

UNITED STATES

Congress



OF AMERICA

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 94th CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

VOLUME 122—PART 2

(JANUARY 28, 1976 TO FEBRUARY 4, 1976)

(PAGES 1235 TO 2462)

THE REGIONAL PRIMARY IDEA

Mr. MONDALE. Mr. President, when I introduced S. 2741, a bill to create a system of regional Presidential primaries, I indicated I hoped it would help stimulate a national debate on ways in which we might improve the chaotic means by which we presently nominate our Presidential candidates. I am very pleased that that has been the case; a number of editorialists and commentators have focused on the problem and suggested a variety of ways in which we might improve the system.

I have also been greatly encouraged by the voluntary actions of a number of States in promoting the regional primary concept. Vermont recently decided to hold its Presidential primary on March 2, the same day as the Massachusetts primary and only 1 week after New Hampshire's, thereby creating a limited New England regional primary. Also, the States of Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada will hold their primaries on May 25, creating the same thing in the Pacific Northwest. I am confident that both of these regional experiences—even though they are limited in scope—will add impetus to the growing national awareness that we must fundamentally reform our present system and that the regional concept offers the best hope of bringing order and rationality out of chaos and irrationality. I hope my colleagues will join me in watching with interest these new political phenomena on the American political scene.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following editorials on the regional primary idea be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the editorials were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Cincinnati Enquirer]

TOO MANY PRIMARIES

Long before the 1976 season for presidential primaries has run its course, a dozen or more Americans are likely to be on the brink of exhaustion—physical, psychological, financial and perhaps even political.

For by the sheerest coincidence, the year in which we have a record number of active, avowed candidates for the two presidential nominations is also the year in which we have a record number of presidential primaries.

Beginning in late February and concluding in June, the primary season will challenge the 1976 presidential aspirants in a way that politicians have rarely been challenged before.

Not every candidate, of course, is going to enter every primary. Most will pick the states in which their prospects look rosier. But very nearly all will come to the end of the primary season with the conclusion that something needs to be done about the primaries.

Sen. Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.), a prospective candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination who was frankly scared out by the primary route, is proposing that Congress act to consolidate the primaries into a series of regional contests.

Such a consolidation would have some obvious advantages. It would still test the candidates as they relate to various issues of local interest and concern; it would still afford people in every part of the country to become acquainted with the candidates and the issues. But those goals would be accom-

plished without the exhausting ritual that is close to making a charade out of the entire electoral process.

There have been some intimations that neighboring states themselves might get together to synchronize their primaries—a kind of collaboration that ought to be encouraged. The urge to do so may be considerably greater by the time the primary season is over.

What the federal government does ought to be limited, however, to persuasion. Primaries are, after all, a matter of state concern. The states ought to be free to determine how and when they choose their convention delegates with a minimum of direction from the top.

The candidates themselves, when all is said and done, are likely to be the foremost salesmen for regional primaries. They will have learned the hard way.

[From the New Prague (Minn.) Times, Dec. 29, 1975]

UNIFORMITY NEEDED IN STATE PRIMARY DATES

Over-emphasis has been given to those state presidential primaries held in late winter and early spring months,—out of all proportion to their ultimate bearing on the outcome of the conventions and election.

For more than a dozen years, the Times has urged that a federal presidential primary election law be adopted providing that in all states holding preferential primaries, the elections be held on the same date and under the same ground rules, nationwide.

Now, Senator Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota has proposed legislation providing for a regional system with the country divided into five regions, and the primaries to be held on six successive Tuesdays in May and June of each election year. Date for each region would be determined by lot. The reason for designating the regions and the five successive weeks of election is to give the candidates an opportunity to present their cause.

While we have advocated the one date nationwide, we assume that Senator Mondale and his staff have given the matter considerable research and study, so we willingly go along with their proposal,—just so something is done about the present somewhat ridiculous situation.

[From the Detroit Lakes (Minn.) Record, Dec. 23, 1975]

REGIONAL PRIMARIES ARE A GOOD IDEA

One of the best political ideas so far as we get into the upcoming Presidential election year is Senator Mondale's plan for a regional system of Presidential primaries.

The current system of primary elections in the states which hold them (Minnesota doesn't) is at best hodge-podge and time consuming for the candidates and at worst, misleading and confusing to the voter, such as in states where you vote for a slate of delegates without knowing what Presidential candidates the delegates are committed to, a practice which wouldn't be allowed under Mondale's proposal.

Before the states' rights people get worried, though, we should emphasize that Mondale's bill would still leave it up to the individual states as to whether or not to hold a Presidential primary. But, those states which want to hold one would have to hold it on the date assigned to that region.

Under the proposal, the nation would be divided geographically into six regions, with each region holding its primary on a designated Tuesday between late March and mid-June of Presidential election years. The election dates would be two-weeks apart and would be assigned to the regions by lot.

Considering many Americans' disillusionment with politics nowadays, an extremely long and dragged out Presidential primary

battle beginning in the February snows in New Hampshire is unwise as well as unnecessary, and we hope the Congress and President Ford heed Mondale's advice in time for the 1980 elections.—K.T.

[From the Washington Star, Jan. 10, 1976]

PRIMARY REFORM NEEDED

The presidential primary season is getting into swing, and a more tortuous, exhausting, irrational system—for candidates and voters alike—could hardly be devised. Congress could make an important contribution in this Bicentennial year by finding a fairer and more orderly method of selecting nominees.

An argument could be made for eliminating primaries altogether. There is no proof that primaries produce better candidates; in fact, they sometimes advance the least publicly acceptable candidates, as in 1972 when Senator George McGovern won the Democratic nomination via the primary route. The primaries place a premium on endurance, financing and ability to organize supporters rather than on intelligence, familiarity with the issues, common sense and capacity to lead the country.

But the primary seems here to stay. The demand for "participatory democracy" has spawned primaries to the extent that 29 states and the District of Columbia are using that method to select 1976 convention delegates. That not many more than one-fourth of the eligible voters take advantage of the opportunity to participate in these grass-roots exercises doesn't seem to make much difference.

Since primaries seem to be the wave of the present and the future, it seems appropriate to reform the primary system rather than try to abolish it. A system of regional primaries might be the best answer; at least it is worth serious exploration.

It makes no sense, for example, that New Hampshire should have such an inappropriately large influence in the nomination process simply because it holds the first primary. Its population is hardly representative of the country in social or political outlook, and its news media are among the most biased to be found anywhere.

Nor does it make sense for candidates to have to shuttle from one end of the Eastern seaboard to the other—from New Hampshire to Florida—to participate in primary elections held two weeks apart. Other illustrations of this helter-skelter system are Pennsylvania and Texas primaries scheduled a week apart; and Rhode Island and California, also a week apart. Candidates must either stay out of some primaries or engage in cross-country campaigning that not only is physically exhausting but wasteful of money.

Several proposals for regional primaries have been made, the latest by Senator Walter Mondale of Minnesota. Mr. Mondale probably would have been a candidate for the Democratic nomination this year had he not been faced with going through what he called the "mindless process" of the primaries.

Senator Mondale's legislation would divide the country into six regions, each of which would hold its presidential primary on one of six designated Tuesdays between late March and mid-June. The six election dates would be assigned by lot by the Federal Elections Commission. States would not be required to hold a primary but if they elected to do so they would have to hold it on the date set for their region.

The bill would require candidates to enter the primaries in at least one state of each region in order to receive federal matching campaign funds. A candidate who is serious about winning the nomination should not view this as an unreasonable requirement.

Other than abolishing cross-over voting—a process by which voters of one party can cross over and vote in the primary of an-

other party—the Mondale bill appears to have a minimal impact on state prerogatives to choose the method by which national convention delegates shall be selected.

Perhaps there are better plans than Mr. Mondale's for reforming the nomination process. The important thing is for Congress to get busy on this matter. It is too late to do anything about 1976 but surely something can be done before another presidential election year rolls around.

[From the St. Peter (Minn.) Herald,
Dec. 8, 1975]

A REGIONAL PRIMARY . . .

We do not often agree with Senator Walter Mondale with regard to almost any subject . . . but we think he is on the right track with the legislation he offered in Congress this past week to create a regional system of presidential primary selections.

There may be some specific objections to the details of his proposal, but we fully agree with him that the proliferation of state primaries from less than a dozen in 1960 to 30 in next year's election has become "a malignant growth that has this country around the neck."

Coupled with the suggestion that President Ford appoint a broadbased bipartisan citizen's commission to study all aspects of selecting presidential nominees, including party rules, campaign financing and candidates' relationships with the media as well as primaries, the regional primary system would, in our view, produce some sensible order to what has become a sort of senseless rat-race for both candidates and voters.

Moreover, it would reduce what is now an even greater danger than ever before the likelihood that presidential nominations will simply be "brokered" at party conventions by power blocs within the political parties . . . with little or no public input into the selections.

Under Mondale's bill the nation would be divided into six regions. States holding primaries in a given region would have to vote on the same day. Each region would be assigned a different date, by lot, at the direction of the Federal Election Commission. Dates would be two weeks apart, between late March and mid-June.

Cross-over voting by members of opposing parties would be restricted. Ballots would have to show the candidate preference, if any, for persons running for national convention delegate.

Each presidential candidate seeking federal matching funds for a campaign would have to enter at least one primary in each region.

Minnesota, for instance, would be included in a region with Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois.

The Minnesota senator, in explaining his proposal, used his own experience in his own sort of "test run" a year or so ago. He termed the present system of selecting nominees as a "mindless process from the candidates' perspective, too often a self-defeating one for the parties and frequently an ineffective one for the nation."

Equally as important, in our view, is the obvious fact that while voters may be able to hear what candidates are saying as they roar around the country trying to take part in what amount to a man-killing schedule of individual elections . . . none of which is scheduled with any regard to any other across the land . . . the candidates themselves simply are unable to sit still and concentrate long enough to hear what the voters are saying.

Mondale termed it the "geography of running" in a press conference last week.

We think a good many things need to be changed in our elective system if it is to survive as the basis for our representative

system . . . if it is going to have anything to do with reflecting the mood and the thinking of the public.

Some form of regional presidential primaries is one step toward returning elections to the people, in our view.

In a similar vein, we are leaning toward some form of public financing of national office election campaigns.

It has been demonstrated to the point of boredom that "money talks" in our present election campaign system.

It may bore us to hear it again, but because it is a basic truth of the system, it becomes absolutely necessary that controls and limitations on campaign donations and spending and public revelation of campaign fund sources be systemized.

We are coming to believe that only through a system of public financing . . . quite likely through an income tax check-off system, as the most likely possibility so far attempted . . . can such controls and limitations be imposed.

[From the Coon Rapids (Minn.) Herald,
Dec. 15, 1975]

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale has introduced a bill to create a system of regional Presidential primaries which he hopes will bring "order, fairness and rationality" to the nation's Presidential nominating process.

Mondale described the present primary system as chaotic. "It is too often a mindless process from the candidates' perspective, too often a self-defeating one for the parties and frequently an ineffective one for the nation."

Mondale's bill would divide the nation into six regions, each of which would hold its Presidential primaries on one of six designated Tuesdays between late March and mid-June of Presidential election years. The six dates, with the two-week intervals, would be assigned by lot to the six regions by the Federal Election Commission five months before the first primary.

The bill would still leave it up to state whether or not they want to hold a primary, but if they do it must be on the date assigned to that state's region.

Mondale hopes his bill will end the "disproportionate and unfair advantage" some states have in the nominating process; compress the primary period into a shorter time; and conserve the candidate's energies and resources, as well as enabling the public to focus the candidate's attention on regional concerns.

Mondale's bill is worth considering very closely, and it is to be hoped Congress will act on it with some haste. Frankly the present system leaves a lot to be desired, not least the fact that the Presidential election race starts some 18 months before the actual election, which is ridiculous.

Primaries, too, are dragged out over a long period of time, which is unnecessary. Packing them into three-month periods two weeks apart will enable the candidate to focus his attention on one part of the country at a time, rather than jet-hopping from one primary to another thousands of miles apart.

Not least one of the benefits that might be realized from this plan is a savings in money for candidates, some of which now comes out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Whether or not it would shorten the election race remains to be seen. Candidates might still declare themselves 18 months in advance, but at least the meat of the campaign is compressed into three months before the nominating convention.

Howard K. Smith of ABC News has frequently commended the British parliamentary election system where an election is called only three weeks before election day, and all the campaigning is restricted to those three weeks.

That works well in Britain, but the size of the United States would probably pre-

clude it from working well here. But at least Mondale's bill goes some way to achieving this desirable goal.—Peter Bodley.

[From the Forum Fargo-Moorhead,
Dec. 13, 1975]

SEN. MONDALE PROPOSAL FOR REGIONAL PRIMARIES PROBABLY SOUND IDEA

The bill offered by Sen. Walter Mondale, D-Minn., to establish regional primary elections is a starting point in the effort to make more sense out of how the nation's president is chosen.

Sen. Mondale says his bill is "modest in approach and simple in its design" but that he is submitting it as a contribution to the national debate from which he hopes a sound structure for electing the president will emerge.

He has asked President Ford to appoint a bipartisan commission to undertake a review of every aspect of the nominating process, to evaluate alternatives, and to report back soon after the 1976 election. It is too late for anything of substance to be done before the 1976 election.

Sen. Mondale's bill would divide the nation into six regions, each of which would hold its presidential primary on one of six designated Tuesdays between late March and mid-June of presidential election years. The six election dates would be assigned by lot to the six regions by the Federal Election Commission five months before the first primary.

It would be up to each state to decide whether it will hold a presidential primary. But if a state decides to hold one, it must be held on the date assigned to the state's region. States would retain the right to determine the type of primary they want, as well as to decide other matters traditionally left to the state, except that "crossover voting" would be eliminated. In other words, voters would be allowed to cast ballots only in the party of their registered affiliation. This would make the process an authentic party function, just as precinct caucuses and party conventions are party functions.

The idea is probably sound but would force some states, such as North Dakota, to institute voter registration by party preference. North Dakota lawmakers have always avoided this type of registration. They could still avoid it by not joining the presidential primary parade.

Sen. Mondale's proposal would compress the primary period into a shorter time and conserve the candidates' energies and resources. It would also offer a greater opportunity for public attention to be focused on regional concerns.

As of now, a helter-skelter schedule of state primaries and delegate selection systems mystifies, frustrates and debilitates candidates and their backers.

Sen. Mondale does not go along with the opinion of some that there is a kind of accidental genius inherent in the present nominating process, which he calls "chaotic."

Incidentally, his proposal would have Minnesota and North Dakota in the same region as Montana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. This is a homogenous region that could focus attention on mutual problems within it.

[From the Pioneer, Bemidji, Minn., Dec. 16,
1975]

SENSIBLE PRIMARIES

Sen. Walter Mondale has introduced a bill to create a system of regional Presidential primaries by dividing the nation into six regions, each of which would hold a Presidential primary on one of six designated Tuesdays between late March and mid-June of election years. His bill would call for six primary election dates, separated from one another by two-week intervals. The dates would be assigned by lot to the six regions

by the Federal Elections Commission five months before the first primary.

The idea behind Mondale's bill is a good one. If there is any method to the madness of the present primary setup, it is pretty hard to define. Mondale was a contender for the Democratic nomination earlier this year, but withdrew convinced by his experience that the entire Presidential election process was badly in need of "fundamental and comprehensive review."

We would agree with that and add that Mondale's proposal is a step in the right direction. In our case, Minnesota would be included in an eight-state north central region where candidates could concentrate their efforts for a two-week period prior to the regional election. They would no longer need to jet across the country to hit whatever primary that happens to fall on a given Tuesday.

Under Mondale's plan, good candidates should not be discouraged from running by the cumbersome and expensive election machinery. Instead, regional primaries would make it easier for candidates to withstand the emotional, physical and financial stress of campaigning.

On the other hand, regional primaries should not take away from the states any of their inherent rights over their own affairs. Mondale claims his bill will accomplish that, with each state retaining the right to determine if it will have a primary and what type of primary will be held.

Unfortunately, Mondale's bill also mandates that "crossover voting" would not be allowed. Here our agreement with Mr. Mondale ends. Right or wrong, cross-over voting and other voting mechanics of each state are sovereign matters. They are not the property of the federal government.

Mondale states the regional proposal is only one aspect of the nominating process which he believes needs attention. Other elements include party rules, financing of Presidential campaigns, and the relationship of the candidates to the media. He said he was offering the primary proposal in hopes of contributing to a national debate on the issue.

We hope he is successful in that goal and that some reorganization of the process is accomplished. But in that process, the individual sovereignty of the state should not be forgotten.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WATERVILLE, MAINE

Mr. MUSKIE. Mr. President, the city of Waterville, in my home State of Maine, has been, I believe, among the most successful communities in the country in taking advantage of Federal programs to revitalize urban areas.

This record of past success is being built upon today, under the leadership of Mayor Richard Carey and a large number of active, energetic business leaders and concerned citizens.

Last April, the city of Waterville was the first community in New England and one of the first 15 in the Nation to receive approval from HUD for its community development plan under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

In a recent report to his constituents, Mayor Carey said:

Credit for this must be shared with all concerned, from HUD to committees to the general public. The City and HUD have formed yet another partnership in the reshaping of Waterville's future.

Mr. President, I add my personal congratulations to those whose hard work

brought Waterville so far in such a short time.

To share the city's community development progress with our colleagues, I ask unanimous consent that the First Annual Report on the city's project be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the report was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974—
WATERVILLE-HUD, A PARTNERSHIP FOR PROGRESS, FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITIZENS OF WATERVILLE, NOVEMBER 17, 1975

CITY OF WATERVILLE,

Waterville, Maine, November 12, 1975.

To the citizens of Waterville:

I could find no better way than this to report to you on my stewardship of the Community Development Program for the past year.

True, we have not officially had a full year of operation, since we were approved by HUD only on the 28th of April 1975, but much activity preceded that approval. While my first contact with the CD program dates back to my involvement in 1972 as a member of the Community Development Committee of the National League of Cities, the City of Waterville was fully committed on November 7, 1974 when I named an Action Committee to gather data for consideration of program development. This was followed by the naming of a Citizens Advisory Committee on December 7, 1974. The Citizens Committee was charged with evaluation of data, formulation of program, citizen involvement and general supervision of the program after Council acceptance. The Citizens Advisory Committee has very ably carried out its function to date.

After 28 meetings, involving the Action Committee, the Advisory Committee, area agencies, HUD, specialist, the general public, two public hearings, public readings before the City Council and several interviews, the City submitted to HUD on February 21, 1975 its CD program application. We were one of the very first in the nation. On February 24, 1975 President Gerald Ford wrote to me announcing his approval of our application. Final HUD approval was received April 28, 1975. Waterville's program was the first in New England and one of the first 15 nationwide approved.

Credit for this must be shared with all concerned, from HUD to committees to the general public. The City and HUD had formed yet another partnership in the reshaping of Waterville's future.

During the six months that have passed since HUD approval was received the City has purchased 15 of the 18 parcels of land scheduled for first year acquisition. As of this date three parcels have been cleared of buildings. Several tenants have been relocated, as have former property owners.

In the area of acquisitions, appraisals have been higher than expected and budgeted for. We will have to adjust our budget figures in succeeding years to reflect this. We did shift some properties from later years to the first year to accommodate the property owners with special problems. The flexibility of this program has allowed us to be of immediate service to these property owners. In two cases, businesses were involved and moving them ahead saved self found new locations for them.

Demolition is underway and improvements on Carreen Street and Carey Lane have already been noted. We hope to clear the house at 9 Carey Lane shortly to afford better fire protection and snow plowing for the people on Liberty Court, located behind this building.

The rehabing of the Boys-Girls Club has started and the contractors are working with-

in the guidelines as established by HUD for this project. This was only the second such project funded by HUD nationally.

We have paid out some monies for relocation with still more committed. We are really just swinging into the relocation phase of the program. Mr. Leonard Dow has been retained by the City to do this work and he has been well received by the citizens of the area.

Bids were sought and a contractor awarded a contract for the Hayden Brook sewer work. Since the bids came in higher than budgeted for, the City Council weighed the total cost and its benefits versus cutbacks to live within the bid and found that benefits far exceeded the cost. Therefore the council appropriated additional funds to match CD funds for a complete project. This council action ratifies the wisdom shown by the Advisory Committee in having this project funded with CD funds.

We have gone as far as we can trying to get matching funds for the Nutritional Program as required by HUD. There being no other funds available, we have turned to the Central Senior Citizens Association for the operations of a meals program within the target area. And I am pleased to report that only last Monday I received official approval from HUD for this approach.

This meeting tonight is the 67th involving the Community Development Program since we started. Some have been longer than others but all have been a contributing factor in our reaching this point. We are far and away ahead of all other communities and our thoroughness and fairness have placed us in the enviable position of serving as a model for others.

I am extremely proud of my crew both in and out of City Hall.

We have been able to proceed up to this point with a small outlay of CD funds in the area of administrative cost. I must confess that it has been done with some degree of hardship placed upon my office, the Administrator's and that of the City Solicitor's, but we are in hopes that in the long run we will be able to effect savings enough in that area to offset rising cost in others. We have hired no full time help and only a part time relocationsman, a part time draftsman and a part time surveyor. The work of the latter two is now completed.

As can be seen, much has been done in a short time. I strongly believe this to be a major purpose of the CD Act. We are pleased, HUD is pleased and I hope that you take some pleasure in having been and continuing to be, a part of this change in our City. A change that touches the lives of us all.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor RICHARD J. CAREY.

THE WHITE HOUSE,

Washington, D.C., February 24, 1976.

HON. RICHARD J. CAREY,
Mayor of Waterville,
Waterville, Me.

DEAR MAYOR CAREY: Last August, I had the honor of signing into law the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

This historic legislation was passed by the Congress to change the old, helter-skelter system of helping our cities grow. The new act is designed to let the cities and counties of our Nation set their own priorities and make their own plans—with only very broad Federal guidelines.

I am pleased and delighted that your City has completed its own plan—and that it has been approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

That is only the first step. I urge that you enlist all your citizens in helping to carry out this plan. This is a new direction in Federal policy and requires total public participation if it is to succeed.