



PRECINCT CAUCUS SURVIVOR'S GUIDE 2010 FOR MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Participation Project, an initiative of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, is an exciting effort to increase voter turnout in traditionally underrepresented populations and to expand the capacity of Minnesota nonprofit organizations to effectively engage in legally permissible, nonpartisan voter engagement efforts. MPP provides tools for individuals and nonprofits to do precinct caucuses, voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities. MPP exists to be a resource to you! For questions, comments, or to learn more, contact Jeff Narabrook at 651-757-3062 or jeff@mncn.org.



MINNESOTA PARTICIPATION PROJECT:
Nonpartisan Nonprofit Voter Mobilization

PRECINCT CAUCUS GLOSSARY



Precinct: the smallest political subdivision of our state. Other subdivisions, in escalating size, include: ward, house district, senate district, county, congressional district, and statewide

Caucus: a group of people organized around a particular issue, candidate, and/or political party

Delegate: a person selected/elected to represent your community to the next level of Minnesota's caucus system

Alternate: a person who can be called upon to fill the place of an elected delegate should they have to leave early or be unable to attend the next level of Minnesota's caucus system

Walking Subcaucus: a group of people gathered around a particular issue and/or candidate for the purpose of electing a delegate to the next level of Minnesota's caucus system. Called a walking subcaucus because participants literally walk around aligning themselves with a particular subcaucus

Resolution: a position statement on an issue that can advance through the caucus process to become a core issue of a political party

Call: the official notice of a party convention or meeting

Nomination: candidates must be nominated before their names will appear on the November election ballot. Each major party will nominate their candidates at state conventions

Straw poll: all precinct caucus attendees in Minnesota will informally vote for their preferred candidate for a particular office; a straw poll is non-binding

ROBERT'S RULES

(cont.)



Part 3, Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly. No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTER- RUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority with notice
Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

ROBERT'S RULES

(cont.)



Part 2, Incidental Motions. No order of precedence. These motions arise incidentally and are decided immediately.

PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTER-RUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Demand a rising vote	I move for a rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

WHO

CAN PARTICIPATE?



IN ORDER TO VOTE, BECOME A DELEGATE, OR OFFER RESOLUTIONS AT YOUR PRECINCT CAUCUS, YOU MUST:

- reside in the precinct in which you want to caucus
- be eligible to vote on November 2, 2010
- be in general agreement with the party's principles

WHAT IF I'M NOT A U.S. CITIZEN?

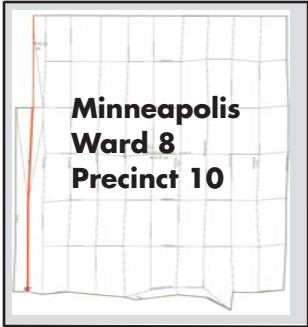
You will not be able to vote in the caucus process, become a delegate, or offer resolutions. HOWEVER, you can still:

- Observe and learn about participatory democracy
- Meet neighbors or friends to discuss issues that you would like to see addressed

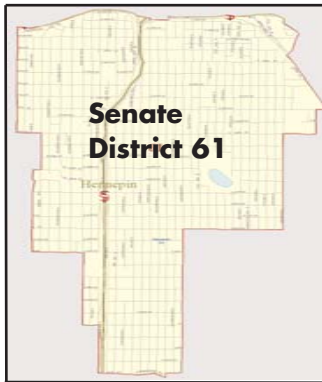
OVERVIEW OF CAUCUS PROCESS



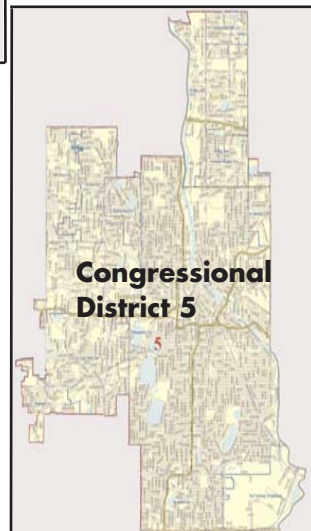
1) Precinct Caucuses:
Feb 2nd, 7:00 p.m.



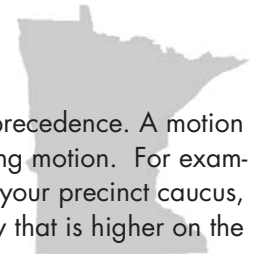
2) Senate District/County Convention: March - April



3) Congressional District Caucuses:
April - May



ROBERT'S RULES



Part 1, Main Motions. These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion. For example, if you want to make a motion to amend a resolution at your precinct caucus, you could do this so long as no motion was before the body that is higher on the chart.

PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTER- RUPT?	2ND ?	DE- BATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take break	I move to recess...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"]	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

ROBERT'S RULES



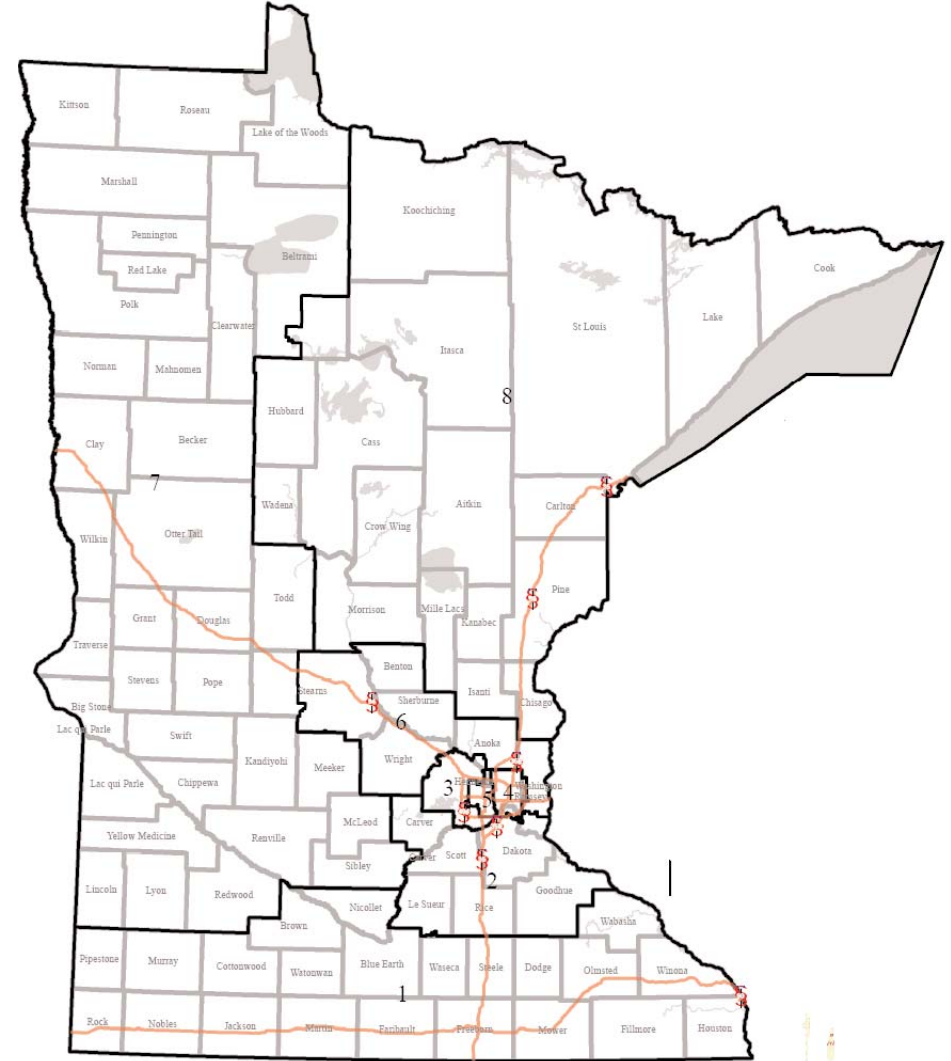
4) State Convention: April - May

WHAT ARE ROBERT'S RULES?

- A method for conducting a meeting in an orderly manner
- Prevents domination of the meeting by any particular individual or group
- Allows all voices to be heard

A NOTE ON ROBERT'S RULES:

- There will likely be people at your caucus who know more about the rules and process than you do, but...
- Don't be afraid to assert yourself and the issues of concern to you
- There will be people there to help you understand how to engage in the process - regardless of whether you know or understand Robert's Rules
- What follows is a comprehensive list of motions under Robert's Rules, they are divided into main motions that you can expect to hear and incidental motions that may come up but are rare.
- **PLEASE KNOW THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO UNDERSTAND OR KNOW ALL OF THESE MOTIONS IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE AND PARTICIPATE AT YOUR PRECINCT CAUCUS.**



SAMPLE PRECINCT CAUCUS AGENDA



- I. Arrive and Sign-In
- II. Precinct Caucus Convenes (usually at 7:00 p.m.)
- III. General Announcements
 - Overview of the process is usually provided
 - Rules and process presented
 - Election Judge recruitment discussed
 - Other party business as needed
- IV. Elect Party Precinct Officers
 - Precinct Chair
 - Assistant Precinct Chair (can be more than one)
 - Secretary
 - Tellers or counters
- V. Delegate and Alternate Elections (usually after 7:30 p.m.)
- VI. Conduct Straw Poll
- VII. Candidate and Elected Officials Speeches
 - Usually done throughout the night as they arrive
- VIII. Resolution Introduction and Debate (this dominates the remainder of the precinct caucus activities and can go late into the night, depending on your precinct)
- IX. Announcement of the results of the Straw Poll
- X. Adjournment

FINDING YOUR PRECINCT CAUCUS



EACH MAJOR PARTY, LISTED BELOW, WILL HOLD THEIR PRECINCT CAUCUSES ON...

FEBRUARY 2, 2010 AT 7:00 P.M.

CONTACT YOUR PARTY:

Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party

www.dfl.org
651-293-1200

Republican Party

www.mngop.com
651-222-0022

Independence Party

www.mnip.org
651-487-9700

CONTACT THE SECRETARY OF STATE:

Visit **www.sos.state.mn.us**

Using information collected from the parties, the Secretary of State's office will be offering a search function that will allow you find your precinct caucus in your respective party. Alternatively, you may call 651-215-1440.

WHAT'S NEXT?



IF YOU ARE ELECTED TO BE A DELEGATE to the senate district/county convention...

- Plan to attend and participate fully
- Lead a subcaucus while there
- Nominate yourself to be a delegate to the congressional district convention, the state convention, or the national convention
- Promote your resolution and others that you support

WHAT IF I CAN'T ATTEND MY PRECINCT CAUCUS?

If, for whatever reason, you are unable to attend your precinct caucus but wish to be a delegate to the next level, you can:

- Send a letter to your precinct chair. To find out who your precinct chair is, contact the party you plan to caucus with and tell them your ward and precinct, or, where you live
- Due to the anticipation of high participation, it is much harder to guarantee that your letter will suffice in landing you a delegate position
 - ♦ You could end up being an alternate

BEING A DELEGATE IN 2010



HOW ARE DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES SELECTED?

2 MAIN WAYS:

- Nominations are taken and voted upon
 - ♦ Can be done for delegates, then alternates, OR all delegates and alternates selected at once
- Walking Subcaucuses
 - ♦ Using this process, delegates are selected from subcaucuses that convene around issues and/or candidates to elect one or more delegates to the next level (see Walking Subcaucus section for more)
- Each party has their own system of electing delegates and alternates - contact the party of your choice find out how they will approach delegate elections

THERE WILL BE COMPETITION FOR DELEGATE SEATS - possibly even at the precinct level. What does that mean?

- Get there early
- Come prepared to nominate and vote for yourself or others to be delegates to the next level of participation
 - ♦ And be prepared to state why YOU should be the delegate!
- Come prepared to name a subcaucus, if your caucus has them

THE WALKING SUBCAUCUS PROCESS



(if applicable)

A walking subcaucus is a group gathered around a candidate and/or issue for the purpose of electing someone to the next level of party conventions.

THE SUBCAUCUS PROCESS:

1. The chair will open nominations for subcaucuses.
2. Anyone who wants to nominate a subcaucus will go to a microphone and, once recognized by the chair, will get (usually) about one minute to nominate a subcaucus.
 - ♦ i.e. "Madame Chair, my name is Josh Winters and I call an Arne Carlson for Public Transportation Subcaucus." Plus a brief explanation of your reason... "because Minnesota is in a public transportation crisis and Arne Carlson has a plan to improve public transportation."
 - ♦ Subcaucuses must carry the name of a candidate (or uncommitted), but may also include issues.
3. When nominations are closed, the chair designates an area where the subcaucuses will meet.
4. The chair will announce how much time (usually 15-20 minutes) will be allowed for people to separate and congregate in their desired subcaucus.
 - ♦ Some people will know exactly which subcaucus they want to join, others will float around to find a subcaucus that appeals to them.
 - ♦ The goal now is to attract as many like-minded people as possible within the allotted time.

RESOLUTIONS

(cont.)



TIPS ON ADVANCING YOUR RESOLUTION:

- Arrive early, bring copies of your resolution, and lobby other participants to support it
- Be concise. Avoid too many "whereas" statements - keeping it short and simple improves your chances of advancing your resolution
- Bring friends/neighbors from your precinct who will support your resolution and lobby for it
- Have your friends who live in other precincts bring the same resolution to their caucus and lobby for it
- Strategy: Don't ally yourself with a candidate
 - ♦ This strategy can be effective in garnering support for a proposal if the candidates have not taken a position on your issue but want YOUR vote for endorsement
- After precinct caucuses, resolutions are presented as a slate to rank and vote on – keep voting and lobbying others to advance it and yourself to the next level!

RESOLUTIONS

(cont.)



HOW DO I PRESENT MY RESOLUTION?

- When you reach the point on the agenda for resolutions, ask to be recognized by the chair to introduce your resolution
- Present your resolution and the reasons for it
- If there is disagreement, the precinct chair will facilitate debate
 - ♦ Often by allowing for 3 statements for the resolution and 3 against, and limiting the time allowed for those statements
 - ♦ Your resolution may also be amended
- Vote!

THE WALKING SUBCAUCUS PROCESS

(cont.)



THE SUBCAUCUS FORMULA:

1. Once the chair calls time and declares the floor frozen, she will call on each subcaucus to call out its number of members.
2. Divide the total number of all people in subcaucuses by the number of delegates to be elected, i.e. $118 \div 18 = 6.55$ – this is the INITIAL VIABILITY NUMBER.
3. Subcaucuses with less than this number are not viable and must find another subcaucus to join.
4. The chair will give another amount of time (usually about 10 minutes) for people to find a new subcaucus, if theirs is not viable.
5. Again, the chair will declare the floor frozen and will call on each subcaucus to call out its number of members.
6. At this point, you will notice some people have dropped out of the process, because their subcaucus became nonviable. Therefore, the chair will need to recount the new total number of participants.
7. Divide the new total number of people in all subcaucuses by the number of delegates to be elected. i.e. $98 \div 18 = 5.444$ (yes - it does get dragged out to three decimal places).
8. The chair divides subcaucus membership by 5.444, i.e. Arne Carlson for Public Transportation group has 19 and the Jesse Ventura group has 15 (we'll consider only two groups, but there may be more) : $19 \div 5.444 = 3.49$, $15 \div 5.444 = 2.755$.
9. The Arne Carlson group gets 3 delegates, since .049 can't be a person. The Jesse Ventura group gets 2 delegates. However, since the Ventura group has the largest remainder at 0.755 vs. 0.49, it gets the extra delegate.

THE WALKING SUBCAUCUS PROCESS



(cont.)

VIABILITY WORKSHEET

If you encounter a walking subcaucus at either your precinct or at subsequent levels of participation, use this formula to figure out how many people you need in a subcaucus to elect a delegate to the next level:

of total caucus participants

÷

of delegates set to advance
(talk to a party official to obtain this number)

_____ =

of subcaucus participants needed to advance 1 delegate

The number you get at the end of this formula may have a remainder. For the purposes of the subcaucus, round this number up to determine the number you need to get 1 delegate. However, please note that the remainder can be important in determining who gets the remaining delegate if there is a tie between subcaucuses. See the Walking Subcaucus formula for an example of this calculation.

REMINDER: As the number of total caucus participants changes (sometimes people need to leave early), the viability number will change. You may need to use the same formula above to determine the new viability number by changing the number in the first box.

RESOLUTIONS



WHAT IS A RESOLUTION?

- Party platforms are made up of party positions on a wide range of issues
- Resolutions are position statements that can be adopted at the precinct level and advanced through the caucus process to become party positions
- Resolutions need to be presented in writing

What does a resolution look like?

- First, you state the problem or opportunity
- Then, the rationale for the position you want the party to adopt
- Then, present the position as a policy statement

EXAMPLE:

Whereas, funding for the preservation of our state's natural environment and the ecosystems it supports is at a 30 year low; and

Whereas, Minnesota's natural environment has been and continues to be one of our greatest assets and contributors to the quality of life in this state; and

Whereas, our generation inherited this natural legacy and we wish future generations to enjoy it as we have;

Therefore, be it resolved that the _____ Party supports increased support of and funding for the conservation and preservation of the natural environment by the state of Minnesota.