

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS  
RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE NASS REGIONAL PRIMARY INITIATIVE**

**RESOLUTION SUMMARY**

Amid concerns that states are moving the dates of their presidential primaries earlier and earlier, which has resulted in “frontloading” the primary system, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) conducted a hearing and released a report on the problems associated with this trend. Following this hearing, NASS formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Presidential Primary Reform. The committee was tasked with developing a plan that would treat each state fairly and would give voters the opportunity to participate in primaries that would not be deemed as “irrelevant.”

The NASS Regional Rotating Primary/Caucus Plan was formally adopted by NASS in 2000. This plan seeks to preserve the rights of each state to have their own elections; provide each state an opportunity to be first in the presidential primary process and provide voters and candidates an opportunity to focus on issues of regional interest.

Under the NASS plan, primaries conducted by region would begin in 2012. A lottery would be held to determine which region would hold the first primary. The next time that a presidential election comes around, the region that began the process would become the last region to conduct primaries and the other regions would move forward. Both Iowa and New Hampshire would retain their leading positions in the presidential selection process.

Primaries in each state in a particular region would be held on or soon after the first Tuesday in March, April, May or June of presidential election years. States in the same region would not be required to hold primaries/caucuses on the same day.

According to the NASS plan, regional groupings would be as follows:

**East:** Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, District of Columbia

**South:** Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

**Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

**West:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Guam

It is hoped that the Regional Rotating Primary Plan would enhance voter participation, strengthen the political process and protect the rights of all states and their citizens to have a defined electoral schedule.

### **Additional Resource Information**

Presidential Primary System:

<http://usgovinfo.about.com/cs/politicalsystem/a/delegateprocess.htm>

The University of Virginia Center for Governmental Studies:

[http://www.centerforpolitics.org/reform/report\\_nominating.htm](http://www.centerforpolitics.org/reform/report_nominating.htm)

National Association of Secretaries of State:

<http://www.nass.org/Primary%20Plan.htm>

### **Resolution Endorsing the NASS Regional Primary Initiative**

Management Directive #1: Support state efforts to raise awareness of the benefits of a regional primary system.

Management Directive #2: CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's web site and make the resolution available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

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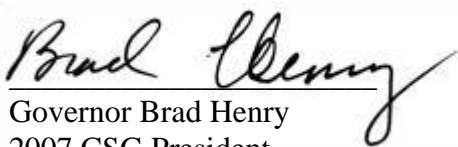
- WHEREAS,** The Council of State Governments (CSG) seeks to provide states with innovative ideas and concepts which encourage civic responsibility and strengthen the democratic process through increased overall voter turnout; and
- WHEREAS,** Many state elected officials who guide the activities of CSG are recognized experts in election administration issues, including a number of members of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) who serve on the CSG Governing Board; and
- WHEREAS,** The anticipated 2008 state primary election date schedule appears to have been haphazardly arranged from a race to the front of the calendar with little consideration for input from distinctly different regions; and
- WHEREAS,** After careful deliberation and consideration of a variety of alternatives, NASS has formally endorsed a Regional Primary concept designed to prevent the “front loading” of the national primary system and to ensure that each state and region of the nation has the opportunity to influence Presidential Primaries; and
- WHEREAS,** NASS has requested that The Council of State Governments endorse the NASS Regional Primary proposal designed to emphasize thoughtful consideration through coordinated regional input over a more protracted period of time.


**THEREFORE, BE IT SO RESOLVED** that The Council of State Governments strongly supports the Regional Primary concept designed and endorsed by the National Association of Secretaries of State.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Council of State Governments will request each of CSG's regions to highlight the NASS regional primary concept through presentations at their individual regional meetings and through their regional publications.

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that The Council of State Governments will undertake whatever actions are deemed appropriate by their membership to encourage the various state legislatures to adopt the Regional Primary system advanced by NASS.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June 2007, at the  
CSG 2007 Spring Committee & Task Force Meetings  
in Puerto Rico

  
Governor Brad Henry  
2007 CSG President

  
Representative Deborah Hudson  
2007 CSG Chair