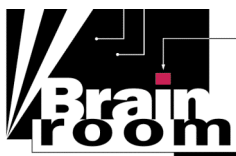




Feb. 19 Primaries & Caucuses Brainroom Briefing Book



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Delegates Available on Feb. 19	Democratic	Republican
Hawaii Caucuses (D)	20	–
Washington Primary	–	19
Wisconsin Primary	74	37
Total	94	56

Introduction – The Democrats

On Feb. 12, Obama notched three more big victories over Clinton in Democratic presidential-nominating contests in the nation's capital and next-door Virginia and Maryland.

Obama had been expected to win the Democrats' "Potomac primaries." But he triumphed by landslide margins, just as he had in five contests over the preceding weekend. Obama likewise is favored in February's final two Democratic votes, in Wisconsin and Hawaii on Feb. 19. His continued momentum, as Clinton is distracted by a staff shake-up and lagging fund raising, has some Democrats questioning her campaign's long-run viability.

The Clinton campaign was thought to be effectively ceding the Hawaii caucuses and Wisconsin primary, and focusing on Texas and Ohio, but she has demonstrated some late interest in Wisconsin. Hawaii is Obama's childhood home, and Wisconsin is a politically progressive state historically, where Obama's message of change and new leadership is resonating, according to polls and Democrats there.¹

Polls show a tight race in Wisconsin, even as Clinton's advisers have publicly downplayed their expectation for the state.

Obama, who usurped Clinton as the leader in delegates by a slender margin last week, was campaigning Monday in Wisconsin, where he has been for most of the week. Clinton arrived in Wisconsin on Saturday after spending most of the week campaigning in Ohio and Texas.

The former first lady had scaled back plans to campaign in Wisconsin, but will now try to squeeze in some stops on Monday that she was forced to cancel over the weekend because of a snowstorm.²

Clinton is asserting that she will rebound in the big-state Texas and Ohio contests March 4. But if Obama sweeps the Feb. 19 contests he could, with the momentum from a 10-event string of victories, threaten Clinton even in Texas and Ohio.³

On Sunday, Obama flew to North Carolina in secret from his hometown of Chicago to meet with Edwards. His campaign confirmed the meeting, but would not comment on the possibility of an endorsement.⁴

Introduction – The Republicans

On Feb. 12, McCain won the Republican primaries in D.C., Virginia and Maryland, but many conservatives continued to protest the party's presumptive nominee by voting for his remaining rival, Huckabee.

In the Republican race, McCain has struggled to win over conservatives who view him as a political maverick out of step with the party on key issues like tax cuts, immigration and campaign finance reform.

McCain on Monday secured the endorsement of former President George H.W. Bush, another step in the veteran senator's fight win unite the party in the face of wary conservatives who have viewed his candidacy with skepticism.

McCain is competing in Wisconsin and Washington, but the race is essentially over as he has an insurmountable delegate lead over Huckabee. A total of 1,191 delegates are needed to secure the party's nomination, and Huckabee has refused to drop out of the race until the veteran Arizona senator reaches that number.

The endorsement by the elder Bush, the patriarch of the Bush family, comes on the heels of former rival Mitt Romney's endorsement last week.⁵

Wisconsin Republican Primary
37 Delegates Available in the Feb. 19 Primary
Total Pledged Delegates: 37, Total Unpledged Delegates: 3
Of 37 pledged delegates, 13 are allocated from statewide voting (at-large), and 24 are allocated by congressional district. District-level delegates allocated proportional to the primary vote. All at-large delegates awarded to top statewide vote-getter.
Open Primary
Poll Times: 7 AM – 8 PM local; Latest Poll Closing: 9 PM ET

Wisconsin Democratic Primary
74 Delegates Available in the Feb. 19 Primary
Total Pledged Delegates: 74, Total Unpledged Delegates: 14
48 pledged district level delegates are allocated according to the primary vote in each CD, with a 15% threshold. 26 pledged statewide delegates are allocated according to the statewide vote, with a 15% threshold.
Open Primary
Poll Times: 7 AM – 8 PM local; Latest Poll Closing: 9 PM ET

Democrats in Wisconsin

Clinton has tried to tamp down expectations in Wisconsin. Clinton strategist Mark Penn called Wisconsin "an uphill challenge." Clinton has taken to calling herself "the underdog candidate."

Wisconsin is a swing states with a population that is whiter and a bit older than the nation as a whole. Wisconsin has an unemployment rate and union membership slightly above the national average. The state ranks near the bottom in prospective employment growth, according to a Moody's Economy.com index. Wisconsin is also enduring population loss.

As the industrial Midwest grapples with globalization and the consequent economic insecurity, a study assessing progress among states into the "new economy" published last year by the Kauffman Foundation ranked Wisconsin 30th.

That insecurity was playing to Clinton's strengths a month ago, when she was drawing broad support among blue-collar workers. But after making inroads in Maryland and Virginia, Obama is trying to win support in Wisconsin's blue-collar community. On Wednesday at the General Motors Corp. plant in working-class Janesville, he told the crowd that if he becomes president, the government will be "there to support you and give you the assistance you need to retool and make this transition."⁶

Obama's advisers and many Democratic strategists believe he can continue to chip away at Clinton's success with working-class voters and women by a new focus on the economy as he faces off against Clinton in Ohio and Texas, which hold primaries March 4; Pennsylvania, which holds its primary April 22; and Wisconsin, which votes on Tuesday.

Most of the recent polls show Obama, familiar to many in Wisconsin because of his popularity in neighboring Illinois, with a narrow lead over Clinton. He opened offices earlier, began television advertising sooner and visited the state twice last year.

Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.), one of Obama's most senior backers in Congress, said Obama has to build on his likely strength in urban Milwaukee and the university town of Madison, and bolster his soaring talk of national unity with attention to bread-and-butter issues.⁷

Clinton is moving belatedly to make a contest of next Tuesday's Democratic presidential primary.⁸

Clinton signaled her intention to fight Obama for the state with a new ad criticizing him for refusing to debate here before Tuesday's primary.⁹ The Clinton campaign has countered Obama with ads touting Clinton's positions on health care and freezing home foreclosures and challenging Obama to a debate he hasn't accepted.

Her advisers say Clinton may not win Wisconsin but can't afford another of the lopsided defeats she suffered in three mid-Atlantic primaries Tuesday.

Obama appears to be better organized in Wisconsin than Clinton, who looks to be throwing together her state operation at the last minute, said UW-Madison political scientist John Coleman.

Obama has been lavishing attention on the historically independent voters of Wisconsin. Obama, the senator from neighboring Illinois, has spent more time in the state than Clinton. Obama drew 4,000 people at a rally last October and beat Clinton back to Wisconsin this year.

Obama drew more than 17,000 at the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison on Feb. 12. And he will have appeared in several other Wisconsin cities before Clinton even made her first appearance on Saturday. The Obama camp doesn't want to risk a loss or even a surprisingly strong Clinton showing at a time when expectations for him are rising.

An internal memo that the Obama campaign accidentally sent to reporters last week projected a 7-point victory over Clinton in Wisconsin. The campaign expects strong support in urban Milwaukee and liberal Madison, and with stops at a Janesville auto plant and in industrial Racine on Wednesday he was trying to shore up support with blue-collar, union households that have been favoring Clinton.¹⁰

Democratic Voters in Wisconsin

Playing down expectations, the Clinton camp says Wisconsin's primary electorate is liberal and well-educated - the kind of voters who have strongly supported Obama. Even Milwaukee, the state's largest city and home to many of the white, working-class voters who have favored Clinton, is also 40 percent black.

The state seems to offer opportunities, and handicaps, for both candidates. For every factor that favors Clinton there is one for Obama, said Charles Franklin, a University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor and polling expert.

While Clinton has more big union support in Wisconsin, only 25 percent of Democratic voters in 2004 earned less than \$30,000. The same percentage earned more than \$75,000, a group that has favored Obama elsewhere.

Wisconsin's open primary rules could give Obama an advantage this year. With the Republican race all but decided for McCain, Obama may benefit from an influx of Republicans and independents, as he has in earlier primaries.

Both candidates were busy courting the student vote, a potentially huge factor. In the 2006 elections, Wisconsin led the nation in young voters at 17 percent.¹¹

"There's a greater hostility toward Bush in Wisconsin, his approval rating here is lower and the antiwar sentiment is stronger." Obama has criticized Clinton's record on the war, but the issue isn't a clean win for him, said Burden.

Wisconsin has same-day voter registration that results in turnouts traditionally among the highest in the nation. That could bode well for Obama, who has fared well among independents. In the latest Republican polls, front-runner McCain leads Huckabee by 20 percentage points. If

independents supporting McCain believe he has wrapped up his party's nomination, they may cross party lines and support Obama in the Democratic primary, Burden said.¹²

Combine a big campus vote with oodles of independents and a heaping of reform-minded, anti-war liberals, and this electorate sounds tailor-made for the youthful senator from the state next door. But the recent history of the Wisconsin primary suggests a more level playing field than that.

Take a turnout that will be majority female, add an oversize union vote and large numbers of working-class whites, and the political turf begins to look a little friendlier to the former first lady.

Then consider the fact that the strongest predictors of success for Obama over the 30-plus contests so far have been: primaries with a huge African-American vote, and caucuses that generate low turnouts dominated by high-intensity supporters. Neither remotely describes the contest in Wisconsin.¹³

Obama's big wins last Tuesday were bolstered by black voters, who made up 29% of the electorate in Virginia and 37% in Maryland. But he also split the white vote with Clinton.

Wisconsin has a population 5.4 million and is about 89% white. It has many young people and upscale liberals, groups that have flocked to Obama in past contests. He does well with independents, and they can vote in primaries here.¹⁴

Demographics aside, two broad features have defined the Wisconsin primary over the decades. One is a big independent vote, which would seem to help Obama. The other is an unusually broad electorate, the product of routinely robust turnouts, which means that no single demographic feature or activist subgroup is likely to dictate the outcome.

"I am more interested in what happens when a large number of people get to vote," Clinton said last week, citing her preference for high-turnout primaries over the low-turnout caucuses that Obama has dominated. "The primary gives people a much better idea of what would happen in a general election."

By those standards, Clinton should love Wisconsin, which boasted the highest primary turnout in the country in 1988 (39 percent of the voting-age population) and the third-highest in 2004. The projection for this year is about 35 percent. That would put it behind only New Hampshire and Massachusetts of all of the states to vote this year. (Clinton won both of those big-turnout primaries.)

Turnouts that large have a moderating effect because they dilute the impact of the party's activist and ideological wing.

Obama has claimed the insurgent mantle, and the profile of his support fits the historical insurgent-vs.-establishment pattern. David Plouffe, his campaign manager, said last week that one reason Wisconsin is good for Obama is it "has a history of supporting insurgent candidates, supporting candidates who were on the reform side of the equation."

But when it comes to this state's presidential primary, that history is a mixed one.

Insurgent winners include Gary Hart over Walter Mondale in 1984 and George McGovern over Hubert Humphrey in 1972. Insurgent losers include Jesse Jackson to Michael Dukakis in 1988, Jerry Brown to Bill Clinton in 1992 and Dean to John Kerry in his failed last stand here four years ago.

The '88 primary might be worth recalling for another reason. Dukakis beat Jackson handily, 48 percent to 28 percent, in a field that included Al Gore and Paul Simon.

Although Obama has shown far greater appeal among white voters than Jackson did, questions still linger about the willingness of some white voters to support an African American for the highest office. In some Southern states this year, Obama's support among whites has run below 30 percent. The fact that white voters in Wisconsin 20 years ago gave at least that much support to Jackson is arguably a good sign for Obama in this race.¹⁵

Perceptions of the state as a liberal, outsider-friendly bastion are less than accurate, said Barry Burden, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Cases in point: John Kerry beat Howard Dean in 2004, Walter Mondale beat Gary Hart in 1984 and Michael Dukakis beat Jesse Jackson in 1988. "In a lot of cases, the insurgent campaign ends here," Burden said.

Also favorable for Clinton: She has won big in past contests with lower-income, blue-collar voters, and there's no shortage of them here.¹⁶

Republicans in Wisconsin

McCain has a commanding lead over Huckabee in the chase for convention delegates.¹⁷ Coupled with continuing fire from the likes of Rush Limbaugh, a weakness in the heart of the party's base is impeding McCain's ability to refocus his campaign for November. That has raised the stakes for McCain in Wisconsin, where Huckabee's base of conservative Christian support is smaller. Without a decisive victory -- more than 50 percent of the vote, with a double-digit margin -- Republican strategists say McCain will face an unpleasant choice: either find some way to persuade Mr. Huckabee to drop out, or deplete scarce resources to prevent further embarrassment on March 4.¹⁸

On Jan. 18, Romney endorsed McCain and urged his delegates to support the Arizona senator. Huckabee said Romney joined the "me too crowd" in making the endorsement, but said it wouldn't affect his candidacy.

McCain didn't do much early campaigning in Wisconsin, but he started campaigning more actively in the state last week with stops in Milwaukee, Oshkosh and La Crosse.¹⁹

Huckabee told supporters that they could help muddle expectations if they vote for him in Tuesday's Wisconsin primary instead of McCain. Huckabee said he thinks Wisconsin feels a lot like Iowa. It's in the same part of the country and has a very conservative Republican Party.

"We're not ready to simply say game over," Huckabee told supporters. "If I win Wisconsin, there'll be some people scratching their heads at those anchor desks saying 'We don't understand this. We don't know what's going on.'"²⁰

Huckabee characterized Wisconsin as "a strong pro-life" state for GOP voters where he believes distancing himself from McCain on social issues will earn him support. Huckabee said voters will react favorably to Huckabee's support for a "human life amendment," his opposition to embryonic stem cell research as well as his criticism of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law.²¹

In a twist, Wisconsin's open primary could provide a boost to Huckabee -- even though it has long been considered a boon for McCain, who has a proven appeal to independent voters.

In other states, independent voters have largely split between McCain and Obama. But with McCain seen as having all but sealed the nomination, and Obama locked in a close battle with Clinton, more independents here might be pulled to the Democratic side.

That could tamp down McCain's vote totals, boosting Huckabee's prospects.

McCain spokesman Brian Rogers said the McCain campaign is well- positioned here: "Voters in Wisconsin know John McCain and know he's a straight talker. They know he's someone prepared to lead from Day One."

McCain has continued to line up the support of the Republican Party's power structure, with all attesting to his conservative credentials. In Wisconsin, former Gov. Tommy G. Thompson, who dropped out of the presidential derby in August, is now backing McCain.²²

Wisconsin Primary History

One hundred years ago, you couldn't vote in a presidential primary in Wisconsin. Instead, candidates were chosen by party bosses who traded favors, political appointments and cash to put friends on the ballot.

Robert M. La Follette called for direct primary elections to replace this corrupt system, but for more than 15 years was thwarted by incumbents who profited from it. Finally, in 1904, voters endorsed the change from smoke-filled back-rooms to open primaries for state-level offices.

When the system was used for the first time in 1906, though, La Follette got a surprise. He had picked Lenroot to succeed him as governor and aligned the progressive Republican machine behind him. Republican voters, however, chose incumbent Gov. James O. Davidson as their candidate instead.

In 1911, Wisconsin's primary law was expanded to include presidential elections. Wisconsin's first presidential primary was held in April 1912, when La Follette gained the most Wisconsin votes (Woodrow Wilson won the presidency).²³

A close race for the Democratic Party's 2008 presidential nomination has enabled Wisconsin to retain its reputation as a difference-maker in the presidential primary process.

Wisconsin has a history of drawing national political attention to its presidential primary.

"Not by planning, but by chance, Wisconsin has produced some drama," said Kenneth Goldstein, professor of political science at UW.²⁴

The next big stop on the 2008 presidential campaign trail will be Wisconsin, where Democratic and Republican primaries Feb. 19 could well clarify the still-unsettled Democratic contest. It is in Wisconsin that the campaign trail becomes a boulevard of broken dreams. No state has so frequently upset leading contenders, slowed down surges and rewritten the rules of races for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations as Wisconsin.

Something in the state's penchant for mavericks and its lack of basic partisan structures feeds fantasies about how the state will respond to visiting campaigners.²⁵

In 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy defeated Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota in the state primary, taking a major step forward in his march to the nomination and presidency.

Eight years later, it was Sen. Eugene McCarthy's anti-war popularity in Wisconsin that was given some credit for forcing President Lyndon Johnson to announce that he wouldn't seek re-election.

In 1972, Alabama Gov. George Wallace finished second. Four years after that, Jimmy Carter's victory in Wisconsin knocked Mo Udall out of the race. It was on the morning of the Wisconsin primary in 1980 that Carter announced the failed mission to rescue the hostages in Iran.

The state's primary was held in early April then and was the second state primary, following only New Hampshire. Those days are gone, but Wisconsin has some unique qualities that set it apart.²⁶

The state has never come first on the primary calendar. Even this year, as other states scrambled to move their primary and caucus dates up to Feb. 5 to be part of the "Super Tuesday" frenzy, Wisconsin held off - choosing to keep its primary on the same day as local elections for town boards and city councils.²⁷

"One thing that stands out is our primary system," said Terri Johnson, assistant professor of public and environmental affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

"It's an open primary so you don't have to be a party member to vote. In addition, we're one of a few states that have same-day registration, and we usually have a large voter turnout. These are progressive innovations that do make Wisconsin competitive. So we're one of the states that the candidates pay attention to."²⁸

Candidates and their backers have always chosen to make Wisconsin matter:

- As upstart contender Franklin Roosevelt did when he beat previous party nominee Al Smith in the 1932 Wisconsin Democratic primary.
- As Willkie did with his audacious but failed 1944 bid.
- As backers of Gen. Douglas MacArthur did when they tried unsuccessfully to build a boomlet for the Milwaukee native with an unsuccessful Republican primary bid in 1948.
- As backers of Dwight Eisenhower did when they upset the campaign of conservative Robert Taft in the state and created an opening for the general to enter the contest for the Republican nomination of 1952.
- As Massachusetts Sen. John Kennedy did when the state put him on track for the party nod in 1960.
- As Minnesota Sen. Eugene McCarthy did when his anti-Vietnam War challenge to President Lyndon Johnson forced the incumbent to quit on the eve of Wisconsin's 1968 Democratic primary.
- As South Dakota Sen. George McGovern did when the state gave him a critical Democratic primary win in 1972.
- As liberal Mo Udall did when he narrowly failed to derail Jimmy Carter's bandwagon in the Wisconsin Democratic primary of 1976.
- As liberal John Anderson and moderate George H.W. Bush did when they tried to block conservative Ronald Reagan's candidacy in the intense Republican primary of 1980.
- As Mike Dukakis and Jesse Jackson did when they fought the essential battle of the 1988 Democratic nomination race in Wisconsin.
- As Bill Clinton did when he used a slim win in the state to prevent challenger Jerry Brown from threatening his "comeback kid" status in the campaign for the 1992 Democratic nomination.

With its rich primary tradition - dating to the days of Robert M. La Follette's Progressive movement at the start of the last century - and with its wide-open process that allows Democrats,

Republicans and independents to cross party lines and participate in whichever primary grabs their interest; its steady status as a swing state; its liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans; its urban, suburban, small-town and rural voting blocks; and its labor union and family farm traditions, few states offer presidential candidates more opportunities to fool themselves into believing that they can get the win they need in Wisconsin.

Just four years ago, Howard Dean was sure that the Badger State's anti-war sentiments would provide him with the perfect opportunity to restart a campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination that had stumbled in the caucuses of Iowa and the New Hampshire primary. The former Vermont governor swept into the state with an energetic campaign plan, enough money for an expensive television campaign and endorsements from many of the state's leading Democrats. He left as a third-place finisher - who trailed both front-runner John Kerry and the man who would become the party's vice presidential nominee, John Edwards. Dean then knew he would not be the party's nominee.²⁹

1992 Republican Presidential Primary

Bush (R)	364,507	(76%)
Buchanan (R)	78,516	(16%)
Other	17,633	(4%)
Duke (R)	12,867	(3%)
Uncommitted	8,725	(2%)

1992 Democratic Presidential Primary

Clinton (D)	287,356	(37%)
Brown (D)	266,207	(35%)
Tsongas (D)	168,619	(22%)
Other	26,488	(3%)
Uncommitted	15,487	(2%)
Harkin (D)	5,395	(1%)

1996 Republican Presidential Primary

Dole (R)	301,628	(53%)
Buchanan (R)	194,733	(34%)
Forbes (R)	32,205	(6%)
Keyes (R)	18,028	(3%)
Other	15,553	(3%)
Lugar (R)	3,215	(1%)

1996 Democratic Presidential Primary

Clinton (D)	347,629	(98%)
Uncommitted	7,005	(2%)

2000 Republican Presidential Primary

Bush (R)	343,292	(69%)
McCain (R)	89,684	(18%)
Keyes (R)	48,919	(10%)
Other	8,369	(2%)
Forbes (R)	5,505	(1%)

2000 Democratic Presidential Primary

Gore (D)	328,682	(89%)
Bradley (D)	32,560	(9%)
Other	6,211	(2%)
LaRouche (D)	3,743	(1%)

2004 Democratic Presidential Primary

Kerry (D)	327,438	(40%)
Edwards (D)	283,376	(34%)
Dean (D)	150,548	(18%)
Kucinich (D)	27,306	(3%)
Sharpton (D)	14,691	(2%)
Other	22,891	(3%)

Wisconsin Primary Turnout

The highest presidential primary voter turnout in Wisconsin in 20 years is expected on Tuesday, thanks to the tight Democratic race between Obama and Clinton.

State election officials are predicting 35 percent of those eligible, or 1.5 million voters, will go to the polls Feb. 19.

"Before Super Tuesday, the thinking was we'd see a turnout in the mid-20s," said State Elections Board spokesman Kyle Richmond.

Wisconsinites can register at the polls on the day of the election, so turnout can be bolstered by how many people show up who haven't voted before. "We feel a significant turnout of up to 150,000 will register on election day," Richmond said.

A 35 percent turnout Tuesday would be the highest presidential primary turnout in Wisconsin since 1988, which featured Michael Dukakis and Jesse Jackson on the Democratic ballot and George Herbert Walker Bush and Bob Dole on the Republican side.

In 1980, 46 percent of the eligible voters turned out for the George W. Bush-Ronald Reagan Republican race and the Ted Kennedy- Jimmy Carter Democratic race. The biggest turnout was in 1960, when 50 percent turned out in a primary that featured Democratic candidates John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey, Richmond said.³⁰

Statewide turnout of voting age population in Wisconsin's presidential primaries since 1960	
Year	Percent
2004	24.1
2000	22.2
1996	24.6
1992	33.2
1988	38.9
1984	27.4
1980	46
1976	42.4
1972	48.2
1968	48.1
1964	44.4
1960	50.2 ³¹

Wisconsin, which is holding its presidential primary on Feb. 19, had a 2007 population of 5.6 million that included a higher percentage of non-Hispanic whites and a lower percentage of Hispanics than the nation as a whole, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. About 77 percent of Wisconsin's voting-age citizens cast a ballot in the 2004 general election, above the national rate of 64 percent and one of the highest voting percentages nationwide.³²

Selected Characteristics	Wisconsin	U.S.
Median age	37.7	36.4
Women	50.3%	50.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	85.7%	66.4%
Black alone	6.0%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	4.7%	14.8%
Median household income	\$48,772	\$48,451
Foreign born	4.4%	12.5%
Persons below poverty	11.0%	13.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25+)	25.1%	27.0%
Median home value	\$163,500	\$185,200

Washington Republican Primary
19 Delegates Available in the Feb. 19 Primary
Total Pledged Delegates: 37, Total Unpledged Delegates: 3
The WA GOP has 37 "morally bound" delegates, plus 3 RNC delegates. 18 of these delegates (2 per CD) are bound to a presidential candidate based on the caucuses (2/9) and State Convention (5/29-5/31/2008). The remaining 19 delegates (1 per CD, 10 At Large) are allocated based on the 2/19 Presidential Primary results.
Semi-Open Primary
Poll Times: 7 AM – 8 PM local; Latest Poll Closing: 11 PM ET

Washington Democratic Primary
0 Delegates Available in the Feb. 19 Primary
Total Pledged Delegates: 78, Total Unpledged Delegates: 19
The Democratic Party held binding precinct caucuses on Feb. 9. The 78 WA Democratic pledged delegates are allocated based on the caucus and convention process. The state also holds a presidential primary for both parties on Feb. 19, but it is a non-binding "beauty contest" for Democrats and will not affect delegate allocation.
Semi-Open Primary
Poll Times: 7 AM – 8 PM local; Latest Poll Closing: 11 PM ET

Washington's Weird Primary

Washington's presidential primary on Tuesday has voters confused and angry, candidates lackadaisical at best, and the state's chief election official predicting the biggest turnout ever.

If Secretary of State Sam Reed is right that 47 percent of eligible voters will cast ballots, it'll be a sign of high interest in the presidential campaign and not a reflection of the importance of Washington's vote.

The results, however, will help flesh out a picture of where the state's electorate is nine months before the general election even though Democrats will not designate a single delegate based on the state's primary results.

Will Republican regulars stick with Huckabee, who did so well in the Feb. 9 caucuses, or will they return to the fold and back McCain? Will the wider scope of voters expected in the primary show the enthusiasm for Obama that Democrats did in their caucuses, or will Clinton be able to counter her trouncing?

The conventional wisdom -- which has been faulty this year -- says caucus-goers represent the extremes of the political parties. That means a higher percentage of liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans showed up on Feb. 9 than what we'll see in the primary.

Washington's system for selecting presidential nominees is divided between party caucuses and the state-run primary -- something no other state does.

And only those primary ballots cast for Republican candidates will count toward a presidential nominee in the nominal race between McCain and Huckabee.

Democrats will ignore the results of the race between Clinton and Obama for allocating their delegates. That leads some to call the primary a beauty contest. But the process isn't pretty.

Secretary of State Reed said most counties last week reported strong returns of early mail-in ballots. The 47 percent turnout he's predicting would be slightly higher than in the state's last presidential primary in 2000. "But you never know," Reed said. "We're guessing."

There's probably no better measure of how little the candidates care about the race than the whereabouts of Huckabee. He finished close behind McCain in the Republican caucuses, and argued that the results might have been skewed against him. Yet Huckabee is doing no campaigning in the state.

McCain's campaign is placing prerecorded telephone calls urging people to vote. But that appears to be the only sign of a campaign between the Feb. 9 caucuses and Tuesday's primary.

The race is still very much alive on the Democratic side. But Tuesday's vote won't matter, as far as the state party is concerned. It will allocate all its delegates through the caucus and convention process -- and none through the primary.

One of the biggest challenges -- especially for the Republicans - - has been to make sure people know they are allowed to vote twice.

Many people who attended the caucuses are not aware that they can also vote in the primary, said GOP spokesman Patrick Bell. Some have even called the party worried that they might be prosecuted for voting twice, Bell said.

Local supporters of Republican Congressman Ron Paul's presidential campaign are hoping to benefit. They've set up a Web site, wastedvote2008.com, urging Democrats to ignore the meaningless primary on their side of the ballot for the chance to muck around in Republican Party politics.

"The key thing to realize here is that you have nothing to lose," the Web site says. "Voting in the Republican primary is NOT a vote in favor of the Republican Party. Rather, it is an opportunity to stack the deck on the Republican side with your preference."

The Web site goes on to note that Paul is the only anti-war Republican in the race.

In other states this year, McCain has done well among independent voters. But it's hard to gauge how the independents will break here.

In 2000, the state's presidential primary gave voters three ballot choices: Republican, Democrat or "unaffiliated." But neither party counted the unaffiliated ballots for allocating delegates.

Among voters who selected Republican ballots that year, McCain lost to George W. Bush by nearly 20 percentage points. But McCain won by nearly as big of a margin among people who used unaffiliated ballots.

This year's primary offers no unaffiliated ballot. Instead voters must sign the oath stating that they consider themselves Republican or Democrat and vow not to take part in the other party's caucuses. A key question is how many independents will be willing to sign a loyalty oath.

One factor that will likely work against Huckabee: Washington residents are among the least church-going in the nation. All five of the primaries that Huckabee has won thus far were in Southern states that rank in the top 10 for people who say they attend church at least once a week. In all of those states, more than 50 percent of the people say they go to church at least weekly, according to a Gallup survey. Washington ranks near the bottom, at 32 percent weekly church attendance.³³

Republicans in Washington

Washington Republicans Use Both Caucuses and a Primary
Although the Democrats in Washington state are allocating all of their voter-chosen delegates to their national convention through presidential preference caucuses, the Republicans rely on a two-part process.
Total of state GOP delegates to national convention: 40
Automatic (party leaders): 3, uncommitted to any presidential candidate.
Allocated through caucuses: 18. Precinct caucuses Feb. 9 chose delegates to legislative district or county caucuses, which will choose delegates to the May 29-31 state convention. At the state convention, the delegation from each of the nine congressional districts will elect two delegates to the national convention. Those national delegates may declare their presidential preferences but are not bound by them.
Allocated through Feb. 19 primary: 19. Of those, 10 will be elected at large by the state convention and pledged to presidential candidates in proportion to the vote for the candidates in the primary (minimum 20 percent primary vote needed to qualify). Also, the delegation from each of the nine congressional districts at the state convention will elect a national delegate pledged to the winner of the primary in that congressional district. ³⁴

With their messy caucuses behind them, Republicans are ready to take up the other half of their complicated, two-sided procedure for picking delegates to their national convention: Tuesday's presidential preference primary.

What's at stake for the GOP contenders is ... well, maybe not so much.

The big picture for the McCain has all but locked up the GOP presidential nomination, winning enough national convention delegates with victories in various state caucuses and primaries to build an apparently insurmountable lead.

Still, former Huckabee, who has won several primaries and caucuses of his own, says it's not over till the fat lady sings, and she won't until one of the candidates nails down the majority of national convention delegates that's needed for the nomination.

So Huckabee continues to campaign, as does Texas Congressman Ron Paul, the even darker dark horse who has failed to finish first in any state so far. Neither of them, nor McCain, is expected in Washington state before Tuesday, though.

Both McCain and Huckabee have been campaigning in Wisconsin, a state that also holds its primary Tuesday, but the Wisconsin GOP will allot 37 of its delegates to candidates based on the results of its primary. In Washington, the primary will decide who gets the support of just 19 of the state's convention delegates.

Except for three slots filled automatically by party leaders, the preferences of the rest of the Washington delegation were determined in the Feb. 9 precinct caucuses -- theoretically, anyway.

Esser infamously declared McCain the winner of the caucuses on the night of Feb. 9. The Huckabee forces wailed in protest: Not all the results were in and the race was too close to announce the outcome, they said. Huckabee himself darkly compared the state GOP to the Soviet Union, alluding -- erroneously -- to a decision to forgo counting all the votes.

After the counting, which had merely been halted overnight, resumed Sunday and Monday, McCain's lead held. With 96 percent of the precincts accounted for, he beat out Huckabee 25.6 percent to 23.3 percent, with Paul third at 21.4 percent, according to the state party.

Although Esser feels the later, more complete totals vindicated his caucus-night call, they don't explain why he made it in the first place, instead of simply releasing the numbers and letting the public and the media make their own interpretations.

Esser said that, for one thing, party officials understand the raw data from the caucuses better than news reporters do.

"I had made the decision in advance that if I were confident of who it was going to turn out to be, I was going to offer my congratulations to the winner," he said. "It was a judgment call. It was my judgment, and I take responsibility for that."

Several commentators suggested that, despite all the fuss over them, the numbers are essentially meaningless.

The state GOP calculated the percentages by matching the names of the delegates selected at the precinct caucuses with what they put down as their presidential preference when they signed into the caucus. But those stated preferences are not binding on the delegates, who, in any event, merely move on to another round of caucuses, at which a smaller number of delegates will be elected to the next round of caucuses, at which delegates to the national convention will be chosen.

So figuring out exactly how those precinct caucus percentages will translate into national convention delegates for McCain, Huckabee or Paul is largely guesswork.

The allocation of delegates via the primary is much more straightforward. And unlike the caucuses, which are private affairs run by party volunteers, the primary is a publicly financed election conducted by government employees.

But it's up to the political parties to decide how to use the results.

The Republicans have given different weight to the primary from presidential election to presidential election, deciding this year to give it roughly equal weight with the caucus.³⁵

Democrats in Washington

For the Democratic candidates, whose names also will appear on the primary ballot, there's even less on the line than there is for the Republicans -- and officially, nothing at all.

The Democrats have never paid any attention to the primary in terms of delegate selection, instead relying on their caucuses -- which this year attracted a record 244,000 participants. But many more could cast ballots in the Democratic primary, the vast majority of them by mail (every county but King and Pierce has adopted all-mail voting).

Obama decisively defeated Clinton in the Democratic caucuses Feb. 9. The two are in a very close fight for the nomination, and should she reverse the results Tuesday, Clinton might point to that outcome as a truer indication of popular support.

State Democratic Party Chairman Dwight Pelz discounted that possibility. "I don't even think there are bragging rights," he said. "A lot of Democrats have already expressed their vote (in the caucuses) and won't be there, so I think it's going to be difficult to draw conclusions."³⁶

Turnout

As many as 1.5 million votes are projected to be cast in Washington State's presidential primary on Tuesday. The question is whether they will count.

The state is obliged to tally the numbers, of course, and the state Republican Party will award 19 of its 40 delegates based on the primary results. Yet Senator John McCain's selection as the Republican nominee is pretty much assured.

More problematic is that the state Democratic Party long ago said it would award its delegates based solely on the results of the statewide caucuses that were held on Feb. 9. The party says a record 250,000 people turned out for the caucuses, which Senator Barack Obama won by 36 percentage points.

Washington is the only state that uses caucuses and primaries to nominate delegates. Accompanying the blame and questionable relevance, there is confusion.

People here do not register to vote by party affiliation, but this year voters in the primary must check a box declaring a preferred party and sign an oath promising that they did not vote in a caucus for another party. There is no mechanism to ensure that people do so — just trust. But if a voter does not select a party and sign the oath, their vote will not be counted in the presidential primary. The changes have not gone over well.

"We're hearing daily, in huge volumes, from voters who are angry with this style of primary," said Bobbie Egan, a spokeswoman for the King County elections division. Ms. Egan said the department had received 50 to 75 complaints a day in recent weeks.

Mail-in ballots received so far show that 25 percent of voters in King County, the largest in the state, are not checking the box. Many are writing notes on their ballots.

Still, people appear to be voting in large numbers. Almost all of Washington voters cast ballots by mail, and Sam Reed, a Republican who is secretary of state and Washington's top election official, said as many as 30 percent of voters in some counties had cast ballots more than a week before the election. He predicted that 47 percent or more of the state's 3.2 million voters would participate, a record.³⁷

Washington Primary History

Political parties in every state have their own peculiar way of nominating presidential candidates. But over the past two decades, Washington's role in the nomination game has evolved beyond peculiar and now borders on bizarre.

Compared to how it's done in other states, "we're pretty far out there," said Todd Donavan, a political-science professor at Western Washington University.

For nearly a century, Washington's political parties relied solely on precinct caucuses -- small gatherings held in homes, schools, churches and firehouses -- to allocate delegates to the national nominating conventions.

But that all changed after the 1988 election. That was the year televangelist Pat Robertson and his so-called "invisible army" of Christian conservative voters dominated the state Republican caucuses and conventions.³⁸

More than 200,000 voters signed a 1988 initiative to the Legislature calling for a primary.³⁹ The next year, the Legislature adopted a citizen initiative calling for a presidential primary. The measure said the party caucus systems were "unnecessarily restrictive" and discriminated against the elderly, disabled and other people unable to attend the gatherings.

But Washington's presidential primary has had a tortured history.

The Republican Party used the first primary, in 1992, to allocate all of its delegates to the national convention. But it hardly mattered because then-President George H.W. Bush already had a lock on the nomination.

The Republicans then switched to a hybrid approach, using the primary to allocate half its delegates in 1996 and a third in 2000.

The state Democratic Party, meanwhile, has never relied on the primary and instead divvies up all of its delegates through the caucus and convention process.

The presidential primary eventually became so meaningless that the Legislature canceled it in 2004. Lawmakers argued it would be a waste of money, given that the Democrats were ignoring the primary and President George W. Bush had no serious challenger on the Republican ticket.

But the primary was revived for 2008. Hoping to give it more impact nationally, a panel of party leaders and state lawmakers agreed last summer to move the primary up by three months, to Feb. 19.

Once again, however, the Democrats are not using it to select delegates. And the Republican Party will use the primary results to allocate only 19 of its 40 delegates to the GOP national convention.

People who vote in the primary will have to choose between a Democratic or Republican ballot and will have to sign an oath promising that they haven't participated in the other party's nominating process.

Unlike 1996 and 2000, voters will not have the option of using an "unaffiliated" ballot. Though a large percentage of voters in those elections cast unaffiliated ballots, their votes were never counted by either party. So the state decided to scrap that option.⁴⁰

February 29, 2000 Washington Republican Primary

Bush (R)	(58%)
McCain (R)	(39%)
Keyes (R)	(2%)
Other	(1%)

March 7, 2000 Washington Democratic Caucuses

Gore (D)	(68%)
Bradley (D)	(28%)
Other	(3%)

March 7, 2000 Washington Republican Caucuses

Bush (R)	(80%)
McCain (R)	(15%)
Keyes (R)	(3%)
Other	(1%)

February 7, 2004 Washington Democratic Caucuses

Kerry (D)	(49%)
Dean (D)	(30%)
Kucinich (D)	(8%)
Edwards (D)	(7%)
Clarks (D)	(3%)
Other	(3%)

No presidential primary in WA in 2004.

February 9, 2008 Washington Republican Caucuses

Precincts Reporting	99.99 %
Huckabee	23.2 %
McCain	25.3 %
Paul	21.5 %
Romney	15.5 %
Other	1.1 %
Uncommitted	13.5 %

February 9, 2008 Washington Republican Caucuses

Precincts Reporting	96.4%
Obama	67.51%
Clinton	31.2%
Uncommitted	1.1%
Other	.16%

Washington, which is holding its presidential primary on Feb. 19, had a 2007 population of 6.5 million that includes a higher percentage of Asians and a lower percentage of blacks and Hispanics than the nation as a whole, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. About 68 percent of Washington's voting-age citizens cast a ballot in the 2004 general election, above the national rate of 64 percent.⁴¹

Selected Characteristics	Washington	U.S.
Median age	36.7	36.4
Women	50.1%	50.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	76.5%	66.4%
Black alone	3.6%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	9.1%	14.8%
Median household income	\$52,583	\$48,451
Foreign born	12.4%	12.5%
Persons below poverty	11.8%	13.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25+)	30.5%	27.0%
Median home value	\$267,600	\$185,200

Hawaii Democratic Caucuses
20 Delegates Available in the Feb. 19 Caucuses
Total Pledged Delegates: 20, Total Unpledged Delegates: 9
13 pledged district level delegates are allocated according to the primary vote in each CD, with a 15% threshold. 7 pledged statewide delegates are allocated according to the statewide vote, with a 15% threshold.
Caucuses convene at 6:00 or 6:30pm local. Presidential balloting will be open for at least 30 minutes, from 7:00-7:30pm. Initial results expected by 8:15pm local (1:15am ET), with the bulk of the precincts reporting by 10:00pm local (3:00am ET); Latest Poll Closing: 12:30 AM ET

Hawaii Democratic Caucuses

A record number of Hawaii Democrats are expected to cast votes during the Feb. 19 caucuses to determine 20 presidential delegate votes in a complex process that has confused many Democrats, including some party leaders.

Any state resident who signs a blue Democratic Party membership card -- even as late as the night of the caucus -- is eligible to vote in one of 70 neighborhood meeting places across the islands.

Complicated rules adopted by the local party and long posted on the party Web site showed only 13 delegate seats up for grabs in the caucus voting, and that's what some party leaders were saying prior to consulting with the national party. Seven more delegate votes originally were to be decided at the May 25 party convention.

Local party leaders found out that the Democratic National Committee recently upped the number of delegate commitments to be decided at the Hawaii caucus to 20 as it tries to standardize the caucus process nationwide, said Jeani Withington, chairwoman for the Democratic Party of Hawaii.⁴²

There are only 20 delegates at stake in Hawaii on Tuesday -- the same day as the Wisconsin primary -- but a Clinton victory would put a dent in Obama's recent string of wins in eight states.⁴³

More than double the 4,000 people who participated in the 2004 caucuses are expected to turn out this year, partly because of the heightened importance of each vote after the Super Tuesday standoff and because of strong interest in both candidates in the state.

Labor unions and some top party leaders have been supporting Clinton, while there's a growing movement backing Obama, who was born and raised in the islands.⁴⁴

Hawai'i Democrats don't just get to choose between the first woman and the first nonwhite leading candidates, but also whether to choose a Hawai'i-born-and-raised contender. Obama, a 1979 graduate of Punahou School, might have a hometown advantage, but his campaign isn't taking that for granted.⁴⁵

Neither candidate has planned campaign trips to Hawaii, but Obama's half-sister, Maya Soetoro-Ng, is campaigning for him locally.

Clinton said she, too, has strong ties to Hawaii because she has visited the state five times since 1993. Also, former President Bill Clinton was responsible for signing the 1993 Apology Resolution that recognized the overthrow of the kingdom of Hawaii in 1893.⁴⁶

In a sign of Hawaii's importance in the tight Democratic race, Chelsea Clinton planned to spend three days in the state campaigning for her mother. She expected to spend two days on Oahu

starting Friday and attend a rally Sunday on Maui hosted by the Hawaii Government Employees Association, the state's largest union.

The Obama campaign began airing a new radio ad on Friday that calls the islands a special place where he was born and grew up. In the ad, Obama says he wants to improve public education by increasing preschool programs and recruiting more teachers.⁴⁷

U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye and DNC member Richard Port have said they're backing Clinton.⁴⁸ After chalking up his historic 15,000th vote in the Senate, Sen. Inouye is coming home for his very first Hawaii Democratic caucus vote. Clinton supporters in the islands are hoping Inouye's popularity will give Clinton a boost over native son Barack Obama who is supported by a growing movement of volunteers in Hawaii.⁴⁹

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie is supporting Obama.⁵⁰

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, the state's largest union, is backing Clinton and hosted her daughter, Chelsea, for a rally at the HGEA building on Maui on Sunday.

Obama's Hawai'i campaign has been gaining momentum, but formal organization only began within the past couple of weeks, when it became clear that the contest between Obama and Clinton would not be settled before the Tuesday caucuses.⁵¹

Clinton pledged on Feb. 13 to "pay special attention to Hawaii" with plans to rejuvenate tourism, reduce reliance on foreign oil and help veterans as the islands prepare for their Democratic caucus next week.

Clinton's "Solutions for Hawaii" plan comes ahead of a difficult caucus vote Tuesday in the islands. "I know we face an uphill battle in the state, but we plan to run a vigorous and successful campaign," Clinton said.

If elected president, Clinton said her programs would strengthen Hawaii's economy, invest in renewable energy and remedy a shortage of public school teachers. "I will pay special attention to Hawaii because I know how tourism-dependent Hawaii is," Clinton said in a conference call with reporters from San Antonio, Texas.⁵²

The Hawaii Republican caucuses ended Feb. 5, but they were not used to pick the state's choice for president. Instead, those caucuses selected delegates to the state Republican convention May 16-18, when the delegates to the national convention will finally be chosen.⁵³

What to Expect on Caucus Night

Hawai'i Democrats have 29 delegates to the Democratic National Convention in August. The party will hold a presidential preference poll at its caucuses on Feb. 19 to determine how 20 of the delegates will be awarded.

The candidates must get 15 percent of the vote to be eligible for delegates, which will be awarded proportionally based on poll results. Voters at the caucuses will also elect delegates to the state convention in May.

Party members who are registered voters are eligible. People can sign up and register on caucus night. People have been encouraged to register to vote and sign up for the party prior to the caucuses to help avoid long lines and delays on caucus night.

Precinct registration will take place 6 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. local time on Feb. 19: voters can register and join the party at their local precinct sites.

A presidential preference poll will take place from 7 p.m. to at least 7:30 p.m. local time on Feb. 19: voting will be open for a half-hour at a minimum and party leaders have promised to leave the voting open until everyone in line has cast ballots.

Precinct officials will count the hand-marked paper ballots and report results to district officials. District officials will compile precinct counts and send the results to party headquarters. Party leaders at headquarters at Ward Centre on O'ahu will compile preliminary results for public release as they come in on caucus night.

Ballots will be recounted by party leaders, with representatives of the presidential campaigns present, on March 1 before the tally is declared final.⁵⁴

Obama's Ties to Hawaii

Obama's sister has been actively campaigning on his behalf.

Maya Soetoro-Ng, 37, who is nine years younger than Obama, said her mother divorced her father when she was 9, making Obama, her half brother, the father figure in her life. He toured colleges with her, showed her New York and Chicago and introduced her to authors such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Toni Morrison and James Baldwin.

Obama's parents -- Barack Obama Sr., a black man from a poor village in Kenya, and Ann Dunham, a white woman whose parents grew up in Kansas -- met at the University of Hawaii and married in Honolulu.

After the marriage failed, a 6-year-old Obama left Hawaii to spend four years in Indonesia with his mother and Indonesian stepfather, Lolo Soetoro. It was in Indonesia that his sister was born. In 1971, when he was 10, Obama's mother sent him back to Honolulu to stay with his maternal grandparents.

Soetoro-Ng teaches history at the private LaPietra Hawaii School for Girls and is married and has a daughter.

Obama still returns to Hawaii almost every Christmas to visit family, indulge in local sushi, body surf at a beach on the southeastern coast of Oahu and look for sea turtles, Soetoro-Ng said. His parents and grandfather have died, and his grandmother is in poor health but has been following the presidential race closely on television, she said.

In his 1995 memoir, "Dreams from My Father," Obama wrote about growing up with the island's unique food and culture: poi and roast pig, choice cuts of aku for sashimi and spearfishing off Kailua Bay. Living in his grandparents' downtown apartment, he attended the prestigious Punahou School and drove to parties at Army bases.

Classmates at Punahou describe Obama -- known as Barry to them -- as an upbeat, social person who played basketball and occasionally wore an African-style shirt.

But in his memoirs, Obama described feeling like a misfit in his Indonesian sandals and old-fashioned clothes when he started at the school. As one of the few black students at Punahou -- and among a small group of blacks on the island -- he remembered someone wanting to touch his hair and being asked whether his father ate people.

He struggled with his racial identity and turned to marijuana to block the questions out, he wrote.⁵⁵

Expected Turnout

Hawai'i Democrats usually draw less than 5,000 people to their presidential caucuses, but Florence Kong Kee, the party's political director, had, as of early February, already ordered 12,000 ballots for the caucuses and was worried that might not be enough.⁵⁶

There will be no voting machine or in-depth ballots. For this caucus they're keeping it simple. One square, one vote. Even if they run out of the ballots the voting is expected to go on. "We will provide them with slips of paper where they can write the candidate of their choice," says Florence Kong Kee.

Either way, the number of votes must match the number of voters. "This is how we're going to verify," says Kong Kee. With attendance sheets at each precinct. So voter signatures and ballots equal out. Even candidate representatives will be on hand to make sure that happens.⁵⁷

Hawaii Caucus History

The caucuses are not elections in the traditional sense, they are internal party functions to prepare for the state convention in May, so there is not the same order or oversight as in a primary or general election conducted by the state. The presidential preference poll is scheduled for a minimum of a half-hour and, activists say, it has often taken less time than that for voting at some precincts in previous years.

"We're going to keep it open," said Florence Kong Kee, the party's political director. "We don't know when this kind of interest will happen again. This is history right now."

The closest comparison to this year is March 1988, when Hawai'i was among 20 states to hold Democratic Party caucuses and primaries in what was the first mega Super Tuesday. Hundreds of progressives joined the party to help the campaign of the Rev. Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition. (Christian conservatives in Hawai'i flooded the state GOP that year for the Rev. Pat Robertson.)

Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis held off Jackson in Hawai'i because of the strength of traditional Democrats on the Neighbor Islands, and Dukakis eventually won the nomination. The Advertiser reported at the time that caucus turnout was about 3,400, although activists for Jackson later put the number at nearly 5,000.

A similar trend may be at work this year. Local volunteers for Clinton believe she may be stronger outside of urban Honolulu and on the Neighbor Islands, where traditional Democrats and labor unions appear to have more influence. Most of the grassroots activity and energy, however, are behind Obama, who was born here and graduated from Punahou School.

Higher caucus turnout would generally favor Obama.

The turnout trend also suggests that many Hawai'i Democrats are motivated more by candidates than whether the caucuses have national import. In 2004, when there was little advance media coverage or local campaign attention, activists for U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio helped push turnout to about 4,000.

Hawai'i Democrats have been gradually moving up the date of their caucuses, which were traditionally held in March, in an effort to be more relevant. The caucuses this year were moved up a week from 2004 and Democrats picked Feb. 19 in part because only one other state — Wisconsin — is holding votes that day. The Democratic National Committee threatened against states leapfrogging their votes into January (and it sanctioned Michigan and Florida for doing so). And local Democrats believed Hawai'i would be lost if the caucuses had been lumped with those of more than 20 other states on Super Tuesday.

"We didn't want to get locked into the frenzy of Super Tuesday," said Mike McCartney, a former party chairman. "We had a hunch about February 19."⁵⁸

March 7, 2000 Hawaii Democratic Caucuses

Gore (D)	(80%)
Bradley (D)	(17%)
Other	(3%)

February 24, 2004 Hawaii Democratic Caucuses

Kerry (D)	(47%)
Kucinich (D)	(31%)
Edwards (D)	(13%)
Dean (D)	(7%)
Other	(2%)

Hawaii, which is holding caucuses on Feb. 19, had a 2007 population of about 1.3 million. It includes a higher percentage of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and a higher percentage of Asians than the nation as a whole, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. About half (51 percent) of Hawaii's voting-age citizens cast a ballot in the 2004 general election, compared to the national rate of 64 percent.⁵⁹

Selected Characteristics	Hawaii	U.S.
Median age	37.3	36.4
Women	50.0%	50.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	24.7%	66.4%
Black alone	2.5%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	7.8%	14.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders alone	9.1%	0.2%
Asian alone	40.0%	4.4%
Median household income	\$61,160	\$48,451
Foreign born	16.3%	12.5%
Persons below poverty	9.3%	13.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25+)	29.7%	27.0%
Median home value	\$529,700	\$185,200

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