

What Is Super Tuesday?



As many as 10 or 12 qualified potential presidential candidates will seek to become the Democratic or Republican presidential nominee and actually run for President of the United States. At one time in history delegates to the Democratic or Republican National Convention selected their nominee at the time of the convention. While this is technically still true that the nominee is voted upon at the convention, the field of candidates is thinned out to a few during the primary elections and caucuses. At this time voters in primaries and state party delegates in caucuses vote for one candidate from among the group of potential nominees. Delegates to the national convention cast their first vote based upon the results of the primary or caucus.

Since this selection process is not an election for a state or federal office, primaries and caucuses are governed by different rules and American politics is filled with a bit of mayhem as the political parties and voters rally around so many candidates. Each party wants to find the best candidate who appeals to the voters and has a good chance of winning the presidency.

The New Hampshire primary and Iowa caucuses are always the first in the nation and occur in January. A state holds its primary or caucus on a date it chooses. While Election Day for federal officials is set by law as the Tuesday after the first Monday of November, primaries and caucuses are held in the early part of the year. Primaries and caucuses can be held on any day of the week but since Tuesday is historically the day of the week for elections many primaries are held on a Tuesday.

When many states hold their primaries on the same Tuesday in February or March, the news media calls the day Super Tuesday. Super Tuesday becomes an important day in the presidential election process because so many people are voting in primaries on the same day. Super Tuesday can give the news media and the American voters a good idea about who might become the presidential nominee of the Democratic or Republican Party.