

EVOLUTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S RULE ON THE TIMING OF PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES

The Democratic Party has sought to limit the timing of the delegate selection process since a 1972 requirement that the selection of delegates be confined to the calendar year of the Convention. Based on the timing of the 1976 nominating calendar, the Party created its first official "window" or time period during which states could hold presidential primaries and caucuses for the 1980 nominating process. Since its inception, this "window" has come to be promulgated as Rule 10 of the Delegate Selection Rules that are reviewed, revised if necessary, and re-adopted every four years by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) for the next cycle. This document chronicles the evolution of Rule 10 from 1972 to 2004 and is presented chronologically from the most recent version backwards. Changes made to the Rule for the respective cycle, if any, are described in italics, preceding the Rule.

2004 Delegate Selection Rules

The 2004 Rule moved the beginning of the window for primaries and caucuses to the first Tuesday in February from the first Tuesday in March. The Rule continued to provide specific exceptions for Iowa to hold its precinct caucuses 15 days before the opening of the window and for New Hampshire to hold its primary seven (7) days before the window opens. The Rule removed an exemption, first granted in the 1984 Rules, for Maine to hold its first-tier caucuses two days prior to the opening of the window, since Maine had not taken advantage of the exemption since 1992.

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nomination process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the first Tuesday in February or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however, that the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than 15 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the New Hampshire primary may be held no earlier than 7 days before the first Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the first Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1984 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of presidential candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

2000 Delegate Selection Rules

The 2000 Rule maintained the window that was put in place for the 1992 process as the first Tuesday in March to the second Tuesday in June, with specific exceptions for Iowa, New Hampshire and Maine to hold nominating events prior to the opening of the window.

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nomination process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the first Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however, that the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than 15 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the New Hampshire primary may be held no earlier than 7 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the Maine first tier caucuses may be held no earlier than 2 days before the first Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the first Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1984 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of presidential candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

1996 Delegate Selection Rules

The 1996 Rule kept the window the same as the 1992 Rule.

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nomination process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the first Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however, that the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than 15 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the New Hampshire primary may be held no earlier than 7 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the Maine first tier caucuses may be held no earlier than 2 days before the first Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the first Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1984 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of presidential candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

1992 Delegate Selection Rules

The 1992 Rule moved the opening of the window from the second Tuesday in March to the first Tuesday in March. The Rule maintained exceptions for Iowa, New Hampshire and Maine to hold their contests a set number of days before the opening of the window, but dropped an exception for Wyoming that was provided in the 1988 rules since the date of its first tier caucus was now inside the new window..

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nomination process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the first Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however, that the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than 15 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the New Hampshire primary may be held no earlier than 7 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the Maine first tier caucuses may be held no earlier than 2 days before the first Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection

procedures on or between the first Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1984 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of presidential candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

1988 Delegate Selection Rules

The 1988 Rules maintained the second Tuesday in March to second Tuesday in June window first adopted for 1980. The Rule gave exceptions to four (4) states to hold contests a set number of days before the first Tuesday in March (as those same states had done in 1984): (1) Iowa no more than 22 days before; (2) New Hampshire no more than 14 days before; (3) Maine caucuses no more than nine (9) days before; and (4) Wyoming caucuses no more than four (4) days before.

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nominating process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the second Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however, that the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than 22 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the New Hampshire primary may be held no earlier than 14 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the Maine first tier caucuses may be held no earlier than 9 days before the first Tuesday in March; and that the Wyoming first tier caucuses may be held no earlier than 4 days before the second Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the second Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1984 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of presidential candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

1984 Delegate Selection Rules

The 1984 Rules kept the window as first adopted for the 1980 cycle, but granted exceptions for Iowa and New Hampshire to hold their first-in-the-nation events before the second Tuesday in March. As provided in the Rule, the Iowa precinct caucuses could be held no

more than 15 days before the opening of the window and the New Hampshire primary could be held no more than seven (7) days before the opening of the window.

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nominating process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the second Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however: The New Hampshire primary may be held no earlier than seven days before the second Tuesday in March, and the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than fifteen days before the second Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the second Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1980 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of presidential candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

C. A Rule 20 exception shall not be granted from Rule 10A in excess of 7 days prior to the second Tuesday in March for primary states and 15 days prior to the second Tuesday in March for caucus states.

1980 Delegate Selection Rules

The 1980 Rules created the "window" based on the timing of the 1976 nominating calendar. The window opened the first Tuesday in March and closed the second Tuesday in June.

10. Timing of the Delegate Selection Process

A. No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nominating process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the second Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the National Convention. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the second Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1976 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule.

B. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of candidates, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention (except as otherwise provided in these rules).

1976 Delegate Selection Rules

The "timeliness" requirement was promulgated as Rule 3.A. of the 1976 Rules.

3. Public Notice

A. All steps in the delegate selection process, including the filing of candidacies, must take place within the calendar year of the Democratic National Convention, except as otherwise provided in these Rules.

1972 Official Guidelines for Delegate Selection

The first instance of the Party's limit on the timing of the delegate selection process was in the Official Guidelines for Delegate Selection adopted by the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection (the McGovern-Fraser Commission) in November 1969. The Guideline on timeliness was promulgated as C-4

C-4 Premature delegate selection (timeliness)

The 1968 Convention adopted language adding to the Call to the 1972 Convention the requirement that the delegate selection process must begin within the calendar year of the Convention. In many States, Governors, State Chairmen, State, district and county committees who are chosen before the calendar year of the Convention, select – or choose agents to select – the delegates. These practices are inconsistent with the Call.

The Commission believes that the 1968 Convention intended to prohibit any untimely procedures which have any direct bearing on the processes by which National Convention delegates are selected. The process by which delegates are nominated is such a procedure. Therefore, the Commission requires State Parties to prohibit any practices by which officials elected or appointed before the calendar year choose nominating committees or propose or endorse a slate of delegates – even when the possibility for a challenge to such slate or committee is provided.

When state law controls, the Commission requires State Parties to make all feasible efforts to repeal, amend, or modify such laws to accomplish the stated purposes.