleven members of the Republican National Committee. Over a ten month period, the committee met with press members, former party chairs and scholars to not discuss substantial party reform, but rather to reform the party’s image (Davis 29). The committee’s report contained “superficial” recommendations that the party should follow in order to improve its image. One observer noted that the committee did not do any substantial work and that it “had no appreciable effect on the 1968 or later national conventions” (Davis 29).

The Delegates and Organizations Committee (1971)

Commonly referred to as the DO Committee, this was set up after the 1968 GOP Convention with the goal to investigate and review potential recommendations (they did not have the authority to implement any recommendations, only to study them). Their first set of recommendations mainly dealt with convention proceedings like seating of delegates, speech length and so on (Davis 29). Nothing substantial came out of this report to initiate any serious reform. The second DO Committee report encouraged that each state send equal numbers of men and women delegates to the national convention, but this measure was not enacted by the national party committee. The DO Committee also recommended that the national party should help the states in the delegate selection process. As one can see, this pales in comparison to the reforms set out by Democratic commissions such as McGovern-Fraser and others, and the DO Committee disbanded after it filed its second report with the GOP National Committee (Davis 29).

The Rule 29 Committee

Dominated mostly with conservative members of the party, this committee was appointed to deal with party reform at large. The chair of the committee, moderate Republican and rising party star Congressman William A. Steiger, was a staunch supporter of open participation by youth, women and minorities at all party levels. This did not please the core conservatives on the committee (Davis 30). Essentially, this committee acted the same as the last; putting forth recommendations and not implementing any substantial reform. Although this committee presented something different that the others did not. In this case, it was the Ripon society, a group of liberal GOP members, who were calling for reform. One thing they did was try to implement a bonus delegate system that was similar to that of the Democrats, even going so far as to take the issue to the federal courts (Davis 29). While the committee attempted reform, it

was all in vain. After decisive victories for Presidents Reagan and Bush in the 1980s, the Ripon Society mostly died off and their reforms were “archived.” However, the Republican Party has had major success, having (at the time the book was written) won resounding victories for control of Congress and The White House (Davis 31).

The Reforms

What can we see about the history of the primaries and the reforms made by both parties? We see a few things. In the early history, we saw a primary process that was controlled by congressional parties. That would soon evolve into party bosses in back rooms making deals to get their preferred candidate nominated. We then see a reform period aimed mostly at the running of conventions and the delegate selection process, at least for the Democrats. Democrats spent nearly twenty years and appointed six committees to review party rules and reform national convention running. The GOP also did this, but on a much smaller scale. The presidential primary includes many different factors that stem from this history. From why Iowa and New Hampshire are first in the primary season to media coverage, money spent and the actual primary voting, it can be a long, winding road to the White House.

Part II

The Four Primaries

Now that we have seen the history of the presidential process and how it came to be in modern terms, we must now look at how important primaries are. The purpose of the primary race is not only for getting delegates but is also used to get a candidate noticed. For instance, Barack Obama was a little known senator before he entered the race. Once he started achieving victories in primary and caucus states, people began to see him as a viable candidate. There is also a factor of a more conceptual primary; one being separate from voting. This was described

by Karl Rove, who in 1999 was heading the campaign of George W. Bush. He described four primaries that Bush would tackle on the way to his nomination which was money, reassurance, substance and party leadership (Halperin and Harris 242).

The first had to deal with money. At the time, Rove referred to it as the “money primary” and stated that it would take between \$20 to \$25 million to be considered a serious candidate for the nomination (Halperin and Harris 242). Rove was able to determine that because of factors such as being the governor of a large state and the son of a former president that Bush would be the dominant fundraising figure. At the time he proved himself to be the most preeminent political fundraiser in the country (Halperin and Harris 242).

Second in these primaries was dealt with reassuring the voters. Voters in Iowa and other early states had never heard Bush speak or had met him. Despite his familial connections, Rove knew that it would be important for Bush to meet as many people as possible, shake hands, and appear in photo ops (Halperin and Harris 242). Rove would also see the troubled Clinton White House as an advantage. While George H.W. Bush was unable to win re-election and other conservative victories, memories of his refined demeanor and ties to the Reagan years trumped the other images of his tarnished brand. Rove was planning to use this to reassure Republican voters (Halperin and Harris 243).

Next was substance. This would come only after the successful completion of the reassurance phase and would include details on policy questions. Bush would make several policy speeches regarding different areas such as education and defense (Halperin and Harris 243). The last of these primaries was the party leadership phase. Bush not only started with the support of many of the nations Republican governors but would also pick up other key GOP

endorsements that outmatched that of his father back in 1988. Bush dominated in this area in the same way he dominated the money primary (Halperin and Harris 243).

While the particular cases above were talking about Bush, these four primaries can be applied to any nomination of a candidate. With money, you have to be able to raise the necessary funds to run in a primary to ensure success. With reassurance you have to reassure the voters of yourself as a viable candidate, especially if you are a little known candidate or politician. With substance, you have to show the voters that you have a steady stance in specific policy areas. Finally, with the fourth primary being party leadership, you need the support of those within the party and need to be able to show that you can be an effective party leader should you win the nomination. Without that and the others, a candidate should not expect to do well in the primaries.

Iowa and New Hampshire

The concept of “four primaries” are critical to understanding and succeeding in if one wishes to do well in the voting primaries. Every election year, we see a new crop of candidates (with some repeats) vying for their party’s nomination. The start of the presidential election season, of course, begins with the voting primary elections and caucuses across the country, most notably Iowa and New Hampshire. When the time for primaries rolls around, the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire Primary are the first in the nation. They can set the stage for the rest of the primary competition and can really give a strong indication of how a candidate will perform in upcoming contests.

Iowa and New Hampshire have become important parts of our country’s election history. It would be near sacrilege to not include this in this thesis. The most casual political observer will notice the Iowa Caucus and New Hampshire primary and how important they are. But why

are Iowa and New Hampshire so important? We will look at the history of the caucus and primaries in these states and see how they came to be first. We will also look at statistics of who has won these contests in the past and see if the winner or winners have gone on to the nomination.

A Treasure and Tradition

First we need to establish the difference between a caucus and a primary. Many people may not know what the difference is, but it is important to understand these differences in order to get a well rounded perspective of the presidential primary. A caucus, defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is a closed meeting of a group of persons belonging to the same political party or faction usually to select candidates or to decide on policy (www.merriam-webster.com). What this means is that instead of a formal vote, party members will meet and decide on whom to award the states delegates to. A primary, on the other hand, is simply a ballot vote where you go in and vote for your preferred candidate. It is more individualized than a caucus and does not focus on group meetings.

Iowa and New Hampshire being first have become an American election tradition, so much that NPR commentator Kevin Phillips said of Iowa and New Hampshire in 2000, that they "...are national treasures that merit the political equivalent of historic preservation" (NPR 2000). Calling them national treasures is something that should not be ignored. The big question now is how did they get to be first? To answer that question, we first look to Iowa.

The story of Iowa getting to vote first is an interesting one. One might think that it stemmed from some long ago established tradition. This, however, is not the case. David Redlawsk, a political scientist from Rutgers University, explains in an interview with The Washington Post's Ezra Klein why Iowa got to vote first in the primaries and why they get to

keep that prestigious position. It all started with the fiasco that was the 1968 convention. By the 1972 election, new Democratic rules stated that a thirty day notice be given of caucuses and primaries whereas before, party bosses could schedule them without giving any notice (Klein 2012). Because Iowa has conventions at the county, congressional, and state level, as well as the caucus, the state had to put out the word early (Klein 2012).

As it turns out, it was hotel rooms, or lack thereof, that allowed Iowa to be first in the nation to vote in the primaries. Normally, Iowa had held its state convention in June. When organizers looked ahead to the scheduled time, they discovered that there were no available hotel rooms in Des Moines. This means they had to push back the state convention, thus pushing back the caucuses, and thanks to the new thirty day rule the Iowa caucus ended up being scheduled in January before New Hampshire (Klein 2012). Beforehand, little attention was given to Iowa. Now that it was first, candidates started noticing it. Jimmy Carter realized Iowa's potential in 1976 and decided to invest time and resources in the state. He would end up coming in second, but would ultimately go on to win the presidency later that year. Despite not coming in first, it allowed Carter to get noticed (Klein 2012).

As for keeping its status as being first, there are steps in place that make it so. For instance, it is written in Iowa law that their caucus must be the first one. This comes after both parties realized the potential that being first had and wrote it into law (Klein 2012). It even goes so far as to the national parties reprimanding those states that try to jump in early. This was the case with Florida in 2008 and 2012; they were only given half of their normal delegates as punishment (Klein 2012). Also in 2008 and 2012, Michigan defied Democratic and Republican Party rules by holding its primary early. The state was allowed to send its full 56 member delegation to the convention, but only 30 had voting rights. (www.foxnews.com).

Now that we know why Iowa became first, it is important to look at the actual effect of winning in Iowa. Redlawsk says in his interview that, if nothing else, Iowa narrows down the candidate field and teaches candidates how to form a grassroots campaign (Klein 2012). However, despite the importance that Iowa has, it has not always necessarily produced the presidential nominee. Let's start by looking at the most recent Iowa caucus, which in this case was only for Republicans. Former Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania just barely beat former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. They each had 24.6% of the total vote, so it came down to individual votes. Santorum had 29,839 and Romney came in with 29,805, respectively (caucus.desmoinesregister.com). That is a difference of only 34 votes. However, as is known, Mitt Romney would go on to win the GOP nomination.

What about in 2008, where both Democrats and Republicans were stumping for support in Iowa? Starting with the Democrats, Barack Obama won the Iowa Caucus with 37.6% and would go on to win the nomination and the presidency. For the GOP, it was Mike Huckabee with the win, taking 34.4% (caucuses.desmoinesregister.com). John McCain, who would end up winning the nomination, came in fourth with 13%. In 2000, both Al Gore and George W. Bush would win the Iowa caucus and would both become their party's nominees. In the early 1990s, Bill Clinton came in fourth with only 2.8%, but would win the nomination and the presidency (caucus.desmoinesregister.com).

So, what does this information tell us? It tells us that winning the caucus doesn't always mean success, or that losing it means that your campaign is doomed. Some have won the caucus, the nomination, and the presidency. Some have won the caucus and the nomination but not the presidency. Some have lost the caucus but won the nomination. It really is a mixed bag of potential results. Going back to Redlawsk's words, the Iowa Caucus will at least get a candidate

noticed and narrow down the playing field. Minnesota Congresswoman Michelle Bachman (R-MN) saw the writing on the wall after the Iowa Caucus in 2012. Having garnered only 5% of the vote, she announced the next day that she was suspending her campaign; “Last night, the people of Iowa spoke with a very clear voice, so I have decided to stand aside” (www.abcnews.go.com). Iowa is a proving ground that can set the tone for the rest of a presidential primary campaign.

New Hampshire

While the Iowa Caucus is certainly important being the first contest in the presidential nomination season, one cannot forget about New Hampshire. The small New England state has had a different path than Iowa, but still remains as one of the prizes in the primaries. Much like Iowa, New Hampshire can also have a mixed result as to who wins the primary, nomination and the presidency. The state has traditionally held the first in the nation primary since the 1920s. At that time, the ballot only listed those seeking to be convention delegates, and not the presidential candidates themselves (Kamarck 51). This would last until 1949 when a state legislator came up with an idea to reform the system. Richard F. Upton, who was the speaker of the House of Representatives in New Hampshire, amended the law to allow for voters to vote directly for a presidential nominee. The goal for this was to have the primary be “more interesting and meaningful...so there would be greater turnout at the polls” (Kamarck 51).

A second reason New Hampshire gained primary prominence was because of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Since returning from World War II he was encouraged to run for president and courted by both parties, but he was reluctant to do so. When the 1952 election came, a group of Republican Eisenhower supporters put his name on the ballot in New Hampshire and he won the primary as a Republican without even visiting the state (Kamarck 52). New Hampshire would also come to be a proving ground for candidates. Harry Truman, after a poor performance in the

state, decided not to seek re-election in 1952. The same would prove true for Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968 (Kamarck 52). Depending on their showing in New Hampshire, presidential candidates can determine if their campaign has a viable path forward.

This brings us to determine the effect the Granite State primary has, and how candidates have fared after the contest, either having won or lost in the state. In the past ten presidential elections, there have only been two candidates who have lost New Hampshire (and Iowa as well) that have secured their parties' nominations (abcnews.go.com). Given this, it is a pretty clear indication that in order for a campaign to have a viable path forward, you must win in either New Hampshire, in Iowa, or both.

Starting with 2008, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama fought bitterly for the Democratic nomination. When it came to New Hampshire, Clinton won thanks to a last minute push through the state, but it was a narrow victory. Obama would go on to win the nomination, being one of only three Democrats in the past 30 years to get the nomination while having lost in New Hampshire (abcnews.go.com). On the Republican side of that year, it was John McCain who had won the primary and the nomination (despite placing fourth in Iowa) (abcnews.go.com). In 2004, then Sen. John Kerry would also go on to win New Hampshire in the primary and the nomination for the Democrats to go up against incumbent George W. Bush.

Much like for the Democrats, it is critical for a Republican candidate to win in New Hampshire if they are serious about winning the party nomination. In the past 30 years, only two Republicans have lost in the state primary and have gone on to win the nomination. George W. Bush is one of these candidates. He lost the New Hampshire primary to Arizona Sen. John McCain in 2000 by nearly 20 percentage points (abcnews.go.com). Al Gore, for the Democrats,

would win the primary and the nomination, but lose to Bush in the closest presidential race in recent history (abcnews.go.com).

I Want to Be First!

Today, it is generally well accepted that the Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary will be the first contests in the presidential nomination season. However, it was not always like this. Starting in the 1970s and even leading up to 2012, lawmakers and states had begun to question and challenge their first in the nation status. This began after the 1976 election of Jimmy Carter as president. Many in the Democratic Party were not happy with the new reforms that had been taking place even though it had elected one of their own as president. In response, the Democratic National Committee set up the Commission on the Role and Future of Presidential Primaries led by Michigan Democratic Party head Morley Winograd (Kamarck 53). There was no one rule or issue that caused the upset within the party so they decided to focus on the system as a whole. One issue that was found was the attention that Iowa was getting. It was argued that the process of selecting delegates under a caucus system was becoming much more transparent and primary like under the new reform rules (Kamarck 53). The principle complainer of this issue was Rep. Mo Udall of Arizona. His campaign debated on whether it should contest the Iowa caucuses but thanks to their new early start, it became too late (Kamarck 53).

Other states began noticing the benefits of being the first primary and caucus states. The attention that Iowa and New Hampshire were getting caused some states to seriously consider moving up the dates of their primaries to try to go as early as possible. The idea was being discussed in the legislatures in Kansas, Missouri, North Carolina and Texas in addition to Maine and Puerto Rico considering bills that would move up their date (Kamarck 54). Also, as stated

earlier, Florida and Michigan were punished for trying to move up the dates of their Republican primaries in 2008 by not being able to have their full delegations vote at the national convention.

What We Have Learned

There are several lessons that can be learned from Iowa and New Hampshire and why they should not be ignored. Candidates ignore them at their own risk (Polsby et al. 109). It is like swimming without a lifeguard; you do so at your own risk. This is not to say that if you win these contests, you will win everything. On the flip side, it is also not saying that if you lose these contests, you will lose it all (Polsby et al. 109). Regardless, a candidate will still want to do well so that they can show the voters that they are in fact a viable candidate. A candidate should also be forewarned that winning in either state does not automatically win them the nomination; a poor performance can end a candidate's campaign quickly (Polsby et al. 109). This was the case with GOP Rep. Michele Bachman after her fifth place Iowa finish in 2012. With the exception of John McCain's fourth place finish in Iowa in 2008, no candidate has finished below third in either state since the modern process was put into place in 1972 and gone on to win the nomination.

Part III

The 2008 Presidential Primary

We will now look at one of the most historical presidential primaries we have seen to date; the 2008 race. This will focus on the bitter contest for the nomination between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to see how Obama was able to win the nomination, despite a close contest throughout the primary season. A focus is placed on 2008 for a few reasons. Aside from the well known historical aspect of the race, there are

several other factors that play into why this race is so important. This includes the money spent, how superdelegates came into play (mainly with the Democrats) and the fact that there were candidates from both parties battling to become the nominee. Particular attention will be paid to the contest between Obama and Clinton and to a lesser extent John McCain's campaign to be the GOP nominee.

Following Delegate Rules

Earlier, we discussed the reforms made to the rules Democrats put in place to select their candidates. Several different commissions reviewed rules ranging from election of delegates to the running of the national convention. How did these rules affect Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's chances of becoming the party nominee? As it turns out, it made a very big impact. For instance, there is the pledged delegate rule that observers noted for each campaign. It is regarded that Clinton's failure to anticipate the strategy of gaining pledged delegates was critical to her losing the nomination. On the other side, Obama is credited with executing a strategy that would gain him those pledged delegates and eventually the nomination (Sabato 232).

The fact that Hillary Clinton lost the nomination was due to several factors, one of which was, of course, not understanding or following the rules. This sentiment is backed up by Karen Tumulty of *Time*. She pointed this out in a list titled "The Five Mistakes Clinton Made." The second item on this list is pretty simple; "She didn't master the rules" (Sabato 238). She suggests that top Clinton campaign aides were not well versed enough in the delegate allocation rules set by the Democratic National Committee, and this included chief strategist Mark Penn. Penn was under the impression that California allocated delegates in a winner-take-all style when it is actually a proportional system

(Sabato 238). It was also lost on Penn that all states, under DNC rules, assigned delegates proportionally. It seems almost impossible to believe but Clinton's chief strategist thought it was a winner-take-all delegate selection procedure. But this is what he thought. This, plus campaign infighting and the failure to recognize simple delegate allocation rules, were big factors as to why Clinton would go on to lose the nomination.

The Importance of the Contests

Not adhering to delegate rules was not Clinton's only failure. Tumulty makes the number three point on her list to be "She underestimated the caucus states." She points out that the Clinton campaign failed to pay attention to the big caucus states, with their reasoning being that women, the elderly and blue collar workers (her main supporters) would not as likely be able to commit to an evening to participate in a caucus meeting (Sabato 239). This in part doomed her campaign. Also, discussed earlier was the importance of the Iowa caucus and how it can be a proving ground for candidates. In Iowa, Barack Obama won with 37.6% while Clinton came in third at 29.8% (caucuses.desmoinesregister.com).

Clinton may not have won in Iowa, but this did not stop her from battling with Obama throughout the primary season. The two politicians found themselves fighting closely up to the national convention for the nomination. A good example of this is Super Tuesday, the day that a majority of states hold their primaries and caucuses. Out of twenty four states that held Democratic primaries and caucuses, Obama would win fourteen states while Clinton would win ten (politics.nytimes.com). While Obama won more states, this serves as a good example of the back and forth wins between the two.

This type of pattern would continue for future caucus contests. Obama had incredible amounts of success in caucus states, with his average margin of victory at 34 percent (Sabato 239). Obama also won twice the amount of pledged delegates than Clinton, with 20 percent of his pledged delegates coming from caucus states, compared to Clinton's 10 percent (Sabato 240). A large part of this was due to fundraising and financial resources available. Mark Penn echoed this sentiment in a New York Times article in which he discusses what went wrong with the campaign. He says the following;

“Having raised more than 100 million in 2007, the Clinton campaign found itself without adequate money at the beginning of 2008, and without organizations in a lot of states as a result” (Sabato 240).

Clinton was consistently outraised and outspent as the primary season went on and was done so by a large margin. Had she allocated her resources in smaller caucus states rather than media focused strategies in larger states, it could have had a larger marginal effect on her campaign (Sabato et al 240).

Show Me the Money

Presidential campaigns have skyrocketed in cost over the past few elections. Along with them is the increasing cost of presidential nominations. Nomination contests alone have gone from tens of millions to hundreds of millions of dollars spent by both parties. For instance in the 1968 nominations, Republicans spent \$20 million and Democrats \$25 million, respectively. By 2004, Democrats spent \$389.7 million and Republicans \$286.9 million, respectively (Wayne 36). It would be fit that 2008 would become more expensive, and it was by far.

It is no secret that the 2008 election was one of the most expensive in history. As was mentioned earlier, Karl Rove estimated that in the 1999/2000 primary season, they would need to raise between \$20 and \$25 million in order to be considered a serious candidate (Halperin and Harris 242). In 2008, candidates were raising and spending nearly ten times that much JUST on the primary election. In total, Obama raised \$745.7 million for both his primary and general election (he used the same committee for both elections). By comparison, Clinton raised over \$223.8 million for her primary and outraised her closest GOP counterpart by several million dollars (www.fec.gov).

Superdelegates

The nomination fight between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton would come down to the superdelegates. Who are these superdelegates? As we discussed earlier superdelegates are unpledged delegates comprised of members of the party that have served in different capacities (Congress, the national party, etc).

After 1984, the superdelegates were not paid too much attention, thanks in part to Democratic contests wrapping up quickly (Kamarck 160). By the time 2008 came, this changed. Superdelegates could have been the deciding factor on who would win the nomination. The distance in the amount of delegates between Clinton and Obama was very thin, with 70 percent of delegates having been awarded to one or the other. It was soon realized by both campaigns that the 796 superdelegates up for grabs could make or break their chances for nomination (Kamarck 162). Much like the actual primary contests, the battle for superdelegates was also back and forth. At different points after Super Tuesday, several media outlets reported that Clinton was ahead in the

superdelegate count ranging from 210 to 243. During that same time period, Obama's superdelegate count was between 141 and 156 (Kamarck 162).

The fact that Clinton was thus far ahead in the superdelegate count gave the campaign confidence that they would win the nomination. Clinton campaign strategist Harold Ickes predicted that the superdelegates would vote for her because they would see her as the strongest general election candidate (Kamarck 162). This sentiment did not sit well with Obama's campaign. Obama campaign manager David Plouffe criticized Clinton for trying to get the superdelegates to vote against how the people voted. He also suggested that Clinton wanted to change the rules to seat unpledged delegates from Michigan and Florida (Kamarck 162). Clinton, however, did not see it this way. She would later counter by saying "I believe that the super-delegates should do the same as any other delegate or voter, which is to determine who they believe will be president" (Kamarck 163).

This new issue of superdelegates put the Obama camp in an interesting position. They went about it with two different tactics, one being that they were stoking the anger of the people at the idea that superdelegates could overturn their will. They also had to court those superdelegates because they realized that due to Clinton's standing within the party, those superdelegates who were behind her were so early on (Karmack 163). While Clinton had strong finishes in key states like Indiana and Texas, she was still trailing Obama in the delegate count due to proportional representation in those states. By May 10, Obama had overtaken Clinton in the superdelegate count, but still did not have enough total delegates to win the nomination (Karmack 163).

By this point, Clinton had only one option left that she believed would lead her to victory which was to have Michigan and Florida's delegates reinstated (the Democratic National Committee had stripped both states of their delegates). Her campaign began an aggressive lobbying effort to get them back in because she outpolled Obama in Florida and with uncommitted voters in Michigan (Karmack 164). They wanted a do-over of sorts in both states, but it did not happen and instead Michigan and Florida had half of their delegates reinstated. Obama received four more delegates from Michigan because he argued that since he had taken his name off the Michigan ballot, the voters voted for "uncommitted" and that those were rightfully his delegates (Karmack 164). They now had a clear path to victory and started calling on the uncommitted superdelegates. That in combination with the last primaries did the trick. On June 3, the Obama campaign announced that it had reached the required 2,118 delegates needed to win the nomination (Karmack 164). Clinton would withdraw from the race days later.

Superdelegates turned out to be critical in the 2008 nominations. It was what helped Obama win the nomination and what helped Clinton lose. One thing that can be taken from this is that Clinton counted too much on superdelegates to get her to victory. As was stated earlier she did not pay enough attention to the delegate allocation rules or the big caucus states. That caused her to rely too heavily on superdelegates to win the nomination. The fact that Obama was courting these delegates was a huge advantage to his campaign. He was able to secure those superdelegates to help propel him to get to that magic number.

Where is John McCain?

While the crux of this section is focused on the Obama-Clinton battle, it is easy to forget those on the GOP side, specifically speaking of John McCain. His path to the nomination was much different than that of Barack Obama. McCain didn't face a battle for states like Obama and Clinton did. He and his party played by a different set of rules that allowed him to win. Additionally, McCain did not have a drawn out battle with one of the other GOP candidates that compared to the fight between Obama and Clinton. While his nomination campaign went through a period of struggle, he would rebound and emerge victorious.

Different Set of Rules

One thing that helped McCain win was the delegate allocation system. Unlike the Democrats, the Republicans used a winner-take-all method. This means that if a candidate won a primary or caucus then they were awarded all of that states delegates, even if they only won by a small margin (Kenski 504). If McCain had to win the nomination by the Democrats proportional method, he would not have done as well. The reason for this is that he was in a more difficult multicandidate primary race than that of his Democratic counterparts. Having realized this, McCain would win the early contests of New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Florida and win all of the delegates in these states. The GOP winner-take-all was a critical factor in McCain's primary victory (Kenski 504).

The Comeback Kid

Despite the fact that John McCain would win the nomination, his campaign hit some rough spots that some thought he would not be able to overcome. After announcing his candidacy in 2006, his campaign started strong but during the spring and summer

2007 his campaign had taken a nose dive. At the time, he was having trouble raising money and had little cash on hand. In addition to that, his poll numbers began dropping as well as his positive media coverage (Kenski 503). By summer of 2007, the media even acknowledged that his campaign was nothing more than a bankrupt political joke. All of these factors nearly pushed McCain to drop out of the race (Kenski 503). He was not a frontrunner coming into the Iowa caucus and his support among his GOP colleagues in Congress was weak (Kenski 505).

McCain would have to retool his campaign and stage a comeback if he wanted to win, and he did just that. He cut back in his staff and budget, which at the time was considered to be bloated (Kenski 503). He also had to style himself as his own candidate. While support among his GOP colleagues in Congress was not strong, he still had a good conservative record under his belt (Kenski 505). He also had to distance himself from President George W. Bush, who was becoming increasingly unpopular. McCain's comeback would include being himself and portraying his image as that of a politician who would sacrifice his career for his views (Kenski 506). His financial situation also improved. Like his Democratic counterparts, McCain had to raise an incredible amount of money for his primary campaign. He would raise over \$219 million just in the primary (www.fec.gov). That puts him close to the fundraising level of Hillary Clinton. The Republican that came the closest in fundraising was Mitt Romney, raising just over \$105 million (www.fec.gov).

His strategy worked. By March 4 of 2008 he was able to clinch the nomination (Kenski 503). Out of 41 primary and caucus contests, McCain won 25. Officially nominated at the Republican National Convention, he ended up with 1,563 delegates (he

needed 1,191 to win) (Kenski 507). Despite several factors that were working against him, and the fact that his campaign was at one point sinking, he was able to pull through it all and win the nomination.

Observations

There are several observations that can be made about the 2008 primary race. One is the difference in rules. John McCain had won his race because he was awarded ALL of the delegates in the primary and caucus states he won. If the Democrats followed that same method, that race could have turned out much differently. Going along with that, Obama and Clinton also had the superdelegate issue to worry about while McCain did not. One of Clinton's mistakes was that she was relying on them too much to win and she did not pay enough attention to the early states. Third was the total number of delegates. McCain only had to get over 1,000 while Obama and Clinton had to get to over 2,000.

Looking at the 2008 primary campaign is important for several reasons. The differences between them and what candidates in both the parties had to go through to win is one of them. Another reason is the campaign battles themselves. Clinton and Obama were battling it out until June while McCain was able to reach his delegate number and clinch his nomination three months before. There is also the money factor. This primary and the following general election was the most expensive one up to that point. It shows the growing costs of primaries and how much one needs to raise and spend for just the CHANCE to potentially be president. This is a good example of where primaries, especially one with both parties putting up candidates, are headed.

Part IV

Where the Presidential Primaries Seem to be Headed

So far we have discussed a lot about the presidential primary process by looking at its early history, how we came to our modern system, and how delegates are selected for the conventions, and specific examples on how candidates won their nominations and why certain states were the first in the nation. All of these things are important factors in determining and predicting where the primaries are headed in the future. In this section we will examine the future of presidential primaries and how they will (or will not) continue in the form that we have come to know them. This section will provide a mixture of information supporting one view point or another and my personal opinion on where I see the primaries going, and if I agree or disagree with what some researchers and authors say.

Are Conventions Old News?

The nominating conventions for the Republicans and Democrats have changed drastically over the past century. As we have seen before, they used to be the place of “smoke filled rooms” where party bosses would come together and choose their candidate for president. Some are asking themselves about the relevance of conventions. Are they relevant? Should they be abolished for the 2016 election? People are simply not interested in watching and following convention events. Author Elaine C. Kamarck asks the question “Do Conventions Matter Anymore?” She discusses several factors as to why conventions may not be as important now as they once were.

One thing Kamarck mentions is the media coverage of national conventions. Media outlets say they will cover less of the conventions than they did four years ago. When the parties complained about this, the media outlets responded by saying that the conventions are too “choreographed” and that there is no news created (Kamarck 147). This leads to some pundits questioning if the conventions are dead. Not only that, but the public has also increasingly started

to wonder if we even need conventions at all (Kamarck 147). One example of people's losing interest in conventions is the Republican National Convention of 2012. The Learning Channel (TLC) reality show 'Here Comes Honey Boo Boo,' a show that follows a six year old beauty pageant queen and her family, earned higher ratings than the Republican National Convention. It pulled a 1.3 rating in the 18-49 year old age demographic, which translates to about three million viewers (Lutz 2012). In the meantime, the RNC and its coverage garnered just over two million viewers that same night (Sieczkowski 2012).

Aside from America's poor taste in reality television (though I must admit I am guilty of watching), the fact that Honey Boo Boo and family beat coverage of the Republican National Convention is really telling a lot. It shows that Americans are becoming less and less interested in national nominating conventions. It could be a sign that the conventions are on their way out given the shifting interest of the American people. The people have spoken, and they have made it clear that they would rather watch a six year old girl compete in beauty pageants, roll around in the mud, and play with her pet pig (yes, all of these actually did happen) than see the presidential nominees speak.

Are conventions needed anymore? Given what was discussed above, most people would say they are not. The media would agree. The American public and the media are shunting aside more and more time that they used to give to conventions. The media has now allotted just one hour of conventions coverage per night during its duration. The American public has multiple different alternatives via cable and internet outlets that they can spend time on in the evening other than watching Convention coverage.

While the shunting aside of the Conventions by the American people and media look like reasons to abolish them altogether, they still play a critical role in our political process. Much of

the following discussion is drawn from Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky's book, *Presidential Elections*, 10th Edition. They argue for the retention of national conventions because of the structure that they provide. One structural point they argue is that the conventions are important to maintaining the selection of nominees. They want a mixed use of primaries and conventions, because they feel that conventions cannot do it alone (Polsby et al. 148). Another structural contribution of national conventions is that they bring intra-party cohesion that is meant to work towards party victory in November and mend factional divides. Along with that the nomination of the Vice Presidential candidate can also help mend this divide (Polsby et al. 146). A third structural element of the conventions is that they give the parties a chance to hammer out a national platform to appease voters by bargaining (Polsby et al. 148). While it could be done in different ways, having it done at the convention, along with the approval of the candidates gives them a sense of legitimacy.

A key role of the conventions is also sheer public relations. This is one of the only times that a candidate will be viewed by a mass audience while giving their acceptance speeches, despite a smaller audience than in the past. However, it is still exposure. It is still an opportunity for candidates to market themselves to the voters. Not only that, but the convention also gives rising figures within the party a chance to be recognized. Being a keynote speaker at the convention or introducing a candidate can really launch a person's political career. Conventions are major players in the political process and are here to stay.

Superdelegates: Do We Need Them?

As we have discussed, superdelegates are a special group of uncommitted delegates that help to select a nominee. In 2008, it was what Hillary Clinton was relying on to win the nomination for the Democrats, a move that would ultimately fail her. Superdelegates, put in

place by the Hunt Commission for the 1984 Democratic National Convention, were intended to give the Democrats in Congress more of a voice to pick the nominee and establish a platform for the party (Kamarck 156). Since then it has grown to include former presidents, state governors and all previous national party chairs. Republicans also have superdelegates and they are chosen in much the same way as the Democrats choose theirs (Kamarck 158).

The use of superdelegates seems good in theory, but there is some controversy surrounding their use. One article argues that superdelegates “appear to be the least democratic institution in this entire nominating process” (Delegating Democracy 2008). Since the superdelegates are not bound to public opinion, they can vote any way they choose. This raises questions as to how they SHOULD vote, as in should they vote for the winner of the total delegate count, by number of states won, winner of the national popular vote and so on (Delegating Democracy 2008). It is really up to the superdelegate to decide. While it may seem undemocratic, the parties can do what they please because of freedom of association rights protected by the First Amendment (Delegating Democracy 2008).

So where are the superdelegates headed? The truth is that their future is uncertain.

Neither party seems to put forth proposals that would either reform the superdelegate system or call for their elimination. It will really be up to the party to decide how to deal with that issue.

Where the Primaries Are Headed

Let's start with the money. The 2008 contest saw that the three major candidates (McCain, Clinton and Obama) raised hundreds of millions of dollars just for their primary fights alone. The general election that followed became the most expensive in history up to that point. This is a trend that is likely to continue in future primaries thanks in large part to the Supreme

Court ruling in the Citizens United v Federal Election Commission (FEC) case. In a very much divided 5-4 decision, the justices ruled that the government cannot ban political spending by corporations or unions (Liptak 2010). This ruling overturns two precedents set by the court, one being Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce that upheld restrictions on corporations from spending to support or oppose a candidate. The other, McConnell v. Federal Election Commission upheld part of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act that limited spending by corporations and unions on political campaigns (Liptak 2010).

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote the majority opinion of the court and was joined by court conservatives Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Alito, Thomas and Scalia. On the dissenting side, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote the opinion and was joined by liberal Justices Breyer, Ginsburg, and Sotomayor (Liptak 2010). The one thing that eight of the justices did agree on was that Congress could require that corporations had to disclose their spending and run disclaimers with their advertisements. Justice Clarence Thomas was the only dissenter on this point (Liptak 2010).

Reaction to the ruling was mixed. Supporters say that campaign funding is free speech and that they should be allowed to donate unlimited amounts to the candidate they support. Those who oppose the court's ruling argue that unlimited spending is a form of corruption and gives an unfair advantage to candidates who can successfully court wealthier donors (Welsh 2012). One might ask if this ruling really matters. The answer is that, yes, it matters a great deal because now outside influences can have a heavy say in the primary process as well as the general election.

It is no secret that running a primary campaign takes an exorbitant amount of money. A top priority for every candidate is fundraising. Because of this, a new term was coined in 1987,

called “the money primary.” At the start of its origin, the phrase was used to describe the critical early phase in political fundraising when a study was conducted on corporate campaign contributions (Goff 5). It is essentially a separate primary that candidates have to do well in. If they do not succeed in the money primary their chances of winning a voting primary are slim to none.

Fundraising like there is no tomorrow has become a required step in order for a candidate’s campaign to be viable and have success. The money goes to candidate travel, direct mail, media access, campaign events, staff and future fundraising efforts (Goff 4). With regards to the money primary, in order for the campaign and candidate to become viable, they need to start well in advance of the primary season. The more a candidate can fundraise, the more credible they will appear to be (Goff 6). Why might this be? If a candidate can get voters and outside groups to donate to their campaign, it will show that they believe in them as a candidate and view him/her as the strongest contender for president.

Can Iowa and New Hampshire Remain in First?

Another issue in the primaries is that of Iowa and New Hampshire traditionally voting first at the start of the primary season. Many question whether they should continue to have this privilege or if states should be able to go first on a rotating basis. The question remains on how long Iowa and New Hampshire can survive being first. For the foreseeable future, it is likely that they will retain their coveted places. However, the fact that more and more states want that same advantage could put Iowa and New Hampshire in jeopardy. Part V will discuss different proposals that create a rotating order of states for each primary. Iowa and New Hampshire would still have the opportunity to go first, but would do so on a rotating basis.

Are the Primaries Here to Stay?

The answer to this question is that for the foreseeable future, the primary is here to stay. While at times it seems like an incredibly long, drawn out process, it is still a process in our country's politics. It is something that we need in order to choose the best possible candidate. Despite its flaws, the primaries have been part of our political legacy for some time and will continue to do so in the future. Some have called for a National Primary Day, in which all states would vote at once on the same day. Could this help or hurt the process? Some say it will help because it will be over and done within a day and the strongest candidate will come out on top. Others say it will hurt because it does not give lesser candidates a chance to gain momentum. We would really only be able to see these results if a National Primary Day were implemented.

Part V

Proposed Reforms Critiqued

The primaries have changed a great deal over the course of time to get to where they are now. Some have begun to question the role that conventions play in this process as well as questioning the process itself. The fact of the matter is the primary is here to stay. We as a nation do not have another way that we choose our presidential nominee (lest we return to a congressional style like that of the Founding Fathers time or the nominating convention period). This does not mean, however, that there is no room for improvement to our current primary system.

A number of different ideas have been proposed on how we should reform the primary process. A big goal for many of them is to give different states the opportunity to go first and make the playing field more equal. Let us compare and contrast these proposals and discuss which ones would be the best option for our primary.

Reforms

When deciding on a new primary system, there are several important things to keep in mind. While there are many other things that could be included, the following list of five criteria are the ones that I see as the most relevant when deciding on a primary reform proposal. They are:

1. Elect a quality candidate, not one who is just well known and financed.
2. Allow for voters in early states to create information for voters in later states.
3. Encourage voter participation so that the electorate is more represented by the total voting age population.
4. Create equality among all the states so that the voters can cast a more meaningful vote (Tolbert and Redlawsk 2009).
5. Have a shorter interval between the contests and the convention so that voters can sustain the information and engagement when the primary was at its height (Conyne-Rapin 2008). Doing this could also increase voter interest in the convention. If there were a shorter gap then the momentum that was gained during the primary can be carried over to the national convention and generate more interest amongst the viewing public.

This section will give a summary of each reform plan. Particular attention will be placed on three of the reform plans that I believe fit the criteria best or is in conflict with that list. The reasons as to why they fit that criterion will be analyzed with the goal of showing the strengths and flaws of each plan.

Primary Reform Proposals

The American Plan

This plan is known by two other names; The Graduated Random Presidential Primary System and the California Plan (we will refer to it as the American Plan). The plan calls for a schedule consisting of ten intervals of two week periods where randomly selected states would hold primaries (fixtheprimaries.com). The first round, for instance, start with states that have a combined interval of eight congressional districts. The second round would increase to 16 congressional districts, and so on until a combination of states totaling 80 congressional districts vote in the tenth round in June. It is designed to create evenness among states and to start with small states in which not a lot of money needs to be spent (fixtheprimaries.com).

The Delaware Plan

This plan splits the states into four pods, with the smallest states going first in Pod 1. This plan relies on a backloading system that has the most populous states going last (fixtheprimaries.com). Each pod will have one month to vote, and each state in that pod can vote anytime during that month. States are not allowed to move their primary date ahead of their appointed month, but can push it back to a later time if they choose (fixtheprimaries.com).

Rotating Regional Plan

Proposed by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) and put forth in legislation to implement it, this plan splits the country into four regions; Eastern, Southern, Midwest and West and each region would vote from March to June (fixtheprimaries.com). Each region has 12 or 13 states with electoral votes from each region ranging from 119-163. The regions will rotate each election cycle so that every region will get a chance to be first. This plan also allows for Iowa and New Hampshire to remain the first in the nation states before the rest of the states vote on a rotating basis (fixtheprimaries.com).

The Regional Lottery Plan

This plan proposes to create four geographic regions and allows one month per region for states to hold their primaries starting in April and ending in July (fixtheprimaries.com). A US Election lottery would be set up and drawings would be held on New Year's Day to determine which region gets to start. A second lottery would be held for states with four or fewer electoral votes to determine which two states could lead off the contests ahead of the regional contests (fixtheprimaries.com).

The One Day National Primary

This proposal is the simplest one to describe; have all primary and caucus contests in one day. It eliminates the controversy of which states will vote first and it could be argued that the majority of the general public would want this plan and get it over with in one day. However, a big issue with this is that it eliminates advantages of a gradual primary schedule in particular for lesser known candidates. A more gradual schedule will allow those lesser candidates to gain momentum and create more even competition throughout the primary season (fixtheprimaries.com).

The following proposals are the ones that I have taken particular interest in because of how they decided to split the states and schedule the primary races. Each has a description of the proposal as well as an analysis of how well they fit with the five criteria. An overarching theme that is seen in these plans, as well as many mentioned before, is that they include dividing the country into geographical regions, but each plan proposes something unique as to how those regions will vote.

The National Plan

This plan calls for a national primary in which every state votes at once. The difference between the National Plan and a National Primary Day is that under this plan, polls are open from January 1 to June 30. This plan would allow citizens in every state to vote at any time during that five month period (fixtheprimaries.com). Results would be announced every month so that voters can keep track of the election and give them ample time to determine for whom to vote. Those who are most involved in politics will vote first, while those who are not can vote at their convenience. It allows the voter to get to know the candidates better as opposed to a single primary day for each state (fixtheprimaries.com).

There are several reasons why I support this plan the most. One reason being is that it gives the voters opportunity to understand each candidate's proposals and make the best selection based on that. One of the goals of this plan is to increase voter participation and by giving them this amount of time they will start to pay more attention to the primaries and will want to participate. It also creates a more level playing field for lesser known candidates. It gives them a chance to use their limited resources in smaller states to start then build momentum to go on to larger ones. Some critics might argue that it extends the primaries into too long a time period. To that I would say that the ends justify the means. Instead of cramming several primaries into a short period of time, we can have this system that allows for more flexibility and allows the candidates to do some real campaigning.

Let us examine how this plan fits in with the criteria starting with the quality candidate. Because this plan is so open, it will allow a candidate to strategically plan on which states to visit and when, which will allow the voters to get to know them. Also, it allows the voters to continue to gather information so that they can pick the candidate they feel is better qualified. Going off that, the voters get information every month on how the candidates stand in the states. This too

will allow the voters to make the best choice. The National Plan also allows for huge voter participation, because it does not limit the states' primaries to just one day; a voter can vote whenever they choose. The plan also creates equality because you avoid the conflict of trying to decide which states will go first. Lastly, since polls are open until the end of June, the conventions could be held the next couple months, thus carrying over the momentum and getting the voter more interested in convention coverage.

The Interregional Plan

This plan was introduced by Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI) and proposes dividing the country into six regions, with six sub-regions. There would be several primary days that span from March to June (fixtheprimaries.com). The order of the sub regions that vote first is based on lottery, which means that every sub-region will get to lead off the primary in every twenty four year cycle. At least one state in each region will vote on each primary day (fixtheprimary.com). For example, under this plan, Michigan would be in Region 5, sub-region C. That means Michigan would get to have their primary on the fourth Tuesday in April along with other states in sub-region C.

This is another proposal that I support. I like the idea of the country being split into regions and sub-regions and that each sub-region will get a chance to lead the charge in the primaries. What this does is give attention to certain states at one time but on a rotating basis, as in the same states do not go first all the time. It allows lesser known candidates to focus resources on a few key areas and gain momentum for later contests. Several primaries are still held on the same day, but they would start much later in the year and end closer to the national nominating conventions.

How does the Interregional Plan fit in with the criteria? It can allow for a lesser known candidate to gain momentum as they move from one sub-region voting period to the next. It also creates voter information once voters see the results from the sub-regions that vote before them. It also allows for voter participation, but on a smaller scale than the National Plan. This plan still limits primaries to one day for the whole sub-region, which may turn away some voters. In terms of equality the states in the sub-region will all have the chance to go first, including Iowa and New Hampshire (just not all of the time). Finally, since this proposal calls for it to go from March to June, the conventions could be held within the next month so as to keep the momentum from the primary going.

The Texas Plan

This plan is similar to the Interregional Plan in that it proposes that the states be broken up into groups, only this plan calls for four groups instead of six and no sub-groups (fixtheprimaries.com). The plan also calls for each group to have an equal number of states and electoral votes within them, and also calls for an equal number of predominantly Republican and Democratic states. The selection order will rotate every primary season so that each group will have the chance to go first (fixtheprimaries.com). All in all, it would seem as though this is the plan that creates the most equality for the primary election.

While it looks good on paper, logistical reasons are why I do not support this proposal. The biggest reason for this is the splitting up of the states. How do you determine which state goes into which group and which group goes first? How do you determine which states are predominantly Republican or Democrat? Do you look at registered voters? How the state voted in the last several presidential elections? If so, what about future elections? What happens to a state that votes Republican one election but Democratic the next? Will states stay in the same

group every primary cycle? As one can see, the process raises more questions than it answers and could potentially create more problems than it solves.

Despite the issues with the Texas Plan, let us see how it fits in with the criteria. For a quality candidate, the way the states are split means there will be about 12 states in each group. This will allow a lesser known candidate to gain momentum as they move through the primary season from state to state and group to group. For information, the Texas Plan allows voters in following groups to see how the candidates fared in early groups, giving them some of the information they need to select a candidate for which to vote. In terms of voter participation however, we do not really know if the plan calls for each group to vote on a single day, a week long period and so on. It would be difficult to gauge voter participation without knowing this information.

For voter equality, the plan, on paper, is perhaps the one that most advocates for equality in the primary process. However, we do not know how it will be determined which group will lead off in the primary or if the groups will always go in the same order. It cannot yet be said on whether this plan TRULY creates equality among the states when it comes to actual voting. Finally, since we do not know a time frame for this proposal, we do not know when it will end, so it is difficult to determine if there is a short or long gap between the primaries and the conventions. If the gap is too long, momentum will be lost and voters will not be interested.

What to do with Superdelegates?

This is a big issue with which needs to be dealt. Are we going to keep the superdelegates the way that they are or create a new use for them? One proposal that was made was to have the superdelegates step in and only vote when there is no candidate who has received the required majority delegate count (Delegating Democracy 2008). This is something that I would support. It

still gives superdelegates a say but it limits them to an emergency sense. Additionally, it has also been said that the superdelegates should not overturn the will of the people. This is also something with which I agree.

Republican Reforms

The primary reform plans that Democrats put into place were discussed earlier. There did not seem to be much reaction from the Republican side until very recently. Even before the Republican primary season had officially ended, there have been several suggestions as to how the GOP can improve on its primary process. These new rules, suggested by Sheahan Virgin and Rob Richie, are outlined because of the events that unfolded during the 2012 nominating contests. One thing they suggest is that the party makes it clear that states will lose their delegates if they violate the proposed primary schedule in 2016 (Virgin and Richie 2012). Additionally, they need to enforce proportionality in states that vote before April 1. Some states use winner take all in early contests. Using that, mixed with proportionality, can create distortions in voter preferences (Virgin and Richie 2012).

Shorter Primary Schedule

Many primary reform advocates call for a shortened primary schedule. They believe the one that we have now is too long. This is something that I would suggest examining very carefully. While it might please many to have a shorter primary season, having one that is too short can condense the primary contests into a packed schedule that could end up being detrimental to both the candidate and the voter. It would cause the candidate to run around to as many states as they could get to and not spend enough time in one area to get to know the voters, which in turn does not allow the voters to get to know the candidate. It would not allow for much retail politicking. A shortened primary schedule is something that would need to be examined

very carefully. By enforcing controls on the frontloading of the primary schedule and setting that date later in the year the time table can be controlled.

The Future of Money

If nothing else, one thing that is certain with the presidential primary is that money will continue to be an important and necessary presence. We can also be assured that given the current trend the cost of a primary will continue to rise, making each contest more costly than the last. Fundraising has become just as important as campaigning itself. Without fundraising, you cannot campaign successfully. The ruling in the Citizens United case will ensure that the trend of increasing primary costs and spending will continue to rise. It has been argued that the candidate no longer has control of their campaign, that instead it is controlled by “instruments of volatile forces beyond their own reckoning” (Bai 2012). This is not a far off point. Candidates run their campaigns based on what they can afford. However, the money calls the shots. Money is the major influence on what a campaign can or cannot do. Therefore, it is really the money that now runs a campaign instead of the candidate.

The future of money in the presidential primary is certain; it will always be there. It will always be a necessary force in the American electoral process. Unless Citizens United is overturned or there is major campaign donation law reform, we will continue to see the cost of running a campaign rise to astronomical levels, giving an unfair edge to some candidates, while leaving others in the dust.

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