

4 Establishing Resolution by National Convention

The following Resolution was recommended by the 2004 Democratic National Convention Rules Committee at its July 25, 2004 meeting for consideration by the 2004 Democratic National Convention. The Resolution was subsequently adopted by the 2004 Democratic National Convention July 26, 2004.

Sponsored by Senator Carl Levin, Michigan
 DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe, Virginia
 Debbie Dingell, Democratic National Committeewoman, Michigan

Resolution Establishing a Commission on Presidential Nomination Timing and Scheduling

WHEREAS, the timing of the delegate selection process and the scheduling of presidential primaries and caucuses is a critical component in the nomination of a candidate for president by the Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the Democratic Party established a “window” in which presidential primaries and caucuses must be scheduled, considering it important and in the public interest to contain the length of the primary season and believing that a longer primary period is divisive and expensive and could potentially weaken the Party’s prospects for the general election in November; and

WHEREAS, over the last two decades individual states have moved their respective contests earlier and earlier in the calendar year; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the Republican Party established its first “window” and set the opening a month ahead of the Democratic “window” which created an unfair, imbalanced and confusing 2000 nominating calendar; and

WHEREAS, for the 2004 presidential nominating process, in an effort to match the calendar used by the Republicans, the Democratic Party advanced by a month the opening of its “window” for when primaries and caucuses may begin; and

WHEREAS, some political pundits were initially skeptical about the Party’s move to match the Republican calendar and allow the primaries and caucuses to begin a month earlier, but came to see the merit of having a presumptive nominee determined earlier among a cross-section of voters in a set of diverse and balanced states to compete with the Republican incumbent;

WHEREAS, for years, objections have been raised to a calendar that some believe gives a disproportionate influence to a few early states; and

WHEREAS, based on the abovementioned issues, some Party leaders have called for an examination of

Report of the Commission on Presidential Nomination Timing and Scheduling

the scheduling of future Democratic presidential primaries and caucuses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2004 Democratic National Convention shall create the Commission on Presidential Nomination Timing and Scheduling; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission shall be charged with the responsibility of studying the timing of presidential primaries and caucuses and developing appropriate recommendations to the Democratic National Committee for the nominating process beginning in 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Commission shall examine all substantive, systematic, and incremental reform proposals while evaluating how specific proposals would be implemented; outlining measures to ensure compliance; and bearing in mind the Party's commitment to a presidential nominating process that is open and fair to all Democratic candidates and voters and that produces the strongest possible nominee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Commission shall consist of between 25 and 40 members, provided that no more than half are members of the Democratic National Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission members include a Democratic governor, two Democratic U.S. Senators, a Democratic Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and other Democratic elected officials, Party leaders, scholars, organized labor officials, grassroots community activists to be appointed by the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee within 30 days following the 2004 general election, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission shall hold a series of regional hearings/meetings throughout the country and shall hold its first meeting within 90 days following the 2004 general election; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Commission shall issue its report and recommendations to the Democratic National Committee by December 31, 2005 for consideration and action by the Democratic National Committee.