

Two Problems With Caucuses

Robert Gehrke, August 18, 2023: “Ditching the 2024 presidential primary means fewer Utah Republicans will nominate a candidate,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*

This source is from a local newspaper in Salt Lake City. Robert Gehrke is a political reporter. [Changed for easier reading.]

There are **two** problems with the Republican decision to use caucuses. **First**, turnout at caucus meetings is much, much lower than turnout for primary elections. That means that fewer Republicans will pick the party’s favorite candidate. In the 2016 caucuses, around 177,000 Republicans went. In 2020, when the party used a direct primary instead because of the pandemic, almost double that number participated (345,000). There are a lot of reasons why caucus turnout is lower. Jobs, kids’ soccer games, and other family commitments make it harder to show up on a specific night than to submit a ballot. A lot of Republicans end up being left out.

That leads to the **second** problem: The people who do show up to caucuses have usually been much more conservative than other Republican voters. Several times, the caucus-chosen delegates have supported more extreme candidates than the ones who have ended up winning general elections. The delegates don’t represent the average voter. Governor Spencer Cox said that in past elections, “the delegates did not represent the Republican Party at all” because not enough people go to caucuses. However, he said he supports the party’s decision to use a caucus anyway because it saves money and could encourage more Republicans to participate next time.

GOP Chair Robert Axson disagrees with the idea that the caucus system leaves people out. He said, “I think the caucus creates a fair playing field for all the candidates.” Axson also said that any Republican who wants to participate can, and that the party will try to help as many people as possible vote.

But if we really want more people participating, we know how to achieve that: Hold a traditional primary election.

Link: [Ditching the 2024 presidential primary means fewer Utah Republicans will nominate a candidate, Robert Gehrke says](#)