

Jim DeGraffenreid

Nevada Republican Party

Testimony in opposition to Assembly Bill 302

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Jim DeGraffenreid. I'm the Vice-Chairman of the Nevada Republican Party, and we're in opposition to this bill.

I've spoken with the sponsors regarding an essential technical amendment that needs to be made in Section 7 regarding the date of the primary. Rule 16 of the national Rules of the Republican Party reads as follows:

RULE NO. 16

**Election, Selection, Allocation, or Binding of Delegates and Alternate Delegates**

(c) Timing and Allocation.

(1) No primary, caucus, convention, or other process to elect, select, allocate, or bind delegates to the national convention shall occur prior to March 1 or after the second Saturday in June in the year in which a national convention is held. Except Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada may conduct their processes no earlier than one month before the next earliest state in the year in which a national convention is held and shall not be subject to the provisions of paragraph (c)(2) of this rule.

(2) Any presidential primary, caucus, convention, or other process to elect, select, allocate, or bind delegates to the national convention that occurs prior to March 15 in the year in which the national convention is held shall provide for the allocation of delegates on a proportional basis."

If Nevada violates the provisions of this rule, Rule 17 of the national Rules of the Republican Party specifies that Nevada's representation at the Republican National Convention will be significantly reduced. At a minimum, Nevada will lose half of our 30 delegates to the national convention. At worst, our delegation could be reduced to nine members total, a more than 2/3 reduction.

Penalties aside, both major parties have spent a great amount of time developing rules to insure an orderly presidential nominating process. Disregarding these causes nothing but chaos and confusion as states attempt to leapfrog each other to gain an advantage by being earlier on the calendar as was done in 2012. It makes no sense for Nevada to break the rules given that we are already one of the four early states.

The sponsors indicated that they were aware of this issue, and I'm told that there is an amendment to move the date into February.

While this would be an essential change, the Nevada Republican Party remains opposed to this bill even with such an amendment .

The Presidential Preference Poll as it is currently handled by each major party is an important event to the parties in terms of fundraising, as well as volunteer and party recruitment. By determining each party's presidential preference in conjunction with our precinct meetings, both the Republican and Democrat parties have been able to increase participation in precinct meetings and conventions, and increase overall participation in the political process. The net result is more educated and active voters, which is a good thing.

There are members of the Republican party that would prefer to see a primary process as opposed to a caucus process, and that's where this bill originated. This will be discussed and debated at our state central committee meeting here in Carson City this Saturday, but regardless of whether Nevada Republicans prefer a caucus or a primary style vote, we believe that the process is best handled by each party rather than by the state of Nevada.

Aside from party considerations, we believe that a primary in January or February is a real problem for Nevadans in general. Section 9 of this bill specifies a filing period in October, and an amendment to Section 7 would put this filing period in November. Either date forces all candidates to do their primary fundraising and campaigning in the middle of the holiday season. Similarly, local election officials would be forced to spend their time during the holidays preparing sample ballots and other materials. Finally, Nevada citizens would be forced to deal with the beginning of a campaign lasting a year or more at a time when they should be free to enjoy the blessings of the season with friends and family.

We ask you to not pass this bill. Any internal party issues that exist with the caucus process are best resolved within the party, rather than inconveniencing candidates, local officials and Nevada citizens with a year long campaign season.