

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill establishes a presidential primary election for Minnesota. Minnesota last conducted a presidential primary election in 1992. The presidential primary established by this bill would be governed by the following general principles:

- **Presidential primary date: first Tuesday in March.** The first primary scheduled under this bill would occur on March 3, 2020. During the 2016 presidential election cycle, this date has been informally referred to as "Super Tuesday," though there is no guarantee that Super Tuesday will continue to be scheduled on the same date in future presidential election cycles.
- **"Open" primary.** A voter would be permitted to vote their nominee preference for the single major political party the voter chooses. As with the existing procedures for the state primary, the party chosen by that voter would not be recorded or known, except on the voter's ballot.
- **Precinct caucuses would continue.** The primary would run in addition to precinct caucuses, if a political party chooses to continue holding a caucus. The bill does not impact a party's right to hold a precinct caucus, or its right to determine what business is conducted at the caucus.
- **Proportional allocation of delegates.** Delegates to a party's national convention would be allocated proportionally to each candidate based on the results of the primary. Delegates would be required to vote for the candidate they were elected to support on at least the first ballot at the national convention, unless released by the candidate. An individual party's rules of procedure may supersede this requirement.

- **Absentee voting would be permitted.** The absentee voting period for the presidential primary would begin in mid-January of the primary year.
- **The August state primary is not impacted.** Only candidates for president would appear on the ballot at the primary established by this bill. The state primary for other federal offices, and state and local offices, would continue to occur in August.

Section

- 1 Preference ballot.** Eliminates the office of president from the precinct caucus preference ballot established in law.
- 2 Manner of nomination.** Requires candidates for a major political party's nomination for president to file an affidavit of candidacy, consistent with the affidavit required of other candidates for federal and state partisan office.
- 3 Federal offices.** Outlines the requirements for an affidavit of candidacy for president. The candidate must certify on the affidavit that he or she meets the eligibility standards provided in the U.S. Constitution for election to that office.
- 4 Separate precincts; combined polling place.** Modifies certain deadlines that apply to the formation of a combined polling place, to reflect the establishment of a presidential primary election.
- 5 Boundary change procedure.** Provides a conforming reference to the law governing changes to precinct boundaries, to reflect the establishment of a presidential preference primary election.
- 6 Appointment lists; duties of political parties and secretary of state.** Modifies a deadline that applies to the submission of potential election judges by each major political party to the secretary of state. Election judge lists would be due by December 1 of the year prior to the year in which the presidential preference primary is to be held, and would be forwarded by the secretary of state to each county auditor no later than December 15 of that year.
- 7 Elections covered.** Expands the current law that allows voters to take time off from work in order to cast a ballot to include the new presidential primary established by this bill.
- 8 Example ballot.** Establishes a deadline for the secretary of state to prepare and distribute an example presidential primary ballot to each county auditor. The ballot must be provided no later than December 1 of the year prior to the presidential preference primary.
- 9 Voter registration.** Provides an exception to certain deadlines related to voter registration for a special election, when the special election is scheduled to be held in conjunction with a presidential primary.
- 10 Plan.** Modifies a deadline that applies to plans for use of an electronic voting system. Changes to these plans must be submitted to the secretary of state no later than December 1

two calendar years prior to a presidential preference primary, in order for them to be approved for use at that primary.

- 11 Presidential primary.** Establishes a presidential primary election be held on the first Tuesday in March of a year in which the office of president is to be elected. The primary would permit all voters of the state to express their preference for a presidential nominee representing one major political party of their choice. A vote for uncommitted delegates would also be permitted. With some exceptions, the presidential primary would be administered similarly to state primary.

This bill does not change the date of the state primary election for other federal and state candidates, which would continue to occur in August, as provided in current law.

- 12 Candidates on ballot.** Provides standards for candidate filing, candidate placement, and format of the presidential primary ballot. Candidates for each party appearing on the ballot would be listed in the order in which they filed with the secretary of state. The filing period would run between 10-12 weeks prior to the primary: roughly mid- to late-December. The filing fee to accompany an affidavit of candidacy is \$500.

This section also establishes administrative standards related to announcement of properly-filed candidates, and notification to candidates of their nomination for the ballot.

- 13 Selection of delegates; national convention balloting.** Provides for proportional allocation of delegates to a political party's national convention, based on the results of the presidential primary. This section requires delegates selected to attend the national convention based on their support of a particular candidate to vote for that candidate on at least the first ballot at the convention, unless released from that obligation by the candidate. If there is a conflict, other rules of the national or state party may supersede this requirement.

- 14 Auditor furnished information by secretary of state; ballot preparation.** Provides standards to ensure proper public notice of the presidential primary election, and requires the secretary of state to prepare various election documents -- including ballots, and absentee ballot materials -- to be used at the presidential primary.

- 15 Effective date.** Provides that the bill is effective the day following final enactment. The first presidential primary scheduled according to the terms of this bill would occur in 2020.