

IOWA CAUCUSES: KEY CHANGES

The Iowa Democratic Party is instituting the most historic changes to the caucus process since its creation in 1972. These changes include opportunities for people to participate at satellite caucus sites, streamlined realignments, and new recount procedures.

Democrats have always been about welcoming new people into our political discourse, and these changes will do just that. The innovative solutions will ensure the 2020 caucuses are a success, and they will continue to be a beacon of the presidential nominating process for years to come.

The changes lie at the essence of what our party is all about — participating in the Democratic process. Having a say in who leads our country. And ensuring that caucusing is easy and accessible.

ACCESSIBILITY & EFFICIENCY

Early Check-In

To help expedite the entrance process, the IDP is offering an early check-in option for Iowa Democrats to skip the general registration line at their precinct caucus. This is the first time the IDP has instituted an early check-in option, and Iowans have until January 17, 2020, to sign up. Caucusgoers need to complete the online form, print it out, sign it, and bring it with them on caucus night in order to enter through the early check-in line.

Streamlined Realignment Process

This year, caucusgoers will have two opportunities to support a viable candidate, and only members of non-viable groups will be allowed to realign during the second, final round. Caucusgoers can leave after the first alignment if their candidate hits the 15% threshold in the first round. Their support will be recorded on a presidential preference card and will provide a paper trail should a recount be necessary. In previous years, the realignment period could go on for multiple rounds and take longer than expected. This streamlined process increases efficiency and accessibility by reducing the amount of time caucusgoers need to stay in the room, as well as the size of the crowd during realignment.

Satellite Caucuses

The 2020 satellite caucuses expand access to the nominating process by giving Iowa Democrats who could not otherwise attend their precinct caucus an opportunity to caucus during extended hours at a location other than their assigned precinct on February 3, 2020. Iowans will be caucusing at 87 additional locations, including 60 in-state, 24 out-of-state (across 13 states & DC) and 3 international satellite sites.

Satellite caucuses function the same as precinct caucuses. Each satellite location will have a trained captain who is charged with overseeing the room, managing volunteers, and reporting the results on caucus night. The number of delegate equivalents from each satellite site is based on the total number of attendees at that site on caucus night. Satellite caucus results will be reported as an additional county, bringing the total number of reported counties on caucus night to 104. In-state satellite caucuses will be reported by congressional district, out-of-state and international sites will be reported by statewide turnout.

Satellite caucusgoers who attend an out-of-state satellite site — or an in-state satellite site that takes place before 6pm CST on February 3, 2020 — must be a registered Democrat and complete the online Satellite Caucus Pre-Registration for their satellite caucus by January 17, 2020. Satellite caucusgoers do not need to pre-register to attend satellite caucuses that are in-state, open to the public, and start after 6pm CST. This change builds on the 2016 satellite caucus structure, will increase overall turnout, and expand participation for people who cannot attend their in-person precinct caucus.

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FAIRNESS & TRANSPARENCY

Locked Results During Alignment Period

To bolster fairness, viability support will be locked during the alignment period. This change ensures a viable candidate cannot lose support at any point in the caucus process. A candidate's support can only change if they receive additional supporters in the realignment. In previous years, the realignment period could go on for multiple rounds and viable candidates could lose their initial delegate support. These locked results also apply to uncommitted groups that are viable on the first or final alignment.

Locked Delegates

The allocation of national delegates will be determined on caucus night, not as a result of the convention process. This change increases fairness in the delegate allocation process by preventing a candidate from losing delegates at the county and district conventions in the event their delegates are not able to attend. This new rule will reinforce consistency for campaigns at the convention.

Reporting More Information

To provide a more transparent view of the movement in the room, the IDP will release three numbers from each precinct on caucus night: totals from the first alignment, final alignment, and the state delegate equivalents (SDE) earned by each presidential preference group. State delegate equivalency is the projected number of state party convention delegates the candidates will receive based upon results of the precinct caucuses. Only viable candidates can earn SDE, and the number is determined post-realignment. In previous years, the party only reported SDE.

Canvass/Recount

Presidential campaigns will be able to request a canvass, and if needed, a recount, of the caucus results (statewide or by congressional district) if they can show that the result could affect the allocation of delegates to the national convention.

SECURITY

Paper Trail

Presidential preference cards serve multiple functions on caucus night, including a paper trail to ensure voter security and proper record-keeping throughout the process. Caucusgoers will receive their two-sided cards after the meeting starts. After the first alignment is counted, caucusgoers will write the name of the candidate they support on the card. Caucusgoers will sign the card before leaving it at the caucus precinct to be secured by the party. Presidential preference cards must be returned to the caucus chair in order to be eligible for a recount should one be necessary.

For more information on the 2020 Iowa Caucuses visit: www.thecaucuses.org

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