## SENATE BILL NO. 421—COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS

#### MARCH 23, 2015

Referred to Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections

SUMMARY—Makes various changes relating to political parties and presidential preference primary elections. (BDR 24-1148)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: May have Fiscal Impact. Effect on the State: Yes.

EXPLANATION - Matter in bolded italics is new; matter between brackets formitted material is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to elections; making various changes relating to political parties and presidential preference primary elections; revising provisions governing the organization and operation of major political parties; providing in certain circumstances for a presidential preference primary election to be held for each major political party; establishing certain requirements and procedures for conducting a presidential preference primary election; requiring delegates to a national party convention to vote according to the results of the state party's presidential preference process in certain circumstances; providing penalties; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

#### **Legislative Counsel's Digest:**

Under existing law, a major political party must: (1) hold precinct meetings in each county; (2) select delegates to the county, state and national party conventions; (3) provide certain types of notice regarding its meetings and conventions; and (4) follow certain procedural requirements when conducting its affairs. (NRS 293.130-293.163) **Sections 3.5-6** of this bill revise various aspects of the organization and operation of major political parties.

Sections 3.5 and 4 authorize major political parties to adopt rules for providing notice of meetings and conventions through an Internet website or other social media. Section 4 also provides that precinct meetings may be consolidated or held for the county at large. Section 5 allows delegates to be selected through a nomination process instead of being selected at precinct meetings and permits the county central committee to provide for forms to be prepared and delivered





electronically. **Section 6** provides that until the end of the first ballot at the national party convention, the state party's delegates are bound to vote at each stage of the presidential nomination process according to the results of the state party's presidential preference process.

Sections 1-2.5, 31.1-38 and 42 of this bill provide, with certain exceptions, for a statewide presidential preference primary election to be held for each major political party on the last Tuesday in February of a presidential election year. Section 32 provides that a presidential preference primary election is generally governed by the same statutory provisions applicable to the existing statewide primary, except that the specific provisions of sections 31.1-38 and any regulations adopted by the Secretary of State to carry out those provisions take precedence and control if there is any conflict. Pursuant to section 33, a major political party may opt out of a presidential preference primary election. Such an election must be held for a major political party if: (1) the chair of the national committee of that party does not timely notify the Secretary of State that the party wants to opt out of the election; and (2) two or more qualified candidates of that party timely file declarations of candidacy for the election with the Secretary of State.

Sections 35-38 establish certain requirements and procedures for conducting a presidential preference primary election. In particular, section 35 specifies which registered voters are entitled to cast a ballot at the election, and section 36 states that local election officials: (1) shall not distribute sample ballots or conduct early voting for the election; (2) shall permit voting by absent ballot and military-overseas ballot for the election; and (3) shall establish polling places for the election that must be open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. on the day of the election. Section 36 also provides that a registered voter in the county who is entitled to cast a ballot at the election may do so at any polling place in the county on the day of the election. Finally, sections 37 and 42 provide that the cost of any presidential preference primary election is a charge against the State and must be paid from the Reserve for Statutory Contingency Account in the State General Fund.

### THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**Section 1.** Chapter 293 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section to read as follows:

"Presidential preference primary election" means an election held in a presidential election year pursuant to sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act to determine the preferences of the registered voters of a major political party regarding the party's nominee for President of the United States.

**Sec. 2.** NRS 293.010 is hereby amended to read as follows:

293.010 As used in this title, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in NRS 293.013 to 293.121, inclusive, *and section 1 of this act* have the meanings ascribed to them in those sections.

**Sec. 2.5.** NRS 293.080 is hereby amended to read as follows: 293.080 *I.* "Primary election" means the election held pursuant to NRS 293.175.





- 2. Except as otherwise provided in sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act, the term includes a presidential preference primary election.
  - **Sec. 3.** (Deleted by amendment.)

- **Sec. 3.5.** NRS 293.130 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 293.130 1. On the dates set by the respective state central committees in each year in which a general election is to be held, a county convention of each major political party must be held at the county seat of each county or at such other place in the county as the county central committee designates.
- 2. The county central committee of each major political party shall cause notice of the holding of the county convention of its party to be [published]:
- (a) Published in one or more newspapers, if any, published in the county [-]; or
- (b) If consistent with the rules of the party, posted on an Internet website or other social media.
  - 3. The notice must be in substantially the following form:

### NOTICE OF.....(NAME OF PARTY).....CONVENTION

County Central Committee of	County, Nevada
By	(Its Chair)
And	(Its Secretary)
NID C 202 127: 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 C 11

**Sec. 4.** NRS 293.135 is hereby amended to read as follows:

293.135 1. [The] Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and subsection 3 of NRS 293.137, the county central committee of each major political party in each county shall have a precinct meeting of the registered voters of the party residing in each voting precinct entitled to delegates in the county convention





called and held on the dates set for the precinct meeting by the respective state central committees in each year in which a general election is held. If consistent with the rules of the party, the county central committee may have precinct meetings consisting of two or more precincts or may have a precinct meeting for the county at large. In any year in which a presidential preference primary election is held for the party, the precinct meetings may not be held until after the results of that election are certified by the Secretary of State pursuant to sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act.

- 2. [The] Each meeting regarding one or more precincts must be held in one of the following places in the following order of preference:
- (a) Any public building within the precinct if the meeting is for a single precinct, or any public building which is in reasonable proximity to the precincts and will accommodate a meeting of two or more precincts; or
- (b) Any private building within the precinct or one of the precincts.
- 3. [The] On the date set by the respective state central committees for giving notice of the precinct meetings, the county central committee shall give notice of [the] each meeting by:
- (a) Posting in a conspicuous place outside the building where the meeting is to be held; and
- (b) Publishing in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the precinct, published in the county, if any are so published,

[\(\rightarrow\) on the date set for giving notice of the meeting by the respective state central committees.] or, if consistent with the rules of the party, posting on an Internet website or other social media.

4. The notice must be **[printed] prepared** in conspicuous display advertising format of not less than 10 column inches, and must include the following language, or words of similar import:

# Notice to All Voters Registered IN THE (STATE NAME OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY)

Nevada state law requires each major political party, in every year during which a general election is held, to have [a] precinct [meeting held for each precinct.] meetings. All persons registered in the party and residing in [the] your precinct are entitled to attend the [precinct meeting.] meeting regarding your precinct. Delegates to your party's county convention will be elected at the meeting regarding your precinct by those in attendance. Set forth below are the time and place at which the meeting regarding your precinct





[meeting] will be held, together with the number of delegates to be elected from each precinct. If you wish to participate in the organization of your party for the coming 2 years, attend the meeting regarding your precinct. [meeting.]

5. The notice must specify:

(a) The date, time and place of the meeting; [and]

- (b) The number of delegates to the county convention to be chosen at the meeting  $\{\cdot,\cdot\}$ ; and
- (c) Any fees which may be charged to attend the county or state convention.

**Sec. 5.** NRS 293.137 is hereby amended to read as follows:

[Promptly] Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3, promptly at the time and place appointed therefor, the [mass] meeting regarding one or more precincts must be convened and organized. **[for each precinct.]** If access to the premises appointed for any such meeting is not available, the meeting may be convened at an accessible place immediately adjacent thereto. The meeting must be conducted openly and publicly and in such a manner that it is freely accessible to any registered voter of the party calling the meeting who resides in *one of* the [precinct] precincts and is desirous of attending the meeting, until the meeting is adjourned. At the meeting, the delegates to which the members of the party residing in *one of* the [precinct] precincts are entitled in the party's county convention must be elected pursuant to the rules of the state central committee of [that] the party. In presidential election years  $\boxminus$  in which a presidential preference primary *election is not held for the party*, the election of delegates may be a part of expressing preferences for candidates for the party's nomination for President of the United States if the rules of the party permit such conduct. The result of the election must be certified to the county convention of the party by the chair and the secretary of the meeting upon the forms specified in subsection  $\frac{3.1}{5}$ .

2. [At] Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3, at the precinct meetings, the delegates and alternates to the party's convention must be elected. If a meeting is not held for a particular precinct at the location specified, that precinct must be without representation at the county convention unless the meeting was scheduled, with proper notice, and no registered voter of the party appeared. In that case, the meeting shall be deemed to have been held and the position of delegate is vacant. If a position of delegate is vacant, it must be filled by the designated alternate, if any. If there is no designated alternate, the vacancy must be filled pursuant to the rules of the party, if the rules of the party so provide, or, if the rules of the party do not so provide, the county central committee shall





appoint a delegate from among the qualified members of the party residing in the precinct in which the vacancy occurred, and the secretary of the county central committee shall certify the appointed delegate to the county convention.

- 3. If consistent with the rules of the party, the delegates and alternates to the party's convention may be elected through a nomination process and may be chosen by precinct or at large. The number of delegates elected may not exceed the number authorized pursuant to NRS 293.133. In presidential election years in which a presidential preference primary election is held for the party, the rules must reasonably reflect the results of the presidential preference primary election. The results of the nomination process must be certified to the county convention of the party by the chair and the secretary overseeing the process upon the forms specified in subsection 5.
- 4. If the county central committee elects to nominate delegates and alternates to the party's convention pursuant to subsection 3, the county central committee shall give notice of the nomination process. The notice:
  - (a) May be given, without limitation, by:
- (1) Publishing in one or more newspapers of general circulation published in the precinct or county, if any; or
- (2) If consistent with the rules of the party, posting on an Internet website or other social media.
  - (b) Must include, without limitation:
    - (1) The name of the party;
    - (2) The purpose of the nomination process;
- (3) The process that will be used to elect delegates and alternates;
  - (4) Any relevant dates, times or locations for the process;
  - (5) The number of delegates to be chosen; and
- (6) Any fees which may be charged to attend the county or state convention.
- 5. The county central committee shall prepare and number serially a number of certificate forms equal to the total number of delegates to be elected throughout the county, and deliver the appropriate number to [each precinct meetings.] the precinct meetings. Each certificate must be in duplicate. The original must be given to the elected delegate, and the duplicate transmitted to the county central committee. The county central committee may provide for such forms to be prepared and delivered electronically pursuant to the rules of the party.
- [4.] 6. All duplicates must be delivered to the chair of the preliminary credentials committee of the county convention. Every





delegate who presents a certificate matching one of the duplicates must be seated without dispute.

- [5.] 7. Each state central committee shall adopt written rules governing, but not limited to, the following procedures:
- (a) The selection, rights and duties of committees of a convention;
  - (b) Challenges to credentials of delegates; and
  - (c) Majority and minority reports of committees.
  - Sec. 5.5. NRS 293.143 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 293.143 1. The county central committee of a major political party to be elected by the county convention of the party must consist of such number of members as may be determined by the convention, but each voting precinct, entitled to one or more delegates in the convention, is entitled to have at least one committeeman or committeewoman and no precinct may have more committeemen or committeewomen than its authorized number of delegates to the county convention.
- 2. After the county convention of the party, the composition of the county central committee may be changed, and during a presidential election year, must be changed, by the county central committee to reflect changes in the organization of precincts and in the number of registered voters of the party, using the same standards adopted by the party to elect delegates to the county convention.
  - **Sec. 6.** NRS 293.163 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 293.163 1. In presidential election years, on the call of a national party convention, but one set of party conventions and but one state convention shall be held on such respective dates and at such places as the state central committee of the party shall designate. If no earlier dates are fixed, the state convention shall be held 30 days before the date set for the national convention and the county conventions shall be held 60 days before the date set for the national convention.
- 2. Delegates to such conventions shall be selected in the same manner as prescribed in NRS 293.130 to 293.160, inclusive, and each convention shall have and exercise all of the power granted it under NRS 293.130 to 293.160, inclusive. In addition to such powers granted it, the state convention shall select the necessary delegates and alternates to the national convention of the party and, if consistent with the rules [and regulations] of the party, shall select the national committeeman and committeewoman of the party from the State of Nevada. Any rules of the party governing the election of delegates and alternates to the national convention of the party, or directing the votes of delegates at the national





convention, must reasonably reflect the results of any presidential preference primary election held for the party.

- 3. Until the end of the first ballot at the national convention of the party, a delegate or alternate to the national convention of the party is bound to vote at each stage of the presidential nomination process at the national convention in accordance with:
- (a) The preference expressed by the members of the state party through any presidential preference process prescribed by NRS 293.130 to 293.160, inclusive, or any presidential preference primary election held for the party; and
  - (b) Any rules of the party adopted pursuant to subsection 4.
- 4. The state central committee of the party shall adopt rules of the party to govern whether the delegates or alternates to the national convention of the party are bound to vote:
- (a) For the presidential candidate receiving the highest percentage of votes during the presidential candidate selection process; or
- (b) In a proportional manner in relation to the presidential preferences expressed during the presidential candidate selection process.
- 5. If a delegate violates the provisions of subsection 3, the delegate and the state party:
- (a) Shall each pay to the candidate for whom the vote of the delegate was bound, an amount equal to the fee paid by the candidate to file with the state party; or
- (b) If the candidate did not pay a fee to file with the state party, shall each pay a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$1,000 for each violation. This penalty must be recovered in a civil action brought in the name of the State of Nevada by the Attorney General in a court of competent jurisdiction. Any civil penalty collected pursuant to this section must be deposited by the Attorney General for credit to the State General Fund in the bank designated by the State Treasurer.
  - **Sec. 7.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - Sec. 8. (Deleted by amendment.)
- Sec. 9. (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 10.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - Sec. 11. (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 12.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - Sec. 13. (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 14.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 15.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - **Sec. 16.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 17.** (Deleted by amendment.)





- **Sec. 18.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 19.** (Deleted by amendment.)

- **Sec. 20.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 21.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - Sec. 22. (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 23.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - Sec. 24. (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 25.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 26.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 27.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 28.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 29.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- Sec. 30. (Deleted by amendment.)
  - **Sec. 31.** Chapter 298 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act.
  - Sec. 31.1. As used in sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in sections 31.2 to 31.6, inclusive, of this act have the meanings ascribed to them in those sections.
  - Sec. 31.2. "Military-overseas ballot" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 293D.050.
  - Sec. 31.3. "National committee" means the national committee of a party.
    - Sec. 31.4. "Party" means a major political party.
    - Sec. 31.5. "Qualified candidate" means a person who is qualified to be a party's nominee for President of the United States pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the United States and the rules of the party.
    - Sec. 31.6. "State central committee" means the state central committee of a party.
  - Sec. 32. 1. The Secretary of State may adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act.
  - 2. To the extent possible, the provisions of chapters 293, 293B and 293D of NRS governing the conduct of a primary election also govern the conduct of a presidential preference primary election and must be given effect to the extent that the provisions of chapters 293, 293B and 293D of NRS do not conflict with the provisions of sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act and the regulations adopted by the Secretary of State to carry out those provisions.
  - 3. If there is a conflict between the provisions of chapters 293, 293B and 293D of NRS and the provisions of 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act and the regulations adopted by the Secretary





of State to carry out those provisions, the provisions of sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act and the regulations adopted by the Secretary of State to carry out those provisions control.

- Sec. 33. 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a presidential preference primary election for each party must be held on the last Tuesday in February of a presidential election year to determine the preferences of the registered voters of the party regarding the party's nominee for President of the United States.
- 2. If a party wants to opt out of a presidential preference primary election, the chair of the national committee of the party must so notify the Secretary of State in writing. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the notice must be given by certified mail and must be received by the Secretary of State not later than 5 p.m. on October 25 of the year immediately preceding the presidential election year. If October 25 is not a business day, the notice must be received by the Secretary of State not later than 5 p.m. of the last business day immediately preceding October 25. Any such notice may be rescinded by a contrary notice given in the manner required by this subsection and more than one notice may be given, but the notice last received by the Secretary of State before the deadline established by this subsection shall be deemed to be the operative notice for the purposes of this section.
- 3. If a party does not opt out of a presidential preference primary election in the manner required by subsection 2 and:
- (a) More than one qualified candidate of the party files a declaration of candidacy pursuant to section 34 of this act, a presidential preference primary election for the party must be held pursuant to the provisions of sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act.
- (b) Only one qualified candidate or no qualified candidate of the party files a declaration of candidacy pursuant to section 34 of this act, a presidential preference primary election for the party must not be held. If only one qualified candidate of the party files a declaration of candidacy, the Secretary of State shall certify the name of the qualified candidate to:
  - (1) The state central committee; and
- (2) The national committee if necessary to comply with the rules of the party.
- Sec. 34. 1. If a person who is a qualified candidate to be a party's nominee for President of the United States wants to appear on the ballot for a presidential preference primary election that is held for the party, the person must, not earlier than November 1 and not later than 5 p.m. on November 15 of the year immediately preceding the presidential election year, file with the Secretary of





State a declaration of candidacy in the form prescribed by the Secretary of State.

2. A person who files a declaration of candidacy pursuant to this section is not required to file a declaration of candidacy or an

acceptance of candidacy pursuant to NRS 293.177.

Sec. 35. 1. If a presidential preference primary election is held for a party, the Secretary of State shall forward to each county clerk the name and mailing address of each qualified candidate of the party whose name must appear on the ballot for the presidential preference primary election for the party pursuant to sections 33 and 34 of this act.

- 2. A registered voter may cast a ballot at a presidential preference primary election for a party only if the registered voter designated on his or her application to register to vote an affiliation with the party. Such a registered voter may vote for only one qualified candidate on the ballot for the party as the voter's preference to be the nominee for President of the United States for the party.
- 3. If a person who is not such a registered voter wants to become a registered voter who may cast a ballot at a presidential preference primary election for a party, the person must register to vote and designate on his or her application to register to vote an affiliation with the party in the manner and within the time required by chapters 293 and 293D of NRS for a primary election.

Sec. 36. 1. In conducting a presidential preference primary election that is held for a party, the county clerk:

(a) Shall not distribute sample ballots for the presidential preference primary election.

(b) Shall not establish any polling places for early voting by personal appearance for the presidential preference primary election, and no registered voter of the party may request to vote early for the presidential preference primary election.

(c) Shall permit voting by registered voters of the party by absent ballot and military-overseas ballot for the presidential preference primary election in the manner and within the time required by chapters 293 and 293D of NRS for voting by absent ballot and military-overseas ballot for a primary election.

(d) Shall establish polling places for voting by registered voters of the party on the day of the presidential preference primary election. The polling places must open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. on the day of the presidential preference primary election.

2. A registered voter of the party who is a registered voter in the county and who is entitled to cast a ballot at the presidential preference primary election for the party may do so at any polling





place in the county on the day of the presidential preference primary election.

- Sec. 37. If a presidential preference primary election is held for one or more parties, the cost of the presidential preference primary election is a charge against the State and must be paid from the Reserve for Statutory Contingency Account upon recommendation by the Secretary of State and approval by the State Board of Examiners.
- Sec. 38. 1. Immediately after a presidential preference primary election is held for a party, the Secretary of State shall compile the returns for each qualified candidate of the party whose name appeared on the ballot for the party.
- 2. The Secretary of State shall make out and file in his or her office an abstract of the returns and shall certify the number of votes received by each qualified candidate of the party to:
  - (a) The state central committee; and
- (b) The national committee if necessary to comply with the rules of the party.
  - **Sec. 39.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - **Sec. 40.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - **Sec. 41.** (Deleted by amendment.)
  - **Sec. 42.** NRS 353.264 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 353.264 1. The Reserve for Statutory Contingency Account is hereby created in the State General Fund.
- 2. The State Board of Examiners shall administer the Reserve for Statutory Contingency Account. The money in the Account must be expended only for:
- (a) The payment of claims which are obligations of the State pursuant to NRS 41.03435, 41.0347, 62I.025, 176.485, 179.310, 212.040, 212.050, 212.070, 281.174, 282.290, 282.315, 288.203, 293.253, 293.405, 353.120, 353.262, 412.154 and 475.235 [;] and section 37 of this act;
- (b) The payment of claims which are obligations of the State pursuant to:
- (1) Chapter 472 of NRS arising from operations of the Division of Forestry of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources directly involving the protection of life and property; and
  - (2) NRS 7.155, 34.750, 176A.640, 179.225 and 213.153,
- except that claims may be approved for the respective purposes listed in this paragraph only when the money otherwise appropriated for those purposes has been exhausted;
- (c) The payment of claims which are obligations of the State pursuant to NRS 41.0349 and 41.037, but only to the extent that the





money in the Fund for Insurance Premiums is insufficient to pay the claims; and

- (d) The payment of claims which are obligations of the State pursuant to NRS 535.030 arising from remedial actions taken by the State Engineer when the condition of a dam becomes dangerous to the safety of life or property.
- 3. The State Board of Examiners may authorize its Clerk or a person designated by the Clerk, under such circumstances as it deems appropriate, to approve, on behalf of the Board, the payment of claims from the Reserve for Statutory Contingency Account. For the purpose of exercising any authority granted to the Clerk of the State Board of Examiners or to the person designated by the Clerk pursuant to this subsection, any statutory reference to the State Board of Examiners relating to such a claim shall be deemed to refer to the Clerk of the Board or the person designated by the Clerk.
  - **Sec. 43.** (Deleted by amendment.)
- **Sec. 44.** The Secretary of State shall adopt such regulations and prescribe such forms as are required by or necessary to carry out the provisions of sections 31.1 to 38, inclusive, of this act so that the regulations and forms are effective and available for distribution and use as soon as practicable before the next presidential election year.
  - **Sec. 45.** This act becomes effective on July 1, 2015.





