



Committee on Ethics & Elections

**Thursday, February 8, 2007
10:00 AM- 11:00 AM
12 HOB**

Meeting Packet

**Marco Rubio
Speaker**

**Pat Patterson
Chair**

Committee Meeting Notice

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Speaker Marco Rubio

Committee on Ethics & Elections

Start Date and Time: Thursday, February 08, 2007 10:00 am

End Date and Time: Thursday, February 08, 2007 11:00 am

Location: 12 HOB

Duration: 1.00 hrs

Consideration of the following bill(s):

HB 537 Presidential Preference Primary by Rivera

NOTICE FINALIZED on 02/01/2007 16:17 by DXV

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Promote personal responsibility – The bill is designed to increase Florida's voice in the selection of presidential candidates of both parties. For the first time in recent history, Florida's voters will be heard with this change in the law.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

The bill as currently written would place Florida's presidential preference primary on January 29, 2008, one week after the current New Hampshire presidential preference primary. The New Hampshire Secretary of State has the ability under New Hampshire law to move up its primary so that it occurs seven days before any other state's primary. It is possible that the New Hampshire election could be moved up even into late 2007.

New Hampshire Law RSA 653:9 provides:

"The presidential primary election shall be held on the second Tuesday in March or on a Tuesday selected by the secretary of state which is 7 days or more immediately preceding the date on which any other state shall hold a similar election, whichever is earlier, of each year when a president of the United States is to be elected or the year previous. Said primary shall be held in connection with the regular March town meeting or, if held on any other day, at a special election called by the secretary of state for that purpose."

Challenges to Moving the Primary Date

Early voting in Florida begins on the 15th day before an election.¹ With early voting, Florida would begin to vote in its primary election on January 14, 2008, the same day of the Iowa caucus. County supervisors of elections (supervisors) can send out absentee ballots as soon as they are printed, following the second Friday in November, the date that this bill would require party delegates to be qualified. The supervisors may begin tabulating absentee ballots four days before election day, but may not release any totals until the polls close at 7 p.m. on election day, January 29, 2008.

An earlier primary election date may present the supervisors with certain challenges for staffing the polls. Florida law requires poll workers to receive 3 hours of training before each election. If a change in the New Hampshire primary date moves Florida's primary into the holiday season, supervisors may have difficulty recruiting sufficient poll workers. If the election falls within the holiday season, many churches and community buildings that would normally be available for polling locations may be booked for holiday functions.

Effect of Political Party Rules on a Change in the Primary Date

Republican Party rules are established and adopted at the party convention every 4 years. According to current party rules, if any state has its primary before February 5th, 2008, and *after* the call to the national convention, it may lose up to 90% of its delegates, thereby reducing

¹ s. 101.657(1)(d), F.S. (2006).

Florida's delegation from 114 to 12 delegates.² The amount of delegates that Florida would lose may depend on the interpretation of what constitutes a violation of the rules. A reduction in Florida's delegates might prompt the Florida delegation to challenge the delegations from Iowa, Nevada, New Mexico, New Hampshire, and North Carolina who would also be violating the same rule.

Democratic Party rules can be changed between conventions by its Rules & Bylaws committee. On July 22, 2006, the National Democratic Party's Rules and Bylaws Committee recommended the following 2008 primary schedule:

- Iowa Caucus - January 14, 2008
- Nevada Caucus - January 19, 2008,
- New Hampshire Primary - January 22, 2008,
- South Carolina Primary - January 29, 2006, and
- Other states beginning February 5, 2008.

The Democratic National Committee approved this rule on August 19, 2006. The new rules also impose new sanctions on presidential candidates if they campaign in states that do not comply with the new rules. Campaigning is defined as making personal appearances in the state, hiring campaign workers, and buying advertising, etc. They will also suffer a reduction in delegates to the national convention similar to that of the Republican Party.

It is not known if the national parties will change or enforce these new rules in order to avoid alienating a pivotal state such as Florida. Some political experts believe a threatened reduction in delegates is merely a bluff.³

Florida is Demographically Representative of the Nation

In the last two presidential elections, Florida has been one of the few states that have closely mirrored the final nationwide results.⁴ This means money spent to win the Florida primary will also benefit candidates in the general election.

While Iowa and New Hampshire may reflect the nation in election outcomes, they don't reflect the nation's ethnic diversity. Iowa and New Hampshire have less than 3% black or Hispanic populations. In fact, New Hampshire's black population is a fraction of 1%. Florida, on the

² Rule 16(2) provides:

If a state or state party violates the Rules of the Republican Party relating to the timing of the selection process resulting in the election of delegates or alternate delegates to the national convention **after** the call to the national convention is issued, then the number of delegates to the national convention from that state shall be reduced by ninety percent (90%), and the corresponding alternate delegates shall also be reduced.

(emphasis added.)

Rule 16(1) provides:

If a state or state party violates the Rules of the Republican Party relating to the timing of the selection process resulting in the election of delegates or alternate delegates to the national convention **before** the call to the national convention is issued, then the number of delegates to the national convention from that state shall be reduced by fifty percent (50%).

(emphasis added.)

³ Comments from Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "The parties, he said, are not going to want to snub vote-rich states such as Florida. And by the time the convention rolls around, having half as many delegates isn't going to matter much because a nominee already will have been decided." *Orlando Sentinel*, Jan. 26, 2007.

⁴ Florida's presidential elections results for 2004 were: Bush 52%; Kerry 47%. The national results were: Bush 50%; Kerry 48%.

other hand, more closely tracks the nation in its ethnic diversity. The nation is currently 75% white, 12% black and 16% Hispanic – similarly, Florida is 78% white, 15% black and 17% Hispanic.

New Hampshire has the 4th highest medium income in the nation. The average person in New Hampshire earns \$10,000 more income than the average American. Florida is 27th in terms of percentage of people over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree. Florida is 25th in terms of median home value. New Hampshire has the fewest people in the nation that are below the poverty level. Florida is 20th in terms of poverty level. Florida clearly reflects the demographic diversity of the nation.

Currently, a small, non-diverse group of citizens (the voters of Iowa and New Hampshire) have a disproportionate impact on the nomination of presidential candidates. While these states provide the benefits of beginning the presidential election in small communities that can be easily traversed, a large and diverse state should follow them. Without a bellwether state such as Florida following on the heels of Iowa and New Hampshire, many groups of Americans may continue to be denied a voice in selecting the most qualified presidential candidates.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 103.101, F.S., to change the date that the presidential preference primary will be held in Florida to the first Tuesday in February, or the first Tuesday immediately following the New Hampshire presidential preference primary, whichever occurs first; also makes conforming changes to dates for submission of presidential candidates to the Secretary of State.

Section 2. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2007.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

This bill should have a positive effect on any local sales tax, rental car and hotel tax revenues.

2. Expenditures:

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

This bill should have a positive effect on sales tax, rental car and hotel tax revenues.

2. Expenditures:

The cost of holding a statewide election at the polls is about \$19 million, traditionally paid by the counties. This would not change under this bill. Some cities have concurrent local elections to save money and may need to coordinate their election dates so that they may continue to realize these cost savings.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

Holding Florida's primary earlier in the year is accompanied by a host of economic benefits. The media, candidates, and special interest groups will spend millions of dollars for political

advertising, food, lodging, and transportation. The economic benefits to New Hampshire alone are currently estimated at over \$250 million dollars.⁵ By comparison, Florida is more than six times larger than the State of New Hampshire.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision: Election laws are exempt from the mandates requirements of Art. VII, s. 18(a), Florida Constitution.

2. Other:

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY: None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

D. STATEMENT OF THE SPONSOR

This statement serves to address two issues raised in the staff analysis for HB 537 related to the Florida presidential preference primary: Challenges to Moving the Primary Date and Effect of Political Party Rules on a Change in the Primary Date.

With respect to challenges involved in moving the primary date, Secretary of State Kurt Browning recently testified before the House Ethics and Elections Committee that the presidential primary dates contemplated in HB 537, under the current condition of holding the New Hampshire primary on January 22nd, do not pose obstacles for implementation by supervisors of elections. If New Hampshire decided to move its primary earlier than January 22nd, it would then possibly be pre-empting the Iowa caucuses currently scheduled for January 14th. Should this highly unlikely scenario crystallize and Florida be placed in a position to move its presidential primary into early or mid-January, then supervisors of elections should make preparations to accommodate potential conflicts associated with holiday functions at churches or community buildings. Supervisors of elections are accustomed to dealing with such potential conflicts under current early voting requirements which overlap weekend days of worship. In terms of the actual election day, any Tuesday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, holiday season or not, should not pose an insurmountable obstacle in terms of potential conflicts with existing polling places.

In terms of the effect of political party rules on a change in the primary date, the sponsor of

⁵ "The overall value of primary-related media exposure, in terms of tourism promotion and business development, is \$33 million for one year leading up to the primary... The one-year economic impact of the 2000 primary, including \$33 million in publicity benefits, was \$264 million." Library and Archives of New Hampshire's Political Tradition at the New Hampshire State Library, found at www.nhprimary.nhsl.lib.nh.us.

HB 537 readily concedes that both the Democrat and Republican parties have the authority and ability to sanction Florida if the presidential primary is moved before February 5th. The most practical sanction at the disposal of the Democrat and Republican parties is the reduction of the number of delegates credentialed for their respective national conventions. As most observers of presidential politics would agree, national conventions in the modern era have become pro-forma exercises organized to coronate a pre-determined presidential nominee rather than a genuine selection or nomination process where the outcome is in question. The role of a delegate in a modern day political party convention has been relegated to that of rubber-stamping the decision made in each delegate's respective state during that state's presidential primary. Under these conditions, priority should be placed on the role Florida will play in selecting a presidential nominee rather than on the opportunities for a select few Floridians to attend a national convention.

Finally, it is important to note that Florida, a state which has decided presidential elections and is considered competitive by both major parties, is widely recognized as a leading state for fundraising efforts by presidential candidates. If presidential candidates are going to utilize Florida for the extraction of financial resources that under the current campaign format are utilized in states such as Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, then it should seem reasonable for the people of Florida to expect presidential candidates to also dedicate time and resources campaigning in the State of Florida.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the presidential preference primary;
 3 amending s. 103.101, F.S.; revising the dates relating to
 4 the presidential preference primary; providing an
 5 effective date.

6
 7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

8
 9 Section 1. Subsections (1), (2), and (6) of section
 10 103.101, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

11 103.101 Presidential preference primary.--

12 (1) Each political party other than a minor political
 13 party shall, on the first ~~second~~ Tuesday in February ~~March~~ in
 14 each year the number of which is a multiple of 4, or the first
 15 Tuesday immediately following the New Hampshire presidential
 16 preference primary, whichever occurs first, elect one person to
 17 be the candidate for nomination of such party for President of
 18 the United States or select delegates to the national nominating
 19 convention, as provided by party rule.

20 (2) There shall be a Presidential Candidate Selection
 21 Committee composed of the Secretary of State, who shall be a
 22 nonvoting chair; the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
 23 the President of the Senate; the minority leader of each house
 24 of the Legislature; and the chair of each political party
 25 required to have a presidential preference primary under this
 26 section.

27 (a) By October ~~December~~ 31 of the year preceding the
 28 Florida presidential preference primary, each political party

29 shall submit to the Secretary of State a list of its
 30 presidential candidates to be placed on the presidential
 31 preference primary ballot or candidates entitled to have
 32 delegates appear on the presidential preference primary ballot.
 33 The Secretary of State shall prepare and publish a list of the
 34 names of the presidential candidates submitted. The Secretary of
 35 State shall submit such list of names of presidential candidates
 36 to the selection committee on the first Tuesday after the first
 37 Monday in November of the ~~January~~ each year preceding the a
 38 ~~presidential preference primary election is held~~. Each person
 39 designated as a presidential candidate shall have his or her
 40 name appear, or have his or her delegates' names appear, on the
 41 presidential preference primary ballot unless all committee
 42 members of the same political party as the candidate agree to
 43 delete such candidate's name from the ballot. The selection
 44 committee shall meet in Tallahassee on the first Tuesday after
 45 the first Monday in November of the ~~January~~ each year preceding
 46 the a presidential preference primary ~~is held~~. The selection
 47 committee shall publicly announce and submit to the Department
 48 of State no later than 5 p.m. on the following day the names of
 49 presidential candidates who shall have their names appear, or
 50 who are entitled to have their delegates' names appear, on the
 51 presidential preference primary ballot. The Department of State
 52 shall immediately notify each presidential candidate designated
 53 by the committee. Such notification shall be in writing, by
 54 registered mail, with return receipt requested.

55 (b) Any presidential candidate whose name does not appear
 56 on the list submitted to the Secretary of State may request that

57 | the selection committee place his or her name on the ballot.
 58 | Such request shall be made in writing to the Secretary of State
 59 | no later than the second Tuesday after the first Monday in
 60 | November of the year preceding the presidential preference
 61 | primary January.

62 | (c) If a presidential candidate makes a request that the
 63 | selection committee reconsider placing the candidate's name on
 64 | the ballot, the selection committee will reconvene no later than
 65 | the second Thursday after the first Monday in November of the
 66 | year preceding the presidential preference primary January to
 67 | reconsider placing the candidate's name on the ballot. The
 68 | Department of State shall immediately notify such candidate of
 69 | the selection committee's decision.

70 | (6) Delegates must qualify no later than the second Friday
 71 | in November of the year preceding the presidential preference
 72 | primary January in the manner provided by party rule.

73 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.

HOUSE AMENDMENT FOR COUNCIL/COMMITTEE PURPOSES

Amendment No. (for drafter's use only)

Bill No. 537

COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

ADOPTED ___ (Y/N)
ADOPTED AS AMENDED ___ (Y/N)
ADOPTED W/O OBJECTION ___ (Y/N)
FAILED TO ADOPT ___ (Y/N)
WITHDRAWN ___ (Y/N)
OTHER _____

1 Council/Committee hearing bill: Ethics and Elections

2 Representative(s) Rivera offered the following:

3
4 **Amendment (with directory amendments)**

5 Remove line(s) 9 and insert:

6 Section 1. Subsections (1), (2), (3), and (6) of section

7
8 Between line(s) 69 and 70 insert:

9
10 (3) A candidate's name shall be printed on the
11 presidential preference primary ballot unless the candidate
12 submits to the Department of State, prior to the second Tuesday
13 after the first Monday in November of the year preceding the
14 presidential preference primary January, an affidavit stating
15 that he or she is not now, and does not presently intend to
16 become, a candidate for President at the upcoming nominating
17 convention. If a candidate withdraws pursuant to this
18 subsection, the Department of State shall notify the state
19 executive committee that the candidate's name will not be placed
20 on the ballot. The Department of State shall, no later than the
21 third Tuesday after the first Monday in November of the year

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HOUSE AMENDMENT FOR COUNCIL/COMMITTEE PURPOSES

Amendment No. (for drafter's use only)

22 preceding the presidential preference primary January, certify
23 to each supervisor of elections the name of each candidate for
24 political party nomination to be printed on the ballot.

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Orlando Sentinel

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/state/orl-flprimary2607jan26,0,7056313.story?coll=orl-news-headlines-state>

Florida wants early primary, more clout

Tamara Lytle and John Kennedy
Sentinel Staff Writers

January 26, 2007

WASHINGTON -- Already a vote-rich megastate, Florida is looming as an even bigger prize in 2008 as lawmakers prepare to move up the state's presidential-primary date to increase its political influence.

A bipartisan group of legislators wants to change the state's presidential primary from March to as early as Jan. 29. Doing so, they say, could make Florida part of a group of states that want to have more influence over who is chosen to run for president.

Others aren't so sure, including national Democratic and Republican party leaders, who fear a war between the states seeking earlier primaries. They're so adamant, in fact, they're threatening to strip Florida and the other states of half of their delegates to the party conventions.

If California, Illinois and New Jersey also push forward their primaries, some candidates fear a flock of front-loaded, costly contests would determine a nominee sooner than ever. That could leave parties saddled with candidates who were chosen so quickly their faults didn't emerge until too late, said Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "There won't be any time for buyer's remorse," he said.

The Democratic National Committee has complicated matters even more by proposing that Nevada hold a caucus between the Jan. 14 Iowa caucus and the Jan. 22 New Hampshire primary, and South Carolina hold a primary just days after New Hampshire.

The committee's goal was to showcase states with more minority voters. But the move has led to "chaos," said William Galvin, secretary of the commonwealth of Massachusetts and head of a primary committee for the National Association of Secretaries of State.

Holding numerous primaries so early in the year runs the risk of turning off voters because it would mean a longer general-election season, said Sabato. Even a political junkie would not be able to stand such a drawn-out campaign, he said.

But the Florida Legislature seems determined to move up its primary date. The measure, expected to come up in the spring, would advance the primary to either a week after New Hampshire's

contest, which is currently scheduled for Jan. 22, or to Feb. 5, whichever comes first.

Florida's last presidential primary -- in March 2004 -- was six weeks after New Hampshire's. And it came after 28 states and the District of Columbia held caucuses or primaries and the nominations of George W. Bush and John Kerry were virtually certain.

One weapon available to the national parties would be to strip Florida of half of its convention delegates, but Sabato thinks that's "a bluff."

The parties, he said, aren't going to want to snub vote-rich states such as Florida. And by the time the conventions come around, having half as many delegates isn't going to matter much because a nominee already will have been decided.

Sabato expects many states -- such as California and Florida -- to move their primaries. Feb. 5 could become something of a national primary with so many of them holding votes.

Many political scientists think that would benefit the best-known candidates.

But Sabato said it would just give the winners of the New Hampshire primary and the Iowa caucuses all the more momentum. And those small states, where voters take their early influence very seriously, have a long history of giving dark-horse candidates a chance, he said.

Larger states with expensive media markets force candidates to begin campaigning very early. And in Florida, that has already begun.

In the past few weeks, former U.S. Sen. John Edwards, a North Carolina Democrat, has visited Central Florida. So have U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.; former Gov. Mitt Romney, a Massachusetts Republican; and U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan.

But the debate over the primary date is not affecting their strategies. They would be here regardless of when the election was held.

Still, many Floridians are convinced an earlier date would give the state a louder voice in choosing the next nominee.

Lawmakers supporting the move -- including House Speaker Marco Rubio, R-West Miami, and House Democratic Leader Dan Gelber of Miami Beach -- downplay the risk of being punished.

They say the political parties would be reluctant to punish a major state like Florida. And even if they did, many say, Floridians would still feel as though they made more of a difference in determining a nominee than under the current calendar.

"Why wouldn't we do it?" Republican Gov. Charlie Crist said this week.

Tamara Lytle can be reached at tlytle@tribune.com or 202-824-8255. John Kennedy, who reported from Tallahassee, can be reached at jkennedy@orlandosentinel.com or 850-222-5564.

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January 25, 2007

Big States' Push for Earlier Vote Scrambles Race

By ADAM NAGOURNEY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24 — As many as four big states — California, Florida, Illinois and New Jersey — are likely to move up their 2008 presidential primaries to early next February, further upending an already unsettled nominating process and forcing candidates of both parties to rethink their campaign strategies, party officials said Wednesday.

The changes, which seem all but certain to be enacted by state legislatures, mean that the presidential candidates face the prospect of going immediately from an ordered series of early contests in relatively small states in January to a single-day, coast-to-coast battlefield in February, encompassing some of the most expensive advertising markets in the nation.

The changes would appear to benefit well-financed and already familiar candidates and diminish the prospects of those with less money and name recognition going into such a highly compressed series of contests early next year.

Associates of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the New York Democrat, and Senator John McCain, the Arizona Republican, said that should either of them stumble early on, the respective party primaries in California and New Jersey — two states that would seem particularly hospitable to them — could offer an expensive but welcome firewall.

But at the same time, states like New Jersey and California could provide an opening for Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, who faces the daunting prospect of overcoming resistance among social conservatives in the Republican contests in Iowa and South Carolina in January.

And several party analysts suggested that having such delegate-rich states at stake on Feb. 5 could persuade candidates who might otherwise step out after a defeat in Iowa or New Hampshire to press on in hopes of a dramatic recovery on the new Super Tuesday.

“I think this is huge,” said John Weaver, a senior adviser to Mr. McCain. “And the unintended consequences could be even bigger.”

While officials in both parties are wary of the changes, final say over the calendar rests with the states. Advisers to Republican and Democratic presidential candidates say they have come to view substantial changes as inevitable and they have begun to plan accordingly.

“We don’t set the calendar, and we don’t control the calendar, but we are going to compete aggressively in all these states,” said Patti Solis Doyle, who is the manager of Mrs. Clinton’s exploratory presidential effort. “And I will also tell you we have the resources and the organization to compete in all those states.”

The developments mark the latest upheaval in a political calendar already in disarray. The Democratic Party voted last year to allow Nevada and South Carolina to move their nominating contests into the narrow period at the beginning of the process that once was confined to just Iowa’s caucus and New Hampshire’s primary.

But New Hampshire officials, protective of their first-in-the-nation primary status, have responded by saying they will schedule their primary as early as it takes, even before Jan. 1, to protect its traditional role. And no one seems to know where the scramble for influence among the states will end.

“This is completely out of control,” said William F. Galvin, the Massachusetts secretary of state. He is the leader of a National Association of Secretaries of State committee that is monitoring this movement and trying to push back against it.

“The issue has been bad,” Mr. Galvin said. “But it’s never been as bad as it has been this year. In New Hampshire, they are going to be singing Christmas carols and voting.”

The developments suggest that the national parties are losing any control they have had over the calendar by which they will nominate presidential candidates in 2008. California, New Jersey, Florida and Illinois are most likely to move their primaries early, probably to Feb. 5, joining at least five smaller states that had already scheduled primaries for that day. Illinois lawmakers are talking about moving their primary to help Senator Barack Obama, a Democratic contender; if history is any guide, it is possible that the other candidates might decline to compete in the home state of one of their rivals.

But final votes have not been taken, and state officials said it was possible they could end up going even earlier. Florida in particular has talked about holding its primary seven days after New Hampshire’s, at the risk of sanctions from the Democratic National Committee. And officials said that other states, viewing this surge to the front of the pack, could join in as well.

The Democratic National Committee had adopted a new calendar last year, reducing the once dominant influence of Iowa and New Hampshire, after years of consideration. The Republican Party has so far deferred to Democrats on the changes, waiting to see the outcome of the back-and-forth.

Democrats and Republicans said that the changes would be the latest step in the evolution of a presidential nominating system that increasingly seems resistant to the kind of dark-horse presidential bid that was possible back when small states like Iowa and New Hampshire enjoyed such influence over the nominating process.

It has sowed unease and confusion among campaign staff members as they have tried to measure its implications, and has prompted them to begin making moves now to prepare for a whole different nominating system. While conventional wisdom is that the best-known candidates would benefit, views about how the shift might play out vary among strategists.

Tad Devine, a Democratic consultant who was a senior adviser to Democratic presidential candidates in 2004 and 2000, said the calendar changes, combined with the presence on the Democratic side of three strong and well-financed candidates — Mr. Obama, Mrs. Clinton and, probably, John Edwards, the former North Carolina senator — could mean that the battle for the nomination drags on for months.

“I think there’s a very good chance that we are going to be sitting here at the end of next March saying, ‘How are people going to put together a majority of delegates with 80 percent of the delegates gone?’ ” he said. “The nominating process in 2008 is not a little different. It’s fundamentally different.”

And the campaigns are adjusting accordingly. Mr. McCain recently hired Steve Schmidt, a former Bush campaign operative who managed the re-election bid of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, the California Republican, in no small part because of what he saw as Mr. Schmidt’s command of California politics.

Similarly, Mitt Romney, the former governor of Massachusetts, has turned his attention to Florida, where he sees a strong prospect of knocking out Mr. McCain by appealing to social conservatives, and installed a campaign team that includes two top political advisers to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. He is about to announce the hiring of more than six top aides in Florida.

Last weekend, Mr. Romney went to New Jersey, where his aides also think he could make a strong appeal.

“The focus of our efforts publicly have been in Iowa, South Carolina, Michigan, New Hampshire,” said Kevin Madden, Mr. Romney’s press secretary. “But we are very well organized in Florida.”

In the case of Florida, Democrats and Republicans have welcomed the prospect of having to spend heavily on an early primary because that could prove an early investment for the general campaign, as well, considering how competitive that state is. That is not the case in California or New Jersey, two expensive states that have been solidly Democratic in recent presidential races.

And some Democrats disputed the notion that a California victory could help someone recover from a poor showing in the early states. Nick Baldick, a senior adviser to Mr. Edwards, noted that Howard Dean spent heavily in states that held their primaries after New Hampshire and Iowa and never recovered.

“All that mattered was momentum and winning in Iowa,” Mr. Baldick said Wednesday. “I would argue that more states on Feb. 5 makes that exponentially more true. That if you don’t have momentum going into states like those four big states, then forget it and just go home.”