

February 19, 2020

Visit us on-line at [EPIC](#)

## A Delegate Situation

*Expected Clear Sailing for President Trump; complicated for Democratic Hopefuls*

President Donald Trump's path to the Republican nomination is clear and practically unobstructed. Former Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld is the only remaining challenger, and President Trump holds a commanding delegate lead (119 to 1 after two states). A majority of the estimated 2,552 Republican delegates (1,277+) are needed to win the Republican nomination on the first ballot. It's also worth noting that nine states—Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, South Carolina and Wisconsin—have cancelled Republican Primaries, giving their delegates to President Trump without a contest.

The Democratic nomination is far from settled ...

### Presidential Nomination Facts

**Delegates are people too.** No, seriously, they are actual people - usually local party leaders and activists. With all the talk of the number of delegates at stake and being won, it's a pretty common misperception that delegates are simply vote totals, but during the presidential primaries and caucuses, candidates are trying to win the support of individuals who will ultimately pledge to support them at their party's national nominating convention.

#### **By the Numbers:**

<b>3,779</b>	<b>Total pledged delegates</b>
<b>1,990</b>	<b>Delegates needed to win on 1<sup>st</sup> ballot</b>
<b>771</b>	<b>Superdelegates</b>
<b>2376</b>	<b>Delegates (both pledged and super needed to win on second and subsequent ballots)</b>

**Pledged vs. Unpledged Delegates** - Pledged delegates, selected based on the state's primary or caucus results, are bound to support the candidate to whom they've been designated during that contest. Unpledged delegates, the "free agents" of the nominating process, are also more widely known as "superdelegates." They are usually party leaders, elected officials, former presidents and vice presidents, etc., who aren't bound to the state's results and can support whomever they want.

#### **A few key points about delegates:**

- Democratic **pledged delegates** are divided proportionally among the states, D.C., territories, and jurisdictions based on population and the party's strength in particular jurisdictions. A quarter of each state's pledged delegates are awarded based on the total statewide results and three-quarters are usually awarded by congressional district (with a few exceptions).
- A candidate must win 15% of the statewide vote or 15% of a congressional district's votes to come away with any delegates.
- The role of **superdelegates** has been reduced this year, as their votes will now **only** come into play if a candidate isn't nominated on the first ballot at the Democratic National Convention in July. So if no candidate earns a majority of the pledged delegates at stake in contests between now and June 6 (when the last 7 delegates are pledged by the Virgin Islands), things

will REALLY get interesting. And tense. Which brings us to the last point:

- Such a scenario would be considered a **“contested convention”** (also known as a multi-ballot convention). The last-multi-ballot convention occurred in 1952 when Democrats nominated Adlai Stevenson on the third ballot, so for political pundits it’s a rare and fascinating possibility. Every race that fails to produce a clear and convincing favorite from the field of multiple candidates, the possibility gets more and more real.

For a look at every state’s delegate total and state contests by date, [click here](#).

For state and presidential primary dates in ERIE’s marketing territory only, [click here](#).