



# *South Dakota Legislative Research Council*

## *Issue Memorandum 96-12*

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### **SOUTH DAKOTA'S EARLY PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**

#### *Introduction*

This memorandum is an update of Issue Memorandum 86-7, written in April of 1986 by Patricia Blackford, then a Staff Attorney with the Legislative Research Council. The issues identified by Ms. Blackford in 1986 are relevant ten years later. This is largely due to the fact that the Presidential Politics landscape has changed little since the early 1980s.

South Dakota's actions in 1986 (provided for in SDCL 12-2-1) resulted in South Dakota's 1988 Presidential Primary being preceded only by New Hampshire's primary, and the Iowa Democratic and Republican Caucuses, and the Republican caucuses in Michigan, Hawaii, and Arkansas.

#### *Cost-Benefit Issues*

The earlier memorandum concluded that a precise cost-benefit analysis is not possible. In fact, any attempt at a even the most rough cost-benefit analysis would be filled with so many assumptions that the cost-benefit analysis would be little more than an attempt to logically synthesize the issue. The Secretary of State has compiled complete data on the cost of the early Presidential Primary election incurred by the counties (see appendix A). On the benefit side, it is difficult to assess the financial impact of the spending of the various candidates in the state. For example, the Dole campaign reported allocating over \$500,000 to South

Dakota for the 1996 primary campaign. However, campaign reports do not indicate whether the money is actually spent in South Dakota or in some other state or market to affect the outcome in South Dakota. Further complicating the issue of trying to identify candidate spending in the state due to the early primary is the notion that some of the spending would have taken place anyway, only at a later date, around the traditional June primary election. The same problems exist with trying to identify the amount of money spent by the news media in the state because of the early Presidential Primary.

Assuming for the moment that one could arrive at a reasonable cost-benefit analysis, that analysis is relevant only with respect to a given mix of Presidential aspirants. For example, January and February of 1988 saw Presidential hopefuls George Bush, Bob Dole, Michael Dukakis, and Richard Gephardt visit the State Capitol in Pierre. January and February of 1992 brought Tom Harkin, Bob Kerry, and Dan Quayle to Pierre. In 1996, the list had dwindled to Bob Dole and Phil Gramm. This evidence may appear to be anecdotal, but it at least indicates that a crowded, tightly contested primary race will bring more candidates into the state. Spending by candidates is also governed by factors which are not predictable. For example, one possible explanation for the seemingly large expenditure by Bob Dole in South Dakota in 1996 is that the Senator made a rather poor showing in both the New Hampshire primary

and the Iowa caucuses. As result, Senator Dole's campaign may have felt that a subsequent poor showing in the candidate's back yard had to be avoided at nearly all costs--thereby dedicating more of the campaign's resources to South Dakota than otherwise may have been the case.

Efforts were made, without success, to try to determine the amount of money that the major television networks spend or have allocated to covering South Dakota's presidential primary.

### *South Dakota and Other States*

Since the late 1980s, other states have moved their presidential primary dates ahead--probably for reasons identified earlier. Those being: (1) bring campaign dollars into the state; and (2) having a greater voice in the selection of Presidential candidates. With Respect to South Dakota, the February 27 primary date was preceded by Delaware (February 24), Iowa caucuses (February 12), Louisiana's Republican caucus (February 6), and New Hampshire (February 20); and shared by Arizona and North Dakota's Republican primary. Most of the national focus--as measured by the efforts of the candidates and the media coverage on February 27--was aimed at Arizona, where the delegate stakes were much greater. Had Arizona not made its presidential primary coincident with South Dakota's, Pierre may have seen the likes of Steven Forbes or Lamar Alexander.

### *Recent Developments*

An interesting situation has developed among New Hampshire, Delaware, and Maine. New Hampshire has a law requiring that its primary be the first in the nation by one week. Delaware has changed its law so its primary is four days after New

Hampshire's. In the year 2000, Maine's primary is scheduled to coincide with New Hampshire's. This confusion may be complicated by the actions of other states--acting either individually or as part of a regional block. Discussions at the federal level and by both major parties have centered around some kind of reform or revision of the method by which the major parties choose their Presidential nominees. Given these discussions, the system of primary elections and state caucuses currently in place may be ripe for change.

### *Summary*

The actions of the 1986 Legislature changed South Dakota's Presidential Primary from one of the latest in the nation to one of the earliest. Undoubtedly, this change has brought candidates for President to South Dakota which otherwise would not have come. Along with the candidates comes associated campaign and media spending. Whether these benefits, along with the national attention focused on early primary states, offsets the extra cost of the election is debatable--and this memorandum makes no claim to offer any empirical evidence to support any position in that debate. There are two things that South Dakotans should bear in mind as decisions around this issue are made: (1) South Dakota, by virtue of its population, has a correspondingly small number of delegates to send to the national political conventions. As such South Dakota's delegates are not the prize to a candidate as the delegates from larger states. Moving the date of South Dakota's Presidential Primary ahead does not add to the value of the delegates. (2) As other states follow the apparent trend and move their Presidential Primary elections ahead on the calendar, any benefits that may have accrued to South Dakota because of its actions in 1986 will erode.

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**This issue memorandum was written by Dale Bertsch, Chief Analyst for Fiscal Research and Budget Analysis for the Legislative Research Council. It is designed to supply background information on the subject and is not a policy statement made by the Legislative Research Council.**

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COUNTY	1988 COST	1992 COST	1996 COST
AURORA	\$ 2,391	\$ 2,160	\$ 1,486
BEADLE	\$ 10,821	\$ 14,160	\$ 12,737
BENNETT	\$ 1,977	\$ 2,982	\$ 2,513
BON HOMME	\$ 4,458	\$ 3,735	\$ 5,294
BROOKINGS	\$ 5,600	\$ 6,948	\$ 7,635
BROWN	\$ 12,843	\$ 16,522	\$ 12,546
BRULE	\$ 3,660	\$ 4,749	\$ 4,878
BUFFALO	\$ 1,395	\$ 2,259	\$ 1,975
BUTTE	\$ 6,251	\$ 8,218	\$ 5,037
CAMPBELL	\$ 1,913	\$ 1,914	\$ 1,735
CHARLES MIX	\$ 9,929	\$ 7,529	\$ 8,037
CLARK	\$ 4,504	\$ 4,929	\$ 4,809
CLAY	\$ 4,892	\$ 5,048	\$ 4,449
CODINGTON	\$ 9,754	\$ 9,255	\$ 13,778
CORSON	\$ 4,624	\$ 4,045	\$ 4,292
CUSTER	\$ 4,499	\$ 4,581	\$ 5,676
DAVISON	\$ 8,633	\$ 7,791	\$ 6,530
DAY	\$ 5,950	\$ 5,646	\$ 4,055
DEUEL	\$ 5,258	\$ 4,529	\$ 4,476
DEWEY	\$ 4,548	\$ 4,337	\$ 4,494
DOUGLAS	\$ 6,215	\$ 4,087	\$ 5,848
EDMUNDS	\$ 3,557	\$ 4,048	\$ 3,391
FALL RIVER	\$ 5,897	\$ 8,840	\$ 7,296
FAULK	\$ 2,828	\$ 3,338	\$ 3,416
GRANT	\$ 5,630	\$ 6,302	\$ 5,564
GREGORY	\$ 3,402	\$ 4,402	\$ 1,964
HAAKON	\$ 3,769	\$ 3,998	\$ 3,694
HAMLIN	\$ 3,566	\$ 3,857	\$ 3,885
HAND	\$ 3,890	\$ 4,016	\$ 2,441
HANSON	\$ 3,271	\$ 2,590	\$ 2,656
HARDING	\$ 2,226	\$ 3,550	\$ 2,642
HUGHES	\$ 6,146	\$ 8,626	\$ 6,845
HUTCHINSON	\$ 7,123	\$ 6,011	\$ 6,352
HYDE	\$ 2,011	\$ 1,972	\$ 1,635
JACKSON	\$ 2,862	\$ 3,821	\$ 2,639
JERAULD	\$ 2,452	\$ 1,978	\$ 1,768
JONES	\$ 1,449	\$ 1,626	\$ 1,646
KINGSBURY	\$ 5,083	\$ 5,971	\$ 5,285
LAKE	\$ 5,592	\$ 5,986	\$ 7,045
LAWRENCE	\$ 9,030	\$ 7,865	\$ 9,986
LINCOLN	\$ 8,104	\$ 6,674	\$ 8,801
LYMAN	\$ 2,592	\$ 3,333	\$ 2,985
MARSHALL	\$ 3,532	\$ 4,936	\$ 3,901
McCOOK	\$ 4,534	\$ 6,052	\$ 4,956
McPHERSON	\$ 2,009	\$ 2,610	\$ 2,094
MEADE	\$ 8,322	\$ 16,972	\$ 14,608
MELLETTTE	\$ 2,799	\$ 3,591	\$ 2,674
MINER	\$ 2,506	\$ 2,373	\$ 1,978
MINNEHAHA	\$ 35,953	\$ 34,489	\$ 25,511
MOODY	\$ 3,721	\$ 3,997	\$ 4,323
PENNINGTON	\$ 15,571	\$ 22,090	\$ 18,995
PERKINS	\$ 7,107	\$ 4,676	\$ 4,262
POTTER	\$ 3,503	\$ 3,385	\$ 2,211
ROBERTS	\$ 7,968	\$ 10,593	\$ 3,791
SANBORN	\$ 2,726	\$ 3,238	\$ 3,262
SHANNON	\$ 3,674	\$ 4,901	\$ 3,649
SPINK	\$ 5,308	\$ 6,126	\$ 5,031
STANLEY	\$ 2,455	\$ 3,319	\$ 2,884
SULLY	\$ 1,619	\$ 2,112	\$ 1,483
TODD	\$ 3,985	\$ 6,872	\$ 4,653
TRIPP	\$ 5,053	\$ 6,011	\$ 5,423
TURNER	\$ 6,621	\$ 5,660	\$ 4,452
UNION	\$ 3,899	\$ 4,151	\$ 4,650
WALWORTH	\$ 4,132	\$ 5,183	\$ 4,950
YANKTON	\$ 6,313	\$ 6,799	\$ 7,397
ZIEBACH	\$ 1,795	\$ 2,411	\$ 2,359
TOTAL	\$ 355,700	\$ 396,773	\$ 353,714

STATE	DEMOCRAT PRIMARY	DEMOCRAT CAUCUS/CONV.	REPUBLICAN PRIMARY	REPUBLICAN CAUCUS/CONV.
ALABAMA	4-Jun		4-Jun	
ALASKA		9-Mar		27-Apr
ARIZONA		9-Mar	27-Feb	
ARKANSAS	21-May		21-May	
CALIFORNIA	26-Mar		26-Mar	
COLORADO	5-Mar		5-Mar	
CONNECTICUT	5-Mar		5-Mar	
DELAWARE	24-Feb		24-Feb	
D.C.	7-May		7-May	
FLORIDA	12-Mar		12-Mar	
GEORGIA	5-Mar		5-Mar	
HAWAII		12-Mar		NOT SET
IDAHO		5-Mar	28-May	
ILLINOIS	19-Mar		19-Mar	
INDIANA	7-May		7-May	
IOWA		12-Feb		12-Feb
KANSAS	2-Apr		2-Apr	
KENTUCKY	28-May		28-May	
LOUISIANA	12-Mar			6-Feb
MAINE	5-Mar		5-Mar	
MARYLAND	5-Mar		5-Mar	
MASSACHUSETTS	5-Mar		5-Mar	
MICHIGAN		16-Mar	19-Mar	
MINNESOTA		5-Mar		5-Mar
MISSISSIPPI	12-May		12-May	
MISSOURI	7-Mar			17-May
MONTANA	4-Jun		4-Jun	
NEBRASKA	14-May		14-May	
NEVADA		26-Mar	26-Mar	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	20-Feb		20-Feb	
NEW JERSEY	4-Jun		4-Jun	
NEW MEXICO	4-Jun		4-Jun	
NEW YORK	7-Mar		7-Mar	
NORTH CAROLINA	7-May		May-78	
NORTH DAKOTA		29-Mar	27-Feb	
OHIO	19-Mar		19-Mar	
OKLAHOMA	12-Mar		12-Mar	
OREGON	12-Mar		12-Mar	
PENNSYLVANIA	23-Apr		23-Apr	
PUERTO RICO	10-Mar		3-Mar	
RHODE ISLAND	5-Mar		5-Mar	
SOUTH CAROLINA		5-Mar	2-Mar	
SOUTH DAKOTA	27-Feb		27-Feb	
TENNESSEE	12-Mar		12-Mar	
TEXAS		12-Mar	12-Mar	
UTAH		25-Mar		25-Mar
VERMONT	5-Mar		5-Mar	
VIRGIN ISLANDS				
VIRGINIA		13-Apr		NOT SET
WASHINGTON		5-Mar	26-Mar	
WEST VIRGINIA	14-May		14-May	
WISCONSIN	19-Mar		19-Mar	
WYOMING		23-Mar		4-May

STATE	DELEGATES, DEMOCRAT	PERCENT	DELEGATES, REPUBLICAN	PERCENT
ALABAMA	62	1.54%	38	1.73%

ALASKA	18	0.45%	19	0.86%
ARIZONA	47	1.17%	37	1.68%
ARKANSAS	43	1.07%	27	1.23%
CALIFORNIA	382	9.50%	201	9.13%
COLORADO	54	1.34%	37	1.68%
CONNECTICUT	61	1.52%	35	1.59%
DELAWARE	19	0.47%	19	0.86%
D.C.	29	0.72%	14	0.64%
FLORIDA	160	3.98%	97	4.41%
GEORGIA	88	2.19%	52	2.36%
GUAM	10	0.25%	4	0.18%
HAWAII	26	0.65%	14	0.64%
IDAHO	24	0.60%	22	1.00%
ILLINOIS	183	4.55%	85	3.86%
INDIANA	86	2.14%	51	2.32%
IOWA	57	1.42%	23	1.04%
KANSAS	42	1.05%	30	1.36%
KENTUCKY	62	1.54%	35	1.59%
LOUISIANA	69	1.72%	38	1.73%
MAINE	30	0.75%	22	1.00%
MARYLAND	80	1.99%	42	1.91%
MASSACHUSETTS	107	2.66%	38	1.73%
MICHIGAN	148	3.68%	72	3.27%
MINNESOTA	87	2.16%	32	1.45%
MISSISSIPPI	45	1.12%	32	1.45%
MISSOURI	86	2.14%	47	2.13%
MONTANA	22	0.55%	20	0.91%
NEBRASKA	31	0.77%	24	1.09%
NEVADA	23	0.57%	21	0.95%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	24	0.60%	23	1.04%
NEW JERSEY	117	2.91%	60	2.72%
NEW MEXICO	33	0.82%	25	1.14%
NEW YORK	268	6.67%	100	4.54%
NORTH CAROLINA	93	2.31%	57	2.59%
NORTH DAKOTA	20	0.50%	17	0.77%
OHIO	167	4.16%	83	3.77%
OKLAHOMA	52	1.29%	34	1.54%
OREGON	53	1.32%	23	1.04%
PENNSYLVANIA	188	4.68%	90	4.09%
PUERTO RICO	57	1.42%	14	0.64%
RHODE ISLAND	28	0.70%	15	0.68%
SOUTH CAROLINA	50	1.24%	36	1.63%
SOUTH DAKOTA	20	0.50%	19	0.86%
TENNESSEE	77	1.92%	45	2.04%
TEXAS	214	5.32%	121	5.50%
UTAH	28	0.70%	27	1.23%
VERMONT	19	0.47%	19	0.86%
VIRGIN ISLANDS	10	0.25%	4	0.18%
VIRGINIA	92	2.29%	54	2.45%
WASHINGTON	80	1.99%	35	1.59%
WEST VIRGINIA	38	0.95%	18	0.82%
WISCONSIN	91	2.26%	35	1.59%
WYOMING	19	0.47%	20	0.91%
TOTAL	4,019	100.00%	2,202	100.00%