

CAUCUS PROCESS IN IOWA

Our caucus process must appear really strange to people outside of our state. It is actually very simple and works well for Iowa. We have unbelievable access to the candidates, we play a large role in determining national policy (their policy has to play well here or they are doomed) and it is a HUGE economic boom for the state. (70 to 100 million)

County Commissioners of Election have no statutory duties in the caucus process. Registration activity increases and we field a lot of calls from potential caucus goers, but otherwise we have no role.

They are conducted by the parties and governed by party by laws. Each party finds their own caucus locations, a temporary chair and conduct the training for those temporary chairs. The caucus is basically a precinct level political party meeting where county delegates are elected to the state convention, platform issues are presented and voted upon and a presidential preference vote is taken. Caucus attendees must be registered with the political party (they can register on caucus night)

- Presidential preference on the Republican side is done with a straw vote of those attending the caucus. This vote is sometimes done by a show of hands or by dividing themselves into groups according to candidate. In precincts that elect only 1 delegate they choose the delegate by majority vote and it must be a paper ballot.
- Democratic candidates must receive at least 15 percent of the votes in that precinct to move on to the county convention. If a candidate receives less than 15 percent of the votes, supporters of non-viable candidates have the option to join a viable candidate group, join another non-viable candidate group to become viable, join other groups to form an uncommitted group or chose to go nowhere and not be counted. Non-viable groups have up to 30 minutes to realign, if they fail to do so in that time, they can ask the for more time, which is voted on by the caucus as a whole. If the caucus refuses, re-alignment is done and delegates are awarded.
- A "third party" may hold a convention to nominate one candidate for president and one for vice president as well.
- The results of this caucus activity on both the Democratic and Republican sides are not binding on the elected delegates, but the delegates usually feel obligated to follow the wishes expressed by the caucus-goers. Thus the initial caucus results provide a good barometer of the composition of Iowa's national delegation.

Our Primary (June 3) in Iowa does not include presidential candidates. It determines other federal, state and local partisan offices to be placed on the November ballot.