

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill provides certain privileges for local precinct caucuses held in first-class cities during an odd-numbered year, including pre-emption of certain public meetings and activities, and granting time off from work for employees to attend the caucus.

Section

- 1** **Caucus within a city of the first class.** Provides certain privileges to local precinct caucuses held by a major political party within a city of the first class.

Under current law, the recognized major political parties in Minnesota are the Democratic-Farmer-Labor, Independence, and Republican parties.

Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth are recognized as cities of the first class. Additional cities may also be recognized after completion of the 2010 federal census.

Subd. 1. Applicability. Specifies that this section only applies to major party precinct caucuses in a first class city held during an odd-numbered year.

Subd. 2. Caucus date. Requires that the two largest major political parties (as determined by number of votes in the most recent election for governor) must submit a single date on which caucuses are to be held in an odd-numbered year. The date must be submitted to the city's governing body by August 1 of each even-numbered year. If the parties do not agree on a date, or no date is submitted, then the provisions of this section apply on the first Tuesday in February of the odd-numbered year.

Subd. 3. Prohibited meetings and activities. Lists the types of government meetings and school activities that are pre-empted after 6:00 p.m. on a local caucus night.

Subd. 4. Absence from work. Permits an employee who is entitled to attend a

precinct caucus to be absent from work for purposes of attending the caucus. The employee must provide at least 10 days written notice to his or her employer. An employee may not be penalized for attending a caucus, except that the employee's salary or wages may be deducted to reflect the absence from work.

Subd. 5. Public school buildings. Prohibits a school official from denying the use of a public school building for a local caucus, if written request is received at least 30 days prior to the caucus date.

Subd. 6. Use of Facilities. Requires public agencies to make their facilities available for holding a local precinct caucus, at a rate equal to the lowest rate charged to any other private or public group for use of the facility.