

LONE STAR PROJECT

Fighting Back... with Facts



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5 Good Reasons to Move the TX Primary to Feb. 5th ***And one big reason why it might not be moved***

Legislation is currently being considered in the Texas State House to move the Texas Primary from March 4, 2008 to February 5, 2008, and Texas Democrats are taking the lead on the issue. Bills supporting a February 5th primary have already been filed by Representative Roberto Alonzo of Dallas (HB 993) and Representative Trey Martinez Fischer of San Antonio (H.B 996). State Representative Richard Raymond of Laredo has cosponsored the Alonzo bill and made a strong public endorsement of the effort calling upon current presidential candidates to endorse an early Texas primary. ([Read the statement here](#))

Why the Primary Date Should be Moved Up

1. Texas should exercise its electoral clout.

Texas is the second largest state by population and has 34 electoral votes. Under the current primary schedule ([see the current tentative schedule here](#)), the four states that will conduct primaries or caucuses prior to February 5th have fewer electoral votes combined than Texas. (Iowa – 7; Nevada – 5; New Hampshire – 4; South Carolina – 8. *Source: U.S. Electoral College*) However, if Texas waits until March 4th to conduct its primary, at least 20 states with a combined 156 electoral votes will have already acted, and the nominee for both parties will likely already be settled. Moreover, a number of other large states, including Florida, are actively considering moving their primary date to February 5th, which would even further diminish Texas's clout. (*Source: Associated Press, January 12, 2007*)

2. The nomination in both parties is wide open.

For the first time in more than 75 years, neither a sitting President nor a Vice President is running for President. (*Source: Austin American-Statesman, January 1, 2007*) At least the early stages of the nominating process will be very competitive in both parties. Texas should be in the mix.

3. Texas should be more than a donor state.

Since at least 1988, neither the Republican nor the Democratic national parties have

expended significant resources to win Texas votes. The nominating process is over by the time the Texas primary is conducted, and Texas has not been competitive during the general election. As a result, Presidential candidates who come to Texas are typically more focused on winning the support and contributions of donors rather than winning Texas votes. Texas donated the 3rd most money in 2004, but garnered little attention from any of the candidates. *(Source: The Washington Times, October 29, 2004)*

4. Primary participation in both parties is shrinking.

Over the last several election cycles, the participation in the primary as a percentage of the registered vote is shrinking. A competitive Presidential primary in Texas will generate interest and political activity within the political parties and generate higher turnout overall. This is particularly important in South Texas and in urban areas where general election contests for the State House, the State Senate and Congress are typically not competitive.

Percent of Primary Turnout compared to Registered Voters in Presidential Years

% Turnout	Year
35%	1976 - Primary
35%	1980 - Primary
26%	1984 - Primary
36%	1988 – Primary*
29%	1992 - Primary
20%	1996 - Primary
16%	2000 - Primary
12%	2004 - Primary

*First Super Tuesday

(Source: Texas Secretary of State)

5. Crucial national issues are at stake.

A controversial war is underway in Iraq. Armed battles are still taking place in Afghanistan. Energy and environmental policy, health care policy, sustaining Social Security and other retirement programs, and national education policy are all matters of intense national debate. The next President will be faced with tremendous substantive challenges that will affect every American. Texans should have the opportunity to participate in choosing the next President before the field has narrowed to only two national party choices.

Why the Texas Primary Might Not Move to Feb 5th

Rick Perry might be too weak to make it happen.

In order for the Texas primary to be moved, legislation has to be approved by the Texas State House and Senate and signed by the Governor. While it is apparent that there is considerable support among Democrats for a change, it is not yet clear whether Republicans will support an earlier primary date. Republicans control both the Texas State House and the Senate. In order for a bill to pass, it will have to have broad support from Republicans in the Legislature.

Perry demonstrated weaker support than even many losers

Rick Perry was re-elected with only 39 percent of the vote. Incredibly, 19 losing gubernatorial candidates lost with a **higher** percentage of the vote than Rick Perry.

State	Party	Candidate	Percentage	Outcome
Rhode Island	Democratic	Fogarty	49%	Lost
Maryland	Republican	Ehrlich	46%	Lost
Minnesota	Democratic	Hatch	46%	Lost
Florida	Democratic	Davis	45%	Lost
South Carolina	Democratic	Moore	45%	Lost
Wisconsin	Republican	Green	45%	Lost
Idaho	Democratic	Brady	44%	Lost
Iowa	Republican	Nussle	44%	Lost
Nevada	Democratic	Titus	44%	Lost
Oregon	Republican	Saxton	43%	Lost
Alabama	Democratic	Baxley	42%	Lost
Michigan	Republican	DeVos	42%	Lost
Alaska	Democratic	Knowles	41%	Lost
Arkansas	Republican	Hutchinson	41%	Lost
Colorado	Republican	Beauprez	41%	Lost
Vermont	Democratic	Parker	41%	Lost
Illinois	Republican	Topinka	40%	Lost
Kansas	Republican	Barnett	40%	Lost
Pennsylvania	Republican	Swann	40%	Lost
Texas	Republican	Perry	39%	"Won"

(Source: CNN America Votes 2006)

Rick Perry's ability to lead an effort to move the Texas Primary date and allow Texans to have a meaningful voice in the Presidential nominating process will be a good measure of whether or not he is the actual leader of the Texas Republicans or little more than a lame duck just a few weeks into his current term.

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