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Get your Caucus on

FEBRUARY 25, 2016 BY HANNAH BROADBENT

LEAVE A COMMENT

CHRISTY ATKINSON | submitted

The term coats the front pages of our newspapers, dominates all political conversation, and, if you pay attention to any of the presidential candidates, you know it's all they seem to care about: caucuses.

So what are caucuses, anyway?

Caucuses are local meetings of members of a political party who come together to endorse candidates (for the presidency, in this case) and decide on the goals for their party.

Each U.S. state holds either caucuses or primaries for political parties to choose their respective presidential nominees, a primary being a less-involved endorsing process. Caucuses and primaries allow members each party to decide on one candidate to represent their party in the November elections.

It's safe to say that all eyes are on the state caucuses and primaries being held across the nation at this time. We've watched closely as Iowa and New Hampshire endorsed candidates from each party, but when will it be Minnesota's turn?

The answer is this coming Tuesday, March 1st!

Here in this great state, we hold caucuses (versus primaries) to determine our votes for the presidential candidates of each political party.

About Minnesota caucuses

First and foremost, political parties hold their own caucuses, and they happen simultaneously on March 1. This means you can only caucus for one party. Nice try, though.

WELCOME!

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The caucuses have three main goals. The first is to endorse a candidate for each party. This happens through a basic vote.

The second goal is to decide what issues the party should stand for, which is called the party's platform. People wishing to participate in this part of the caucus, although not required, are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas. These resolutions are voted on and may be sent forward to the state convention.

The third goal is to choose delegates for the state convention. The number of delegates, or individuals who represent their precinct, corresponds to the amount of votes each candidate received. You are welcome and encouraged to volunteer as a delegate! Be sure you are aware of the time commitments if you do volunteer, though.

How to caucus

The Minnesota caucuses, held March 1, are a part of Super Tuesday—a big day in politics when many states hold their caucuses and primaries.

To participate in your local caucus you must be eligible to vote by the November elections and you must live in the precinct you show up to caucus for. You do not need to be an official member of your chosen political party to participate.

Worried about fitting caucusing into your busy schedule? Well don't! The gatherings are held in each election precinct, AKA close to where you live (use the Secretary of State website to find out your caucus location: <http://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>). The caucuses begin at 7 p.m., and they don't take up much time if you only plan to vote and head out.

Do make sure you are there before 8 p.m., if even just in line, otherwise your vote won't be counted. There is no absentee voting for caucuses.

Expect two lines at your caucus location: one to just cast your vote and leave, and the other to participate in the full caucus. There will be volunteers at your caucus location willing to help and direct you.

If you are still undecided about who you support, you can still caucus! In fact, one aspect of the caucus is attendees trying to convince their fellow community members to vote for a particular candidate.

Caucusing is a fantastic opportunity to get your voice heard, endorse your favorite candidate, raise issues that are important to you and meet like-minded members of your community.

It's well known that Duluth people love to see younger folks participating in politics and getting involved with issues affecting the community. Exercising your right to be heard is critical to the democratic process. Let the nation know what you stand for on March 1!

The Rundown:

You're Invited!

What: Your local caucus – select one party to caucus for

When: March 1st, 7 p.m. (no later than 8 p.m.)

Where: Visit <http://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us/> to find out where you party's caucus is held.

Why: Your voice matters! Exercise your right to vote!

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PODCAST: CHANCELLOR CHAT

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The Statesman



University of Minnesota Duluth's student newspaper



UPCOMING EVENTS

There are no upcoming events at this time.