

## CHAPTER 45: POLITICAL PARTIES

### § 2301. Organization of major political parties

A major political party shall organize biennially as provided in this chapter. No person acting on behalf of a major political party shall accept any contribution or make any expenditure (except for the purpose of organizing under this chapter) unless the party has a current certificate of organization on file with the secretary of state. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### § 2302. State chairman to call caucus

The chairman of the state committee of a party shall set a date for members of the party to meet in caucus in their respective towns, which date shall be between September 10 and September 30, inclusive, in each odd numbered year. At least 14 days before the date set for the caucuses, the state chairman shall mail a notice of the date and purpose of the caucuses to each town clerk and to each town chairman of the party, and shall cause the notice to be published in at least two newspapers having general circulation within the state. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### § 2303. Town chairman to give notice

The town chairman or, if unavailable, or if the records of the secretary of state show there is no chairman, any three voters of the town, shall arrange to hold a caucus on the day designated by the state chairman, in some public place within the town, and shall set the hour of the caucus. At least five days before the day of the caucus the chairman shall post a notice of the date, purpose, time and place of the caucus in the town clerk's office and in at least one other public place in town. In towns of one thousand or more population, he shall also publish the notice in a newspaper having general circulation in the town. If three voters arrange to call the caucus, the voters shall designate one of their number to perform the duties prescribed above for the town chairman. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; amended 1981, No. 239 (Adj. Sess.), § 13.)

### § 2304. Town caucus

(a) At the time and place set for the town caucus, the voters of the party residing in the town shall meet in caucus and proceed to elect a town committee, consisting of such number of voters of the town as the caucus deems necessary, to serve during the following two years or until their successors are elected or appointed. Additional members of a town committee may be elected by the town committee at any meeting, and may be eligible to vote on matters before the town committee at that meeting or at the next meeting, as determined by the members of the committee before the election.

(b) The voter checklist used by the caucus shall be the most recent checklist approved by the board of civil authority. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### § 2305. First meeting of town committee

The first meeting of the town committee shall be held immediately following adjournment of the caucus. At this meeting, members of the town committee shall elect committee officers and delegates to the county committee. All officers and other members of the town committee and all delegates to the county committee shall be voters of the town. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2306. Procedure upon failure to hold caucus**

If the voters of the party residing in any town fail to hold a caucus on the day designated by the state chairman, any three or more voters of the party residing in the town may call and hold a caucus at any time thereafter, in the manner provided above. Those voters calling the caucus shall designate one of their number to perform the duties prescribed above for the town chairman. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2307. Certification of officers and county committee delegates**

Within 72 hours after the caucus, the chairman and secretary of the town committee shall mail to the secretary of state, the chairmen of the state and county committees, and the town clerk a copy of the notice calling the meeting and a certified list of the names and mailing addresses of the officers and members of the town committee and of the delegates to the county committee. A committee is not considered organized until it has filed the material required by this section. The secretary of state shall furnish forms for this purpose to the chairman of the state committee of a political party. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2308. Composition of county committee**

The number of delegates to the county committee which each town caucus is entitled to elect shall be apportioned by the state committee, based upon the number of votes cast for the party's candidate for governor in the last election, provided that each town caucus shall be entitled to elect at least two delegates. Delegates to the county committee shall be voters of the town, but need not be members of the town committee; they shall serve during the following two years or until their successors are elected or appointed. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2309. First meeting of county committee**

The chairman of the state committee shall set a date, not more than 30 days after the date of the party's caucuses, for the first meeting of each county committee. The state chairman shall notify the chairmen of the county committees of the date of the meeting and shall publish notice in at least two newspapers with general circulation within the state. The chairman of the county committee shall set the hour and place of the meeting and shall notify all delegates-elect by mail not less than 10 days prior to the meeting. At the time and place set for the meeting, the delegates shall proceed to elect their officers and perfect an organization for the ensuing two years. All officers and other members of the county committee and all delegates to the state committee shall be voters of the county. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2310. Election of state committee**

The chairman of the county committee shall be a member of the state committee. Each county committee shall be entitled to elect at least two additional members of the state committee, one male and one female. These delegates need not be members of the county committee. If the rules or bylaws of a state committee provide for apportionment of additional members of the state committee to come from the county, the county committee also shall elect those additional members. All county committee members and officers and all persons elected to the state committee shall be voters in the county from which they are elected. County committee members and delegates to the state committee shall serve for the following two years or until their successors are elected or appointed. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2311. Certification of county officers and state committee members**

Within 72 hours of the first meeting of the county committee, its chairman and secretary shall mail to the secretary of state, the county clerk, and the chairman of the state committee a copy of the notice calling the meeting and a certified list of the names and mailing addresses of the officers of the county committee and of the members elected by the county committee to the state committee. A committee is not considered organized until it has filed the material required by this section. The secretary of state shall prescribe and furnish forms for this purpose. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; amended 1985, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 9.)

### **§ 2312. First meeting of the state committee**

The chairman of the state committee shall name an hour and place of meeting on a day not less than 15 nor more than 30 days after the day set for the first meeting of the county committee of the party, at which time the members-elect of the state committee shall meet and perfect an organization for the ensuing two years. The chairman of the state committee shall notify all members-elect of the state committee in writing, at least seven days before the day set for the meeting. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2313. Filing of certificate of organization**

Within ten days after the first meeting of the state committee of a party, the chair and secretary shall file in the office of the secretary of state a certificate stating that the party has completed its organization for the ensuing two years and has substantially complied with the provisions of this chapter. However, no state committee shall be eligible to file a certificate of organization unless it has town committees organized in at least 15 towns in this state by January 1 of the year of the general election. The certificate of organization shall set forth the names and mailing addresses of the officers and members of the state committee, together with the counties which they represent. It shall also designate, in not more than three words, the name by which the party shall be identified on any Australian ballot and shall be accompanied by a copy of the notice calling the meeting. The secretary of state shall prescribe and furnish the form to be used for this purpose. Upon receipt of a certificate of organization, the secretary of state promptly shall notify all persons who have registered with the secretary of state asking to be notified of such filings. Within ten days, the secretary of state shall accept a certificate of organization if it appears to be valid on its face or reject it if it is not. The secretary of state may reject a certificate of organization if the political or other name is not substantially different from the name of any organized political party. When a certificate is rejected, the secretary of state promptly shall notify the chair and secretary of the committee to inform them in writing of the reasons for rejection. A committee is not considered organized until the material required by this section has been filed and accepted. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; amended 1983, No. 90, § 3, eff. April 29, 1983; 2001, No. 5, § 16.)

### **§ 2314. Officers required**

Every committee of a political party is required to elect a chairman, a vice chairman, a secretary, treasurer and an assistant treasurer, who need not be members of the committee at the time of their election, but who become members, with full voting rights, upon their election. A committee may also elect from among its members such other officers as it deems appropriate to its work. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2315. Adoption of rules and bylaws**

Every committee of a political party is authorized to adopt rules and bylaws consistent with law. Every rule or bylaw may be amended by simple majority vote of those present and voting at any meeting of the committee, provided written notice of the proposed amendment is given to all committee members at least seven days prior to the meeting. All rules, bylaws, and amendments thereto shall be filed with the secretary of state, and the copies filed shall be the official copies. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2316. Secret ballot**

At every caucus or meeting of a political committee, if there is a contest for nomination, recommendation, or election to any office or position, the vote shall be taken by secret written ballot. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2317. Voters not to participate in more than one party**

No voter shall vote in the biennial town caucus of more than one party in the same year, nor shall any voter simultaneously hold membership on the committees of more than one political party. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2318. Organization of minor political parties**

A minor political party may organize in the manner set forth in this subchapter or in another manner which its members deem appropriate. Minor political parties shall comply with the filing requirements of sections 2307, 2311 to the extent applicable, and 2313 of this title, except that they need not be organized in 15 towns. They shall also comply with the procedural requirements of sections 2303 through 2306 and 2313 of this title, but need not comply with other procedural requirements in sections 2301, 2302, 2308 through 2310, and 2312 of this title. Minor political parties shall also comply with sections 2314 through 2317 of this title. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2319. Party conventions for platforms and presidential elections**

On or before the fourth Tuesday in September in each even numbered year, upon the call of the chairman of the state committee of the party, a party platform convention of each organized political party shall be held to make and adopt the platform of the party. In presidential years the convention shall be the same convention held to nominate presidential electors. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

### **§ 2320. Delegates to state platform convention**

Delegates to the state platform convention shall be the members of the national committee, the state committee and the county committees of the party, the chairmen of the town committees of the party, the nominees of the party for state officers, state senators, county officers and representatives to the general assembly and certain other members of the party, not to exceed twelve, if selected by the state committee of the party. Upon application of the chairman of the state committee of a party, the secretary of state shall deliver to him a duly certified roll of the nominees of that party for the several offices named in this section. The secretary of the state committee of the party shall make and certify a roll of the convention, made in accordance with this section, and none but certified delegates shall take part in the convention. (Added 1979, No. 198 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)