

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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No. 185

H.P. 138

House of Representatives, January 25, 2021

An Act To Abolish Mandatory Political Caucuses

Received by the Clerk of the House on January 21, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

Handwritten signature of Robert B. Hunt in cursive.

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative CARDONE of Bangor.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §158**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 253, §14, is further amended
3 to read:

4 **§158. Municipal caucus**

5 During the gubernatorial election year, the registrar shall attend ~~the~~ any biennial
6 municipal caucus ~~of each held by a~~ qualified party for at least 30 minutes preceding the
7 commencement of the caucus at the location where the caucus is being held. During the
8 presidential election year, the registrar shall attend ~~the~~ any biennial municipal caucus ~~of~~
9 ~~each held by a~~ qualified party for at least one hour preceding the commencement of the
10 caucus at the location where the caucus is being held. The registrar shall accept the
11 registrations and enrollments of all qualified voters who attempt to register and enroll, and
12 all persons so registered and enrolled may participate in their party caucus. The registrar
13 shall allow all persons to register or enroll who are present at the caucus at the end of the
14 30-minute or one-hour registration period.

15 **Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §301, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 254, §1, is further
16 amended to read:

17 **1. Primary election.** A party qualifies to participate in a primary election if its
18 designation was listed on the ballot of either of the 2 preceding general elections and if:

19 ~~A. The party held municipal caucuses as prescribed by Article 2 in at least one~~
20 ~~municipality in a minimum of 14 counties in the State during the election year in which~~
21 ~~the designation was listed on the ballot and any interim election year and fulfills this~~
22 ~~same requirement during the year of the primary election;~~

23 B. The party held a state convention as prescribed by Article ~~III~~ 3 during the election
24 year in which the designation was listed on the ballot and any interim election year;
25 and

26 E. At least 10,000 voters enrolled in the party voted in the last general election, except
27 that a qualified party does not have to meet this enrollment until the 2nd general
28 election after it has qualified and thereafter.

29 ~~Each state party committee must file a statement with the Secretary of State on or before~~
30 ~~March 20th certifying that the party has held the municipal caucuses required by paragraph~~
31 ~~A. The statement must be signed by the party chair or the chair's designated agent.~~

32 **Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §302, sub-§3**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 450, §4, is repealed.

33 **Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §302, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 450, §5, is further
34 amended to read:

35 **4. Convention.** A party that has qualified under subsections 1 and 2 to participate in
36 a primary election must in that same year ~~conduct the municipal caucuses under subsection~~
37 ~~3 and~~ hold a state convention as prescribed by Article ~~III~~ 3 in order to have the party
38 designation of its candidates printed on the ballot in the general election of that year. The
39 voter or group of voters who files the declaration of intent may perform the duties of the
40 state committee under section 321, subsection 1 for the party's initial convention.

41 **Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §303, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 131, §11, is repealed.

1 **Sec. 6. 21-A MRSA §303, sub-§5**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 131, §11, is further
2 amended to read:

3 **5. Convention.** A party that has qualified under subsections 1 and 2 to participate in
4 a primary election must in that same year ~~conduct the municipal caucuses under subsection~~
5 ~~4 and~~ hold a state convention as prescribed by Article 3, in order to have the party
6 designation of its candidates printed on the ballot in the general election of that year. The
7 voters who file the declaration of intent may perform the duties of the state committee
8 under section 321, subsection 1 for the party's initial convention.

9 **Sec. 7. 21-A MRSA §311, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 387, §3, is further
10 amended to read:

11 A biennial municipal caucus may be held by any political party ~~for the purpose of~~
12 ~~electing for any purpose authorized by party rules, including the election of delegates to a~~
13 ~~state convention and for any other business.~~ A biennial municipal caucus is governed by
14 the following provisions.

15 **Sec. 8. 21-A MRSA §311, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 248, §4, is further
16 amended to read:

17 **1. Call.** The caucus may be called by the chair or a majority of the members of the
18 municipal committee of a political party. If the municipal committee ~~fails to~~ does not call
19 a caucus to be held before March 20th during a general election year and party rules require
20 the election of delegates to a state convention by municipal caucus, the county committee
21 may call the caucus. At the request of ~~that~~ the committee that called a caucus in accordance
22 with this subsection, the municipal officers shall provide available space in a public
23 building for a caucus. The municipality may charge a rental fee or janitorial service fee for
24 the available space. A ~~municipality~~ municipal committee of a political party may hold its
25 caucus outside the municipality if several ~~municipalities~~ municipal committees of the same
26 political party elect to meet on a consolidated basis or if the committee calling the caucus
27 in accordance with this subsection determines that a facility outside the municipality is
28 more suitable.

29 **Sec. 9. 21-A MRSA §311, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 387, §3, is repealed.

30 **Sec. 10. 21-A MRSA §321, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 387, §4, is further
31 amended to read:

32 **1. Time, place and representation.** The party's state committee shall determine the
33 time, place and basis of representation for the convention, including whether delegates are
34 elected at biennial municipal caucuses or selected by county committees. Delegates must
35 be qualified to vote in the party's primary election unless otherwise permitted by party rules.

36 **Sec. 11. 21-A MRSA §363, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2019, c. 636, §2, is further
37 amended to read:

38 The meeting of a political committee as required by sections 371, 374-A, 381, ~~382~~ and
39 393 is governed by the following provisions.

40 **Sec. 12. 21-A MRSA §363, sub-§2, ¶A**, as corrected by RR 2019, c. 2, Pt. B, §49,
41 is repealed.

42 **Sec. 13. 21-A MRSA §363, sub-§5**, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 409, §1, is repealed.

1 3. Authorizing the members of a party's county committee residing within a
2 representative district to choose a nominee to fill a vacancy for Representative to the
3 Legislature.