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## THE SELECTION OF DELEGATES FOR THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND THE STATE AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS OF BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES IN WISCONSIN IN 1964\*

### 1. STATE CONVENTIONS

County unit delegates to each party's voluntary organization state convention are chosen at county caucuses in the spring. The number of Republican delegates is based on a ratio of one county delegate per 250 Republican votes cast in the previous gubernatorial election; there were 3,686 delegates at the May 1964 Republican voluntary organization's state convention. The number of Democratic delegates is based on each unit's paid-up membership; 2,200 members received delegate credentials for the June 1964 Democratic voluntary organization's state convention.

The statutory conventions, the so-called "platform conventions", consist of each party's post-primary candidates for the 5 major state offices and the Legislature, plus their holdover Senators, who convene in the State Capitol on the third Tuesday after biennial September primaries to "formulate the state platform of their party". In practice, a platform previously prepared by the voluntary organization platform committee, and already discussed and approved at the voluntary state convention, is submitted to the statutory convention for official adoption with such changes as are agreed to. State law also requires the statutory conventions to select the party state central committees and the party electoral college list.

### 2. NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

The national committee of each party determines the number of votes each state delegation will cast at the national convention called to nominate the party candidates for President and Vice President. State vote quotas are based on the number of Congressmen and the prior voting record of each state. The Republican National Committee assigned a 1964 convention quota of 30 votes to Wisconsin Republicans; the Democratic National Committee gave Wisconsin Democrats a quota of 46 votes.

Before any delegates are actually named, the state voluntary organization of each party apportions the national convention vote quota among at-large and district delegates. The Republican state voluntary committee set up its 1964 30-vote quota on a 1-delegate, 1-vote basis of 10 at-large delegates and 2 delegates from each of the 10 Congressional districts. The Democratic voluntary organization distributed their 46-vote quota to a delegation of 62, consisting of the 2 national committeemen with whole votes, 20 whole vote district delegates, 20 half vote district delegates, 8 whole vote at-large delegates and 12 half vote at-large delegates.

Wisconsin statutes restrict the electorate to voting for delegate slates pledged to specific presidential candidates, with the exception of individual "uninstructed" candidates

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for district delegate. Any interested candidate for President may certify his own full slate of delegates to the Secretary of State, to appear on the party ballot under the candidate's name. In addition, any individual may run on a party ballot in his own district as an "uninstructed" delegate.

A split in the presidential candidate commitments of district delegates can result if some districts give a majority vote to the district slate of one candidate, and other districts elect the district slate of a different candidate of the same party. At-large delegates cannot be split in this way, since only one at-large slate, committed to a specific presidential candidate, can win the majority of party votes on a state-wide basis.

The 1964 state presidential primary was a good illustration of the varied ways in which the names of convention delegates get on the ballot. Neither President Johnson or the major Republican candidates planned to enter the Wisconsin primary. Each state central committee resorted to the "favorite son" device, inviting the man of its choice to certify a slate pledged to him as the party's nominal presidential candidate.

When Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama suddenly entered the Wisconsin primary on the Democratic ticket, it became even more urgent for the state party to run a favorite son candidate pledged to Lyndon Johnson. Otherwise the Wallace slate could have become the party's convention delegation by default.

Governor John W. Reynolds became the Democratic favorite son candidate, serving as a stand-in for Johnson, to whom he would release the votes of his delegation. The Reynolds-pledged slate consisted of the 40 district delegates chosen at February district caucuses, with whole votes for the top 2 vote-getters in each district and half votes for the other 2, and the 20 delegates at-large elected by the Democratic voluntary administrative committee, with 8 whole and 12 half votes apportioned among them.

Congressman John W. Byrnes accepted the Republican favorite son candidacy on condition that his delegation remain strictly uncommitted to any of the Republican presidential contenders and pledged to him until he released their votes at the convention. He selected his slate of 10 at-large and 20 district delegates from a list of names recommended to him by the party district chairmen and vice-chairmen.

In the 6th Congressional district, Peter Wheeler Reiss, a Goldwater partisan dissatisfied with the uncommitted pledge of the Republican slate, filed as an individual "uninstructed" district delegate candidate on the Republican ticket, pledging himself openly to Goldwater.

The slates pledged to Byrnes and Reynolds won the April primary, and both presidential candidates, in an unusual move, released their delegates' votes before, rather than after the first ballot of the national convention.

Reynolds, in fact, released his delegation 2 months before the Democratic national convention, at a Milwaukee meeting of the delegates, explaining he wanted Wisconsin Democrats to participate immediately in the process that would lead to election of President Johnson. Byrnes held his delegation to their favorite son pledge at the Republican convention until he released them just hours before the first balloting.

The legality of these pre-balloting releases was confirmed in a 7/9/64 opinion issued by Attorney General George Thompson at the request of Secretary of State Robert Zimmerman. Sec. 5.38 (3) (e), Wis. Statutes, requires that delegates will "... until released by said candidate, vote for his candidacy on the first ballot of the said convention...". Thereafter, the delegates are released from their pledge if a 2/3 majority votes to withdraw their pledge, or their candidate receives less than 10 per cent of the total vote cast on the ballot. The Attorney General ruled that this section permits a presidential candidate to release delegates from their pledge of support at any time before, during or after the first convention ballot.

The election of alternates for the convention delegates is assigned by law to the statutory state central committees. In 1964 the Republican central committee named 10 at-large and 20 district alternates; the Democrats chose 14 at-large and 30 district alternates.

### 3. MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

A Wisconsin voter does not vote directly for his choice for President and Vice President. When he marks the square next to their name, he is actually voting for a slate of 12 people not even named on the ballot--the presidential elector candidates of one party. If they win the election they become the official state presidential electors. Each elector is morally and by tradition committed to cast his electoral college votes for his party's candidates for President and Vice President.

Wisconsin's 12 electoral votes are based on the federal Constitution's provision that the President and Vice President shall be elected by an electoral college consisting of presidential electors from each state numerically equal to the state's total number of U.S. Senators and Representatives.

Each state party will pick a 1964 slate of 2 at-large electors and one from each Congressional district at their statutory conventions in the State Capitol September 29, "the third Tuesday after the biennial September primary". The electors who win in the November 3 election will cast Wisconsin's official electoral college votes for their party's candidates for President and Vice President when they convene in the State Capitol December 14, "the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December next after their election" specified by state law. A vacancy in the office of presidential elector is filled by majority vote by the remaining electors.

(End)

Sources for this information were the 1964 Blue Book articles, "Wisconsin Political Parties", pages 669-695, and "Wisconsin Elections", pages 703-771; our clipping files on presidential elections, electoral colleges, political conventions and both political parties, state and national; the Wis. Statutes and talks with staff members of the Democratic and Republican parties' state headquarters and Leo Fahey, election division supervisor in the Secretary of State's department.

We have presented the current picture, using 1964 statistics. Selection procedures and numbers have varied in the past in both parties, and may be different in the future.