

# TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE CAUCUSES IN MINNESOTA

---

## 1. What is a caucus and how does it differ from a primary?

The caucus system is a political process put on by the major political parties in Minnesota. At the caucus, party activists endorse candidates and discuss issues important to that political party. Caucus results in Minnesota help determine which issues are the most important to the party and which candidate the parties will nominate for president or another elected office.

Caucuses differ from primaries in that they are arranged by the political party (in Minnesota, either Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) or Republican) and not the Secretary of State. In certain states, caucuses allow for participants to openly show support for their candidates by raising hands or breaking into groups, but in Minnesota, voting is anonymous and is usually done by writing a candidate's name on a ballot to be counted.

In Minnesota you caucus in a precinct, a small geographic area that represents all or part of your neighborhood. You can find the location of your precinct caucus on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website: <http://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us>.

## 2. Who can attend?

The criteria for attending a caucus is similar to voting in the general election: 1) You must be at least 18 years old and eligible to vote in the November general election; 2) You live in the precinct; 3) Your views are generally aligned with the political party whose caucus you're attending.

Note that you are not able to vote absentee in either the Minnesota Republican or Minnesota DFL Party presidential preference ballot; you must attend in person.

## 3. What can I expect?

It's important to remember that voting for presidential candidates is only one part of the caucus. The majority of the caucus will be spent electing local precinct leaders and discussing and voting on issues important to the party platform. In total, the event should not last more than two hours.

If all you want to do is cast your vote and leave, you may, but if you are interested in getting more involved with the party, there will be people at your caucus location happy to share more information.

## 4. Why should I care?

First, 100 percent of votes not cast don't count, so it's important to show up and vote, particularly if you feel strongly about one presidential candidate or another. If you don't caucus, you're letting someone else decide who your party's candidate is going to be.

Minnesota recently moved its precinct caucus date to March 1, or "Super Tuesday" as it is widely known, which means that our early votes will help steer a course for the states whose primaries will follow.

In addition, the caucuses serve as a forum for deciding the party platform, or the party's issues and goals. If you feel strongly about a topic, attending a caucus is a great way to show your support and discuss the issues with your neighbors.

## 5. Where can I find more information?

Visit the Minnesota Republican (<http://mngop.com/>) or Democratic-Farmer-Labor (<https://www.dfl.org/>) website, for more information on where and how to caucus.