



THE TEXAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY/CAUCUS SYSTEM



A Committee Report by the Advisory Committee to the State
Democratic Executive Committee



CONTENTS

Contents.....	1
Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
History of the Hybrid Primary/Caucus System.....	4
TDP Chairman Richie’s Charge to the Advisory Committee	6
Specifically, the Advisory Committee was charged with the following:.....	6
Action Taken by the Advisory Committee	7
Specifically, the actions of the committee included:	7
Summary of Evidence and Data Gathered by the Committee	8
Summary of Public Testimony and Data Gathered	12
Committee REcommendations.....	13
Simplify the rules for conducting caucuses.....	13
Simplify the method of conducting caucuses	15
Impose more controls on the conduct of caucuses	16
Impose more controls on the conduct of caucus-goers	17
Simplify and impose more controls on the complaint and challenge process.....	17
Make the caucus more representative	17
The Advisory Committee to the SDEC	18



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to published reports, approximately one million (1,000,000) democrats participated in the Texas Democratic Party's 2008 primary caucus, overwhelming the system and causing logistical challenges uniformly across the state. Although the Texas Democratic Party greatly benefited from capturing detailed contact information on mostly new participants, the fact remains that these logistical challenges affected the experience for vast numbers, many of whom were first-time caucus goers.

Convention participants throughout the state expressed their concern regarding the logistical challenges, some feeling that the use of the nation's only hybrid caucus system exasperated those challenges. As a result of these concerns, Texas Democratic Party Chairman Boyd Richie appointed State Senator Royce West to chair the Advisory Committee on the Texas Democratic Party Convention/Caucus System to examine the issue.

The Advisory Committee on the Texas Democratic Party Convention/Caucus System was charged with studying the intricacies of our state's election system, specifically to provide an overall assessment of the conduct of the 2008 Texas Convention system, which includes, but is not limited to:

- i) *The method of delivery of convention materials to the Convention Chairs (e.g. sign-in sheets) and ultimately to the convention itself;*
- ii) *The adequacy of the eligibility verification that Democrats voted in the 2008 Democratic Primary as a precursor to participation in the convention system;*
- iii) *The utility of the TDP Rules themselves in how to conduct/administer one's precinct and/or county/senatorial district convention; and*
- iv) *The reporting of the results of the concluded conventions, ensuring both the accuracy and integrity of the reported data.*

The Committee conducted a series of meetings, open to the public, featuring testimonies from Democrats around the state. As a result, several categories of modification were identified:

- i) *Simplify the rules for conducting caucuses*
- ii) *Simplify the method of conducting caucuses*
- iii) *Impose more controls on the conduct of caucuses*
- iv) *Impose more controls on the conduct of caucus-goers*
- v) *Simplify and impose more controls on the complaint and challenge process*
- vi) *Make the caucus more representative*

The committee developed an interim report regarding the data pursuant to the testimony and findings, submitted the report to the full body of the TDP's State Democratic Executive Committee on June 6, 2009 and held a final committee on August 8, 2009 to finalize recommendations and present them to the Rules Committee of the SDEC for further action.



INTRODUCTION

The 2008 election cycle created a historic political climate for Democrats in Texas. Over 2.8 million Democrats voted in our Primary and approximately one million participated in our convention/caucus system. Such a groundswell of participation by Texas Democrats produced the momentum needed to fuel a thrust into the General Election that captured enough of the vote to finally bring attention to Texas by the DNC and national political entities for the 2010 cycle.

However, this surge of participation presented many logistical challenges for some of our Precinct, County and Senatorial District conventions - particularly in the urban areas.

Some convention participants throughout the state expressed their concern over the use of the hybrid system in Texas. As a result of these concerns, Texas Democratic Party Chairman Boyd Richie appointed State Senator Royce West to chair the Advisory Committee on the Texas Democratic Party Convention/Caucus System to examine the issue.

The Advisory Committee on the Texas Democratic Party Convention/Caucus System was charged with studying the intricacies of our state's election system. The Committee conducted a series of meetings, open to the public, featuring testimonies from Democrats around the state.

Those unable to attend any of the hearings were encouraged to submit written testimony by e-mailing it to the Committee. This open examination of the Convention/Caucus process was fashioned to inform and educate our Party leadership, elected officials and the general public about how best to approach the issue of potential modifications to the Convention process in Texas.

Countless hours of research, testimony and debate have been invested in this Advisory Committee report regarding the core functionality of the Texas Democratic Party's Convention/Caucus system on behalf of every voting Democrat in the state of Texas.

This document is representative of the facts gathered and serves as the Convention/Caucus Advisory Committee's recommendation to the State Democratic Executive Committee -- Rules Committee.



HISTORY OF THE HYBRID PRIMARY/CAUCUS SYSTEM

Prior to 1988 (with the exception of 1976) the Texas Democratic Party used the convention system to allocate and select delegates to the National Convention.

Before 1960, primary and precinct conventions were held on the fourth Saturday in July with the county conventions held the following week. During presidential election years, an additional precinct convention was held the first Saturday in May and an additional county convention on the fourth Tuesday that same month. There were also two state conventions; a “Presidential Convention” early in the summer and a “Governor’s Convention” later in the year. The delegates often differed between the two conventions, and after 1960, the Texas Democratic Party eliminated the dual conventions by moving the primary to May. However, the practice of holding a second state convention, the “Governor’s Convention,” continued through 1984. Through 1968 all conventions were subject to “Unit Rule” and the majority took all.

The 1972 Convention was the first conducted under the McGovern-Fraser Guidelines. These guidelines were a set of Democratic National Committee Rules that mandated proportional representation and diversity quotas. It was also the first time the Texas Democratic Party had fully codified, widely available rules for the conventions to follow. In 1976, the Texas Democratic Party held its first binding presidential primary. The primary was driven by legislation designed to be a sort of “winner take all” by senate district and by individual delegate candidates. The delegates themselves appeared on the ballot with their Presidential preference. President Carter won all but three of the elected delegates under this system. By the next presidential primary, delegate allocations returned to the conventions and the Texas Democratic Party adopted the use of a non-binding primary, known as a “beauty contest” primary. Fortunately, the results of the non-binding primary and the Conventions were quite similar. The nomination was still undecided and the process still very much alive when the presidential campaigns rolled into Texas in 1984. As a result of the nearly 500,000 delegates who attended precinct conventions that year, the system strained and in many instances failed. Frequently, spaces were not adequate to accommodate crowds, emotions were very high, order was difficult, and overall fairness suffered.

Reform of the system began in December of 1984 when Texas Democratic Party Chair Bob Slagle appointed a 45 member “Presidential Selection Commission” composed of legislators, State Democratic Executive Committee members, and leaders of many party constituencies for the purpose of considering changes in party rules and the Election Code relating to delegate selection. Slagle chaired the Commission with state party and national committee members serving as ex-officio members. The



Commission met on a series of Saturdays through December 1984 and January 1985. They heard substantive testimony from legislators and experts from both Texas and other states. They considered all manner of changes including a split-day primary (separating the presidential and general primaries) and approval voting (a rank by preference voting system). They also urged changes in the national Primary window – including narrowing it, not allowing exceptions to it, and moving Texas to the front of it – that are still relevant today. After substantial deliberation, the Commission, with only one dissenting vote, recommended the hybrid primary/caucus system currently in use.

The Commission’s recommendations passed the State Democratic Executive Committee as a rules change with the required super majority in February 1985 and the necessary revisions were added to the Texas Election Code in the first Called Session following the 1985 session of the Texas Legislature.

The system calls for a 75% Primary and 25% Caucus division of the delegation (excluding pledged Party and Elected Official Delegates). The practical effect of this is that the Texas pledged delegation division is 65% Primary and 35% Caucus. All individual delegates are selected through the convention process with the delegates allocated under the primary selected in senate district caucuses and the delegates allocated under the caucus, the “At-Large” delegates, are selected at the precinct, county, and state level conventions. The division of delegates between senate districts is driven by a formula that gives equal weight to votes in that district for the Democratic candidates for President and Governor in the most recent election and is one of the Democratic National Committee approved options because this division represents a rural/urban compromise. Texas does have two major Democratic National Committee exemptions: one for the entire hybrid system which is the only one of its kind, and a second to operate by state senate, as opposed to congressional, districts.

In the highly contested Presidential Primary of 1988 (the first Super-Tuesday year), the new system worked well. Those who voted in the primary were provided the opportunity for broad meaningful participation while the caucuses brought new numbers of active Democrats. Until the 2008 Primary, however, every presidential primary was simply over before Texas would hold its primary. Since the results were pre-determined, participation was low. During this time however, some party leaders suggested abolishing the precinct conventions. In many precincts, conventions were often not held or lacked anyone with the requisite knowledge needed to make use of or take charge of the convention. This past cycle, the Texas Democratic Party did scores of trainings around the state and most county parties made serious efforts to prepare for the conventions. However, twenty years of low participation coupled with the high volume of participants in the 2008 Primary have created logistical challenges that need to be overcome.



TDP CHAIRMAN RICHIE'S CHARGE TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The surge of participation during the 2008 election cycle, when combined with Texas' unique hybrid primary/caucus system, presented some logistical challenges for many precinct and county/senatorial district conventions. In response to the concerns of many voters, Texas Democratic Party Chairman Boyd Richie charged the Advisory Committee on the Texas Democratic Party Convention/Caucus System to address these concerns.

Specifically, the Advisory Committee was charged with the following:

- 1) Hear and consider voter testimony of Texas Democrats who wish to speak in support of or against the current structure of the Texas primary/convention hybrid system;
- 2) Consider any other relevant data/information presented before the Committee which helps inform the committee's deliberations and investigation;
- 3) Provide an overall assessment of the conduct of the 2008 Texas Convention system, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - i) The method of delivery of convention materials to the Convention Chairs (e.g. sign-in sheets) and ultimately to the convention itself;
 - ii) The adequacy of the eligibility verification that Democrats voted in the 2008 Democratic Primary as a precursor to participation in the convention system;
 - iii) The utility of the TDP Rules themselves in how to conduct/administer one's precinct and/or county/senatorial district convention; and
 - iv) The reporting of the results of the concluded conventions, ensuring both the accuracy and integrity of the reported data.
- 4) Provide a formal written recommendation to the Permanent Rules Committee of the State Democratic Convention.



ACTION TAKEN BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On April 4, 2008, Chairman Richie held a conference call with Senator Royce West to discuss the possibility of creating a committee to review the Texas Convention/Caucus system and make recommendations for either abolishing the system, augmenting the system or retaining the current system. West accepted the task and together they developed a list of possible committee members from current SDEC members, county chairs, precinct chairs, party activists and elected officials from every region of the state. Several of those names included persons who had originally participated in the development of the current hybrid caucus system.

Once the committee was solidified, Chairman Richie issued a charge to the committee on April 22, 2008, initiating the exhaustive work represented in this report.

The actions taken in response to the committee charge from Chairman Richie were designed to elicit as much response from the public as possible, to properly assess those responses, and accurately report the suggestions made by active members of the Democratic Party.

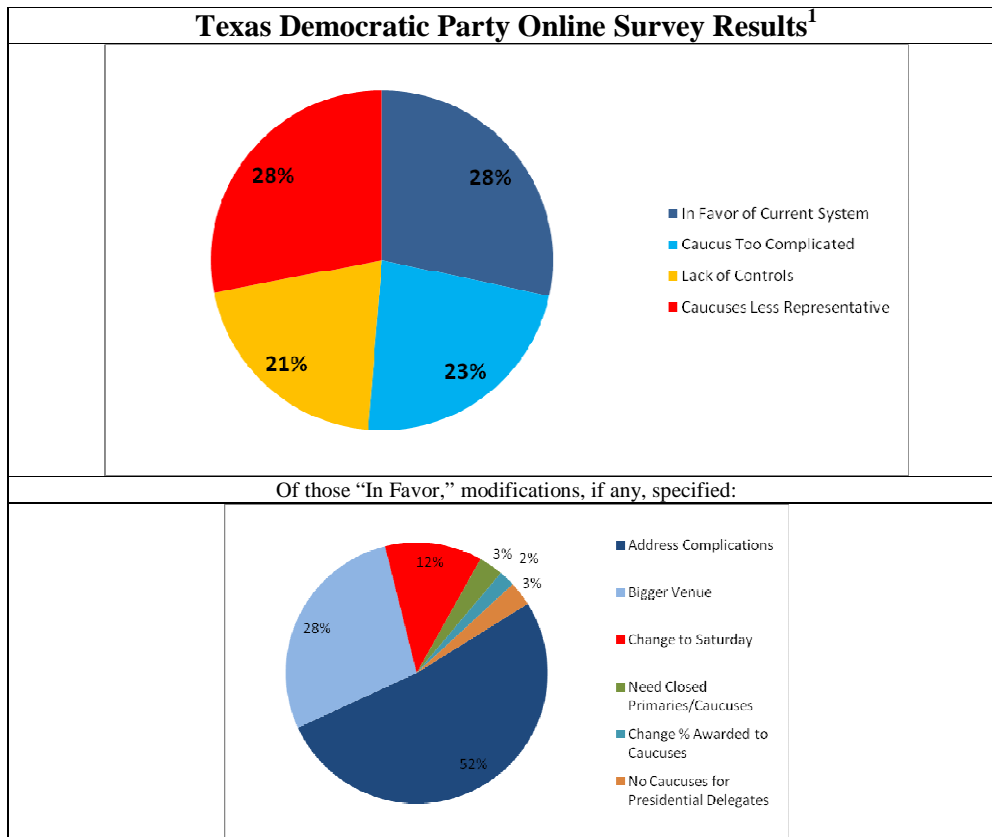
Specifically, the actions of the committee included:

- 1) Soliciting online responses from the Texas Democratic Party website
- 2) Distributing surveys to state democratic convention attendees
- 3) Holding hearings at eleven locations and soliciting written and oral testimony from the public:
 - a) June 7, 2008- State Democratic Convention—Austin, TX
 - b) July 7, 2008- Austin Community College—Austin, TX
 - c) Sept. 6, 2008- Harlingen Public Library—Harlingen, TX
 - d) October 4, 2008- El Paso Community College—El Paso, TX
 - e) October 17, 2008- Maverick Activities Center at UT Arlington—Arlington, TX
 - f) October 18, 2008- Stephen F. Austin State University—Nacogdoches, TX
 - g) November 8, 2008- Science Spectrum—Lubbock, TX
 - h) November 14, 2008- AFL-CIO Building—Austin, TX
 - i) December 17, 2008- Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center—Dallas, TX
 - j) December 19, 2008- CWA Hall—Houston, TX
 - k) December 20, 2008- San Antonio Area Progressive Action Coalition—San Antonio, TX
- 4) Convening committee meetings and conference calls
 - a) April 4, 2008- Organizational Conference Call
 - b) June 16, 2008- Second Conference Call
 - c) February 7, 2009- Full Committee Meeting
 - d) March 7, 2009- Report Abstract Subcommittee Meeting
 - e) June 4, 2009 – Full Committee Interim Advisory Report Conference Call
 - f) June 6, 2009 – Presentation of Interim Report to the State Democratic Executive Committee
 - g) June 24, 2009-First Committee Meeting to Determine Recommendations to the SDEC
 - h) August 8, 2009 – Final Committee Meeting to Determine Recommendations to the SDEC



SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE AND DATA GATHERED BY THE COMMITTEE

The responses received through the various methods employed by the Advisory Committee were both numerous and complementary. Over 300 people responded online, approximately 2,780 people returned the surveys at the State Democratic Convention, and 232 individuals provided oral and written testimony at hearings across the state. The responses were tabulated into categories to provide quantitative data for comparison, and the comments and suggestions provided in those responses were summarized and developed into specific recommendations for the State Democratic Executive Committee. The categorized tabulations are provided in this section of the report. They are separated by method and, when possible, subdivided into localities.



¹ 378 responses were received online (of these, 89 were in favor of current system, 72 felt that the caucuses were too complicated, 65 felt there were a lack of controls, 88 felt the caucuses were less representative and 64 were unrelated responses)



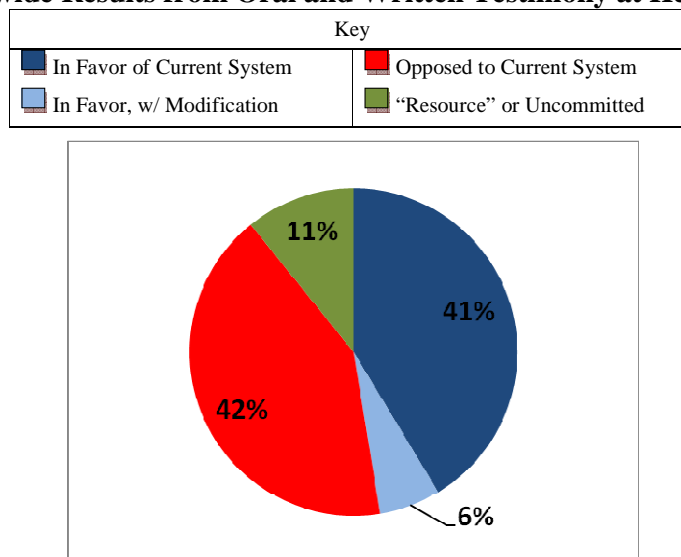
State Democratic Convention Survey Results ²			
One-third of the Texas pledged delegates are allocated via the caucus process. What fraction is appropriate?		Much of the caucus and convention process is governed by state law. Would you support a bill that gives control of the process to the parties?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All None 1/2 1/3 Other 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No 	
Should precinct conventions be held:		The county conventions are held 25 days after the primary. Is that	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On election night On the Saturday after At another time 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About Right Too Late Too Soon 	
Precincts are allocated one delegate to the county (or Senate District) convention for every 15 votes cast for the Democratic candidates for governor in the previous election. Precincts also get an equal number of alternates. Is that		Precincts (and Senate Districts) are allocated one delegate to the state convention for every 180 votes cast for the Democratic candidate for governor in the previous election (and an equal number of alternates). Is that	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough county delegates The right number Too many county delegates 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough state delegates The right number Too many state delegates 	
Should we allow county delegates to sign into their county conventions online and print their own credentials?		Should county credentials committees be constituted before the county conventions in order to resolve credentials challenges ahead of time?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No 	

² Questions returned with no response were not included in the charts



<p>Should the statewide credentials committee be constituted before the state convention in order to resolve credentials challenges ahead of time?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p>	<p>Precinct business, such as the selection of delegates to the state convention, is currently conducted at the county or senate district convention. Should precincts be allowed to conduct their business ahead of time?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p>
<p>Much Senate District business (such as electing SDEC members, committee slots and delegates & alternates for the national convention) is currently done at the state convention. Should Senate Districts be allowed to conduct their business ahead of time?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p>	

Statewide Results from Oral and Written Testimony at Hearings³



³ The positions of witnesses were tabulated using comment cards filled out prior to giving testimony

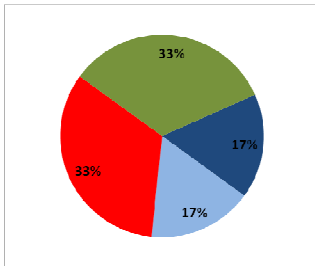


Testimony at Hearings By Location⁴

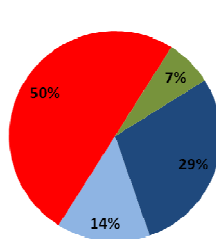
Key

In Favor of Current System	Opposed to Current System
In Favor, w/ Modification	"Resource" or Uncommitted

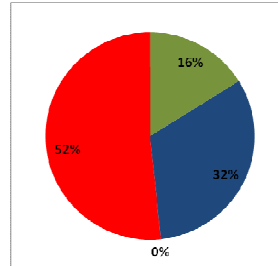
Harlingen (Sep. 6)⁴



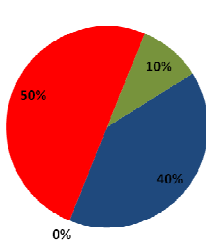
El Paso (Oct. 4)⁶



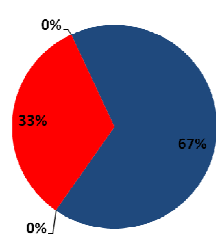
Arlington (Oct. 17)⁷



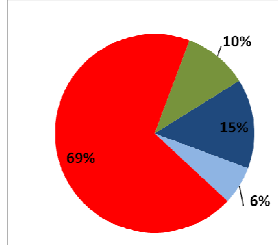
Nacogdoches (Oct. 18)⁸



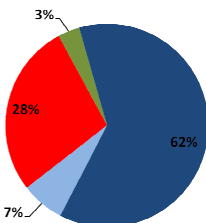
Lubbock (Nov. 8)⁹



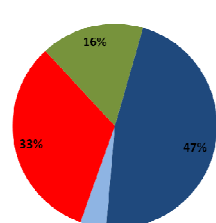
Austin (Nov. 14)¹⁰



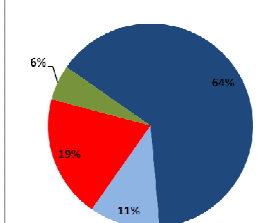
Dallas (Dec. 17)¹¹



Houston (Dec. 19)¹²



San Antonio (Dec. 20)¹³



⁴ The positions of witnesses were tabulated using comment cards filled out prior to giving testimony

⁵ 6 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Harlingen

⁶ 15 submitted written or oral testimony individuals in El Paso with 1 opposed providing duplicate testimony

⁷ 32 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Arlington with 1 opposed providing duplicate testimony

⁸ 11 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Nacogdoches with 1 resource providing duplicate testimony

⁹ 9 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Lubbock

¹⁰ 54 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Austin with 6 opposed providing duplicate testimony (the July 7th hearing testimony was provided by neutral parties that offered their expertise on possible alternatives)

¹¹ 34 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Dallas with 5 opposed providing duplicate testimony

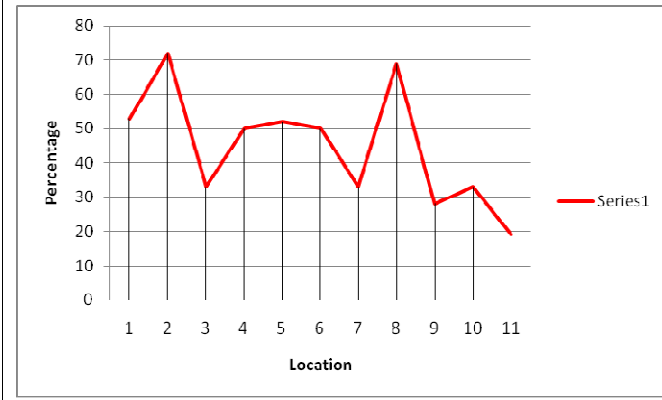
¹² 50 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in Houston with 1 opposed providing duplicate testimony

¹³ 38 individuals submitted written or oral testimony in San Antonio with 2 opposed providing duplicate testimony

NOTE: Individuals testifying multiple times, I.E. providing "Duplicate Testimony" were counted once at first hearing location



Opposition to Current System by Location



1. TDP Convention Survey
2. TDP On-Line Survey
3. Harlingen Caucus Hearing
4. El Paso Caucus Hearing
5. Arlington Caucus Hearing
6. Nacogdoches Caucus Hearing
7. Lubbock Caucus Hearing
8. Austin Caucus Hearing
9. Dallas Caucus Hearing
10. Houston Caucus Hearing
11. San Antonio Caucus Hearing

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY AND DATA GATHERED

The early responses, collected through state-wide methods (online and state convention surveys), show that a majority of voters oppose the current system as is. However, the responses that were capable of being subdivided by city (hearings) indicate that the opposition to the primary/caucus system may be geographically and demographically divided. Furthermore, when the reasons for opposition are considered, the data shows that most people disagree with the method of conducting caucuses (too complicated and lack of process and procedural controls), rather than disagreeing with the system in general.

A majority of people in favor of the current system nevertheless believe that the Party should simplify the process and impose more controls. For the majority of voters who expressed opposition to the current system online, these issues were the reasons they now favor a strict primary system. For others opposed to the caucus system, including a majority of voters at the Austin hearing and a substantial minority of the voters who responded online, the issue with the caucus was more fundamental. These voters oppose the caucus system because they believe it resulted in the underrepresentation of some due to circumstances beyond their control. However, recommendations were given by these voters as possible changes that could improve the hybrid primary/caucus system if put in place by the Party. These proposals, as well as the proposals that were corroborated by other voters, are listed in the following section.



COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Texas Election code was last revised prior to the widespread use of home computers, the internet, texting and other modern communication tools. We strongly urge the revision and modification of the Texas Election code to embrace the new communication technologies. The Texas State Democratic Party rules should be modified to reflect the availability of technological advancements to inform Democratic voters.

Simplify the rules for conducting caucuses

Assign precinct chairs the role of permanent convention chair when available. Under current TDP rules, the precinct chair acts as the temporary convention chair, calls the meeting to order and announces the temporary roll. The actual business of the convention begins after a permanent chair, secretary, and other officers are elected. The current method allows for removal of the person who is most likely to be able to conduct the convention properly in favor of voters who may be attending their first convention. This measure would make the precinct chair the permanent convention chair. It would ensure that precinct chairs, who are already known and likely have experience or are capable of being trained beforehand, remain in control of the caucus, and would prevent management of the caucus by inexperienced or biased individuals. It would also encourage “Top of the Ticket” campaigns to be more proactive in aggressively organizing precinct chairs and may cause such positions to be more competitive and sought after in the future.

⇒ This measure would require rule and statutory changes and will have no fiscal impact

Permit holding county and senate district conventions outside the jurisdiction or at different times if the circumstances make it impractical to do otherwise. Under the Election Code, Section 174.062, senate district conventions must be held within the jurisdiction of the district within the county. County conventions must be held within county lines. Empowering the county chair or some other elected official to change the location in certain circumstances would allow the use of larger facilities to prevent overcrowding. H.B. No. 2101 passed by the 81st Texas Legislature, relates only to the place for the convening of a county convention. The state democratic executive committee must revise the state rules to reflect this new legislative action.

The committee recommends that the State Democratic Executive Committee consider granting authority to the State Democratic Chair to grant waivers authorized by H.B. No. 2101.



⇒ This measure would require rule changes and may have a fiscal impact to the political division handling the convention.

Create a “best practices” handbook. The creation of a “best practices” handbook would allow voters and officials to be able to learn from past mistakes and better prepare for upcoming elections. It could be posted online to ensure accessibility to all caucus attendees, especially those desiring leadership and delegate roles. However, the conduct of conventions varies among areas, such as urban versus rural. “Best practices” may differ among these areas.

⇒ No rule or statutory change necessary for this measure and there would be a negligible fiscal impact for printing if added to the TDP Rule book or prepared online

Simplify Rules, Formulas, Sign In and Caucus Voting Procedure. Create uniform forms that can be used statewide. For example create forms for delegates and alternates elected at their precinct, county or senatorial convention can use as proof of their election. Measures to simplify the process would help increase the ease of the process amongst participants and quicken the pace of the caucus process. However, many of the rules were designed as controls to reduce possible mistakes.

⇒ This measure would require rule change and fiscal impact would vary depending on changes

Poll Lists Used to Verify Voter Eligibility. The committee recommends that the Party request the Secretary of State to instruct all county election officials and authorities to provide separate poll lists for each precinct on election-day. Paired or combined precinct lists of registered voters shall not be merged. The committee also recommends that steps be made to introduce legislation promoting such resolve.

⇒ This measure would require statutory changes and will have no fiscal impact

Comment [T1]: I’ve reached out to Rep. Pierson’s office regarding this legislation. Her bill only allows for moving the County Convention and does not address moving the Senatorial Convention. Her chief of staff, Maurine (sp) stated that when crafting the legislation, leg council found a statute already in place that allowed for moving the senate district convention. She furthermore stated, it was discussed that creating a provision to allow for a date change of the convention would require a constitutional amendment and with the ability to move the location, the need to change the date should be nullified. (I and Ruben agree.)

I have requested Maurine’s assistance in identifying the statute allowing senatorial district conventions to be moved. Our recommendation may need to be altered to only reflect that the SDEC make a rule change to allow the party (State Chair approval) to move conventions. Depending on findings, we may need to include a recommendation that a statutory change be sought to allow senatorial district conventions to be moved as well. —Daniel Clayton 9-24-09



Simplify the method of conducting caucuses

Provide training and certification for Democrats prior to holding conventions. Create a certification and training program to ensure that the Chair or any Democrat has the requisite knowledge to properly hold a convention. The party is encouraged to support training for Precinct Chairs and all Democrats.

⇒ This measure would require a rule change and there will be a fiscal impact

Add an optional space for the inclusion of e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers to voter registration forms. Including a space for cell phone numbers and email addresses on voter registration forms would allow the inclusion of methods for communicating that have come to dominate over traditional landline phones.

⇒ This measure may require statutory changes and would have no fiscal impact

Require notice of conventions be posted on party and county websites and early voting locations. This measure would give voters ample means to inform themselves on the locations of conventions although it would be difficult to monitor postings at all county party locations.

Note: If county parties do not have web sites or offices they will be granted a waiver

⇒ This measure would require a rule and statutory change and would have no fiscal impact



Impose more controls on the conduct of caucuses

Encourage the party to explore innovative technology for electronic check-in and/or sign-in procedures. Currently, the system for determining eligibility to vote is done by hand and voters sign-in on paper forms. Making the check-in electronic would reduce the wait time for veteran convention attendees who can simply acknowledge their previous information as correct. For those new to the convention, electronic sign-in would allow documentation to be more readable. The system could require specific fields to be filled out, ensuring useful information is collected and the information could be sent directly to voter files. The program could be an online secure system.

⇒ This measure may require rule changes dependent on method employed and fiscal impact would be dependent on the method used

Require contact information on the minutes forms. The minutes forms for Precinct, County and Senatorial District Conventions need be modified to provide for spaces to collect contact information for the Permanent Convention Chair, the Permanent Convention Secretary and the Delegation Chair including an email, phone and mailing address for each of the aforementioned officers of the convention.

Identification of Delegates and Alternates from Precinct Convention. The delegates and the alternates contact information shall be clearly printed on a separate form. In addition, a new form needs to be created to give to delegates, alternates and the delegation chair as evidence that they were elected at their Precinct Conventions to represent the precinct at the senatorial district or county convention. The notice should include the precinct number, location of the precinct convention, the name, contact information and signature of the precinct convention chair and either the name of the delegate or alternate and their elective status as delegate, alternate or delegate / delegation chair.

⇒ This may require a rule change and there may be a possible fiscal impact

Use barcodes on sign-in sheets. Encourage the use of barcode technology at senatorial and county conventions.

⇒ This measure would not require rule or statutory changes and fiscal impact would depend on the method of ascertaining the validity of barcode

Comment [T2]: Chad? -DC



Impose more controls on the conduct of caucus-goers

Create criminal penalties (misdemeanors) for interference with convention. While many of the general election prohibitions apply to party conventions, Texas Election law does not have criminal penalties for offenses that relate to the nuances of conventions. Creating these penalties could deter and prohibit the unauthorized taking of election packets and reporting results, convening in improper places, failing to report results in a timely manner, intimidation of attendees, etc.

⇒ This measure would require rule statutory changes and will have no fiscal impact

Simplify and impose more controls on the complaint and challenge process

Require the creation of standardized form for complaints and challenges at each convention. The party will provide a standardized form to file challenges at a convention, with the process outlined on the back of the form. Such form should be made available via the party website.

⇒ Requires a rule change and would have minimal fiscal impact from the cost of additional forms

Create an advisory group that has the power to issue binding rules interpretations. Allows the Party to streamline the process for handling questions and complaints

⇒ This measure would require a rules change and have no fiscal impact

Make the caucus more representative

Consider moving the precinct convention day. The committee heard a significant amount of testimony requesting a change of day for the precinct convention. The committee recommends that the party seek legislation allowing political parties the discretion to determine whether to hold their precinct convention immediately following the primary or the Saturday immediately following the primary. The committee further recommends that in making the decision of whether or not to move the day, the party consider impact on participation, logistics and fiscal support from the State of Texas.

⇒ This measure would require both rule and statutory changes

Reduce or eliminate the percentage of delegates allocated to the caucus system. While there was diversity of testimony and much discussion relating to the continuing allocation of delegates through the convention system, a substantive but not unanimous majority of the committee recommends maintaining the current system.

⇒ This measure requires a rules change and could result in reduced convention expenses



THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SDEC

Senator Royce West, Chair
Rep. Jessica Farrar, Vice Chair

MEMBERS

Frederick Barrow
Bill Brannon
Lee Brown
Linda Burgess
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