

The Florida Senate
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Ethics and Elections Committee

BILL: PCS/SB's 960 & 1010

INTRODUCER: Ethics and Elections Committee, Senators Constantine and Ring

SUBJECT: Presidential Preference Primary

DATE: March 5, 2007

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Fox	Rubinas	EE	Pre-meeting
2.			JU	
3.			TA	
4.			RC	
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

Proposed Committee Substitute for Senate Bills 960 and 1010 moves the date of the Florida presidential preference primary from the second Tuesday in March (March 11, 2008) to the third Tuesday in February (February 19, 2008) of a presidential election year.

The bill conforms various dates associated with the presidential preference primary.

This bill substantially amends section 103.101 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The Florida presidential preference primary is held on the second Tuesday in March in each presidential election year. s. 103.101(1), F.S. By the time Florida's presidential preference primary was held in the last two nominating cycles (2000 & 2004), the eventual Republican and Democratic nominees had already been determined and the leading candidates were running essentially unopposed.

In recent years, many states have moved up their presidential primary elections to take advantage of the national attention coveted by the early primary states. The 2008 primary schedule is still in flux. The National Association of Secretaries of State's 2008 Presidential Nominating Calendar¹ looked like this (as of April 9, 2007):

¹ <http://www.nass.org/releases/2008%20Presidential%20Primaries%20Calendar.pdf>

JANUARY 2008

- **January 8:** District of Columbia*
- **January 14:** Iowa (caucuses)
- **January 19:** Nevada (caucuses)
- **January 22:** New Hampshire (primary)*, *Wyoming (GOP caucuses)*
- **January 29:** *Florida, South Carolina (Dem. Primary)*

FEBRUARY 2008

- **February (Date TBD):** *Michigan, North Dakota (caucuses)*
- **February 2:** *South Carolina (GOP Primary)*
- **February 5:** Alabama, *Arizona*, Arkansas, California, *Colorado (caucuses)*, *Connecticut*, Delaware, *Georgia, Illinois, Kansas*, Missouri, *Montana*, New Jersey, *New Mexico*, New York, *North Carolina*, Oklahoma, *Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas*, Utah
- **February 9:** Louisiana
- **February 10:** Maine (Dem. Caucuses)
- **February 12:** *Maryland*, Virginia*
- **February 19:** Wisconsin
- **February 26:** Hawaii (Dem. Caucuses), Idaho (Dem. Caucuses)

If Florida were to wait until the second Tuesday in March to conduct its 2008 primary, likely more than half the states will have already conducted their election and all but certainly have determined the ultimate nominees.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The Proposed Committee Substitute changes the date of Florida's Presidential Preference Primary from the second Tuesday in March to the third Tuesday in February of a presidential election year. Dates with respect to the selection of candidates or delegates of political parties whose names are to appear on the ballot are changed to conform. In addition, the dates for delegates to qualify are changed to conform.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Many municipalities have elections which are currently scheduled to be held on the second Tuesday in March and they enjoy a cost savings by holding their elections in conjunction with the Presidential Preference Primary. Therefore, the cost for holding these municipal elections is likely to increase, unless the municipalities change the dates of their elections.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

While this bill may provide Floridians with a greater voice in the presidential nominating process, it has been widely reported that a compressed, front-loaded primary schedule will likely benefit better-known, better-funded candidates.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
