



# Why YOU should attend your precinct caucus!

## **The Major Party Precinct Caucus**

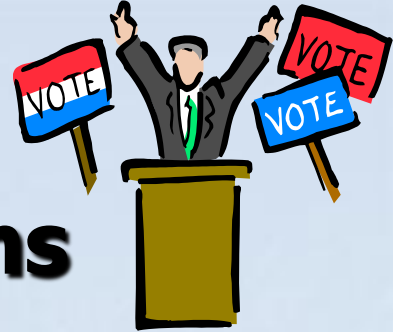
**A key form of grassroots activity by  
major parties in Minnesota**



# Launching the election season

- The road to Election Day begins at the precinct caucuses; usually held in the first week of February.
- Everyone who lives within a voting precinct and is a qualified voter (or will be by the next election) can participate in one party's precinct caucus in any one year.
- No presidential primary in MN. Express a presidential preference in a straw vote at their precinct caucus.

# 1<sup>st</sup> step in democratic elections



- **Precinct** caucuses are the first step on the road to the final selection of candidates and platforms
- Delegates elected to **county or legislative district** convention; resolutions on issues adopted.
- Delegates elected to **Congressional** district conventions and then to State Convention; resolutions refined and become party platform at State Convention.
- **National** convention (in presidential years)

*Issues and candidates are discussed and voted on by the delegates selected from the prior level.*

# Why should I attend my caucus?

- Select candidates to represent your party in the election. Take part in the party process!
- Introduce resolutions on issues you support;. Educate voters and help build a party's platform!
- Be a delegate and perhaps join a committee!
- You may choose to go only to observe the process.
- *You may take time off work to attend your precinct caucus after giving your employer 10 days written notice w/no penalty or deduction from wages other than the time absent from work.*



# How do I decide which party caucus to attend?

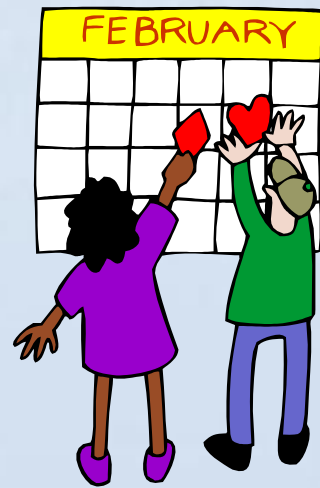


- Check the positions of the parties on issues and decide if you're in general agreement with one.
- When you sign in at a caucus, you will be stating that you do support the basic tenets of that party. You may also go to either party caucus as a non-voting observer.
- Minor political parties are not required to participate in the caucus process, but may do so.

# When and where are the caucuses?

**7 p.m. February 7, 2012! TUESDAY**

- In even years, caucuses for the major parties (Republican, Democratic, Independence) take place at 7:00 p.m. on the date established in every voting precinct of the state.
- Location: Visit the Sec. of State's website - [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us)



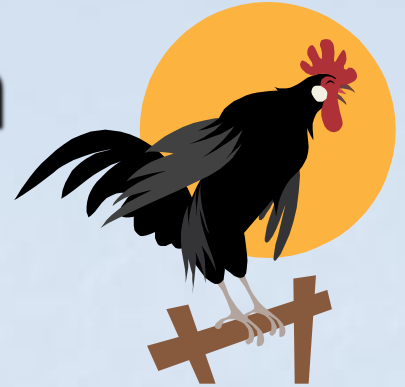
# What happens at a precinct caucus?



## Sign-in:

- You will be asked to sign your name and address stating you agree with party principles and intend to support party candidates in the coming election.
- *You may attend any party caucus as an observer.*

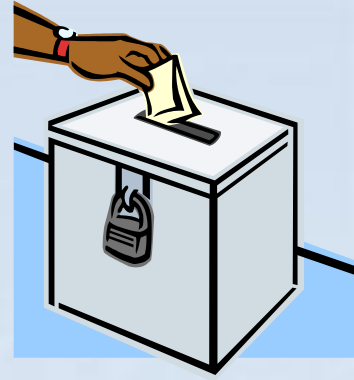
# What happens at a precinct caucus?



## Before the caucus convenes:

- Go early. If your caucus includes activists, this is the time they are passing out copies of the resolutions they hope will be adopted and looking for support for delegates and candidates.
- Bring copies of your own resolutions, bring people who support your positions to the caucus or identify supporters there. Ask an experienced caucus attendee to advise you on strategy.

# What happens at a precinct caucus?



7:00 p.m. Caucuses in the state are convened

Order of Business:

- **Election of caucus chair and the precinct officers:** Two-year positions involving campaign work, fundraising and organization. You may nominate yourself.
- **Straw Poll:** Caucus attendees' presidential preference.

# A Note on Electing Delegates and Alternates

- In some precincts this is highly competitive, in others they ask for volunteers.
- You may nominate yourself or someone who shares your views.
- If many are interested, ask the chair if each might make a short statement on qualifications and positions on issues.
- All voting is by secret ballot.



# Committees



- Select committee delegates for Credentials, Rules, and Resolutions committees.
- If you would like to be more involved make sure to raise your hand and let the caucus convener know you will help on a committee.
- Make sure to figure out who the chair of the committee is and when the meeting is going to be scheduled as well as the dates for your upcoming district or county convention.

# Issue Resolutions

- Resolutions relating to state or national issues that might be affected by legislation:
  - Must be in written form.
  - Read, seconded, debated and voted on by a voice vote.
  - Time limit for discussion both pro and con – the chair sets the rules of debate unless overturned by majority vote.
  - If passed, resolutions are forwarded to the convention at the next level.



# Introducing a Resolution in 3 Easy Steps

- **TIP:** Go early to pass out copies of your resolutions and answer questions before the caucus begins.
- 1. Give a brief introduction to the issue, why it is important, and generally what it says. Pass out resolution and factsheet.
- 2. Read your resolution in full to fellow precinct members.
- 3. Answer questions to the best of your ability during discussion period (if needed).
- Vote to pass the resolutions for which you agree.



# Talking Points for Mining Resolution

- Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I live at \_\_\_\_\_. I would like to read a resolution to protect our lakes, rivers, and streams for future generations.
- Copper-sulfide mines have been proposed next to the Boundary Waters and the streams that drain to Lake Superior.
- This is not iron ore mining. This is a new kind of mining that has so far never been able to control pollution from draining into lakes, streams, and wetlands in the U.S. and across the world.
- These mines turn into Superfund sites, costing tax payers billions of dollars to clean up, and leaving pollution behind.
- I hope you will support this resolution which states that no sulfide mines shall be permitted if they threaten Minnesota's water resources and natural heritage. I appreciate your consideration.

# Caucus Adjourns!

- Caucus must last at least one hour. Adjournment occurs when all of the business is completed.

## Caucus Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKL31V6IKcE>



# Resources

- MN Secretary of State:
  - Elections Division 651-296-2803
  - [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us)
- [www.Protect.MN](http://www.Protect.MN) and #protectmn
- League of Women Voters: [www.lwvmn.org](http://www.lwvmn.org)

