

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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

BILL: SB 2574

SPONSOR: Senator King

SUBJECT: Presidential Preference Primary

DATE: March 30, 2000 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Bradshaw</u>	<u>Bradshaw</u>	<u>EE</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 2574 changes the date of the Presidential Preference Primary from the second Tuesday in March to the *fourth Tuesday in January* of the presidential election year. The bill conforms various dates associated with the Presidential Preference Primary.

This bill substantially amends section 103.101, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Under current law, the Presidential Preference Primary is held on the second Tuesday in March in each year the number of which is a multiple of four. s. 103.101(1), F.S. In 2000, Florida's Presidential Preference Primary was held on Tuesday, March 14. As a result of legislative changes, California and New York, along with a number of other states, held their Presidential Preference Primary on March 7, 2000. By the time Florida's Presidential Preference Primary was held, the Republican and Democratic nominees had been determined and the leading candidates were running essentially unopposed.

In recent years, many states have moved their Presidential Primary elections to take advantage of the national attention coveted by the early primary states. This "frontloading" has caused the leaders of both the Republican and Democratic parties and the National Association of Secretaries of State to begin discussing ideas for amending the primary calendar.

The National Association of Secretaries of State has endorsed a plan for regional primaries. Under this plan, the country would be divided into four regions, with each region holding their primary in either March, April, May or June. The regions would rotate months every four years. Iowa and New Hampshire would continue to hold their primary or caucus prior to the beginning of the rotation schedule.

Other ideas being discussed include (1) grouping states by time zone, with a rotation system similar to that under the regional plan, and (2) the “Delaware plan,” which allows smaller states to vote first and larger states to vote last.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Senate Bill 2574 changes the date of Florida’s Presidential Preference Primary from the *second Tuesday in March* to the *fourth Tuesday in January* of the presidential election year. All dates with respect to the selection and certification 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. Since the next Presidential Preference Primary is not scheduled until 2004, it is unclear how this change would impact Florida’s position as a result of future legislative changes in other states and on the national level.

Both major political parties have rules regarding delegates. The Republican National Committee offers additional delegates to states holding primaries later in the process. The Democratic Party rule prohibits primaries, caucuses, or conventions prior to the first Tuesday in March, except in Iowa, New Hampshire and Maine. If the Democratic Party continues to restrict primary dates by party rule, it is unclear if Florida’s delegates to the Democratic National Convention would be seated if Florida’s primary date is moved to January.

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:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
