

Senator Mark Harris
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Idaho Senate Reaches 60% Support, Awaits House Action on Consolidated Presidential Primary

BOISE, IDAHO – September 6, 2023 – Progress is being made in the Idaho Legislature's efforts to drive greater voter participation in the upcoming Presidential Primary. On Tuesday, the Idaho State Senate achieved the 60% support needed to convene a special session and address the consolidation of the upcoming presidential primary with the scheduled May 2024 primary election.

The goal of consolidating all primary elections to the May primary date during the First Regular Session of the 67th Legislature was to increase voter turnout and make sure that the nomination process used Idaho taxpayers' money responsibly and effectively. The consolidation would save approximately \$2.7 million in taxpayer funds.

The proposed legislation seeks to empower political parties to determine their preferred methods for nominating candidates while allowing the Idaho Secretary of State to be informed of their intentions by October 1. This initiative prioritizes voter participation by enabling a presidential primary to be held concurrently with the regular primary election in May.

While there has been a push for a March presidential nominating caucus, proponents of a consolidated May primary believe it holds the potential to enhance representation, increase voter influence, and provide a more accurate reflection of the party's preferences.

"While the early stages of the nomination process certainly hold significance, it's important to recognize that a competitive race can extend beyond March. A May primary empowers Idaho Republicans to play a pivotal role in shaping the outcome of the nomination by strategically positioning their votes behind candidates who remain in contention," noted Senate Assistant Majority Leader Abby Lee. "It is concerning that those who care about secure elections prefer a caucus where votes are counted in barns and backyards instead of Idaho's tried and proven ballot process for such a critical election."

The successful attainment of 60% support within the Idaho State Senate demonstrates the importance of this issue. Now, the focus shifts to the Idaho House of Representatives.

"We strongly uphold our democratic responsibility to provide every Idahoan with the opportunity to have their voices heard and their votes make an impact," emphasized Chuck Winder, Idaho State Senate President Pro Tempore. "I am hopeful that our colleagues in the House will support the special session on this critical issue."

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