

Democratic National Committee reorders presidential primary schedule

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The Democratic National Committee (DNC) approved by a voice vote Saturday a significant restructuring of the presidential primary calendar. The two states that have traditionally gone first, Iowa and New Hampshire, were pushed back in favor of South Carolina, while Michigan and Georgia were also moved up.

The new order of primaries was set in response to demands from President Joe Biden, whose campaign in the 2020 primaries was rescued from oblivion by the South Carolina primary, which he won thanks to support from Representative James Clyburn, the sole Democratic member of Congress from that state and a longtime leader of the Congressional Black Caucus.

While there were complaints about the technical collapse that delayed tabulation of ballots in the Iowa caucuses in 2020, the real issue driving the DNC decision was that both Iowa and New Hampshire—for the last 40 years the first contest and the first primary—are both largely white.

This did not fit with the racist identity politics that increasingly dominate the Democratic Party, with political groupings based on race, gender and sexual preference holding sway. South Carolina is the first primary state with a large black population, and in both Michigan and Georgia the Democratic primary vote is heavily African American.

The new order for the 2024 campaign will be South Carolina on February 3, followed three days later by New Hampshire and Nevada, then Georgia February 13 and Michigan February 26. These five will be followed by the “Super Tuesday” contests across nearly two dozen states, in which perceived frontrunner status according to the media and accumulated financial resources play the decisive role.

This order seems tailor-made for a Biden reelection

campaign, not yet declared but already begun in many respects. Putting South Carolina first is not merely a political payback for Representative Clyburn, but something of an insurance policy for the future.

Given the mountain of crises facing the administration—war, pandemic, economic turmoil and likely recession, and above all the emergence of significant working class struggles against corporate America—Biden could well anticipate a challenge to his renomination, even if that seems nonexistent at present.

The primary order approved by the DNC conflicts in several instances with election law or procedure in the states affected. South Carolina, Nevada and Michigan have already taken action to accommodate the new schedule, with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer signing into law, backed by both parties, the moving up of the state’s presidential primary.

But New Hampshire state law requires its primary to be first in the nation, and state officials plan to move it forward ahead of South Carolina. If the primary is held in violation of the DNC plan, the state would be penalized with a reduction in delegate numbers, and candidates who campaign there could be penalized as well.

Georgia’s primary date has already been set by Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, and he is not expected to change it simply in response to a DNC resolution. This would undercut the significance of a primary in one of the 10 most populous states, as well as a key battleground state in 2020 and likely in 2024.

The DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee has given both states until early June to adhere to the proposed calendar, but both state governments are Republican-controlled and have no incentive to shift their position.

Besides the change in the primary schedule, the

winter meeting of the DNC, held in Philadelphia over the weekend, served as a pre-campaign rally for the likely Biden-Harris reelection campaign. Both addressed the meeting and were met with ovations and chants of “four more years.”

The semblance of unanimity was in contrast to the worsening political standing of both the Democratic and Republican parties with the broad masses of the American people. A *Washington Post*-ABC News poll published Sunday found that a staggering 40 percent of those responding said they were worse off financially today than when Biden took office. This was the highest number in any ABC/*Post* poll dating back 37 years, the newspaper said.

Six in 10 Democrats didn’t want Biden to be renominated, while half of Republicans did not want Trump to be the nominee. Even fewer, Democrats, Republicans or independents, wanted to see a second version of the Trump-Biden contest of 2020.

These figures are dismal under any circumstances, but coming two years after Trump tried to overthrow the American government and overturn the results of the 2020 election through the assault on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, the results for the Democratic Party and Biden are nothing short of a political indictment.

The poll results do not represent a shift to the right, but a colossal loss of confidence in the Biden administration among those who reluctantly voted for Biden and Harris. Some 36 percent of *Democrats* say they would be disappointed if Biden won reelection. A staggering 69 percent of Democrats aged 18-39 do not want Biden to run for reelection.

Biden declared after January 6 that he wanted to preserve a strong Republican Party, and he spent the first two years of his administration seeking bipartisan deals with an increasingly fascistic political organization. His State of the Union address on Tuesday night will undoubtedly contain further such appeals, directed especially to the Republicans now in control of the House of Representatives, even though a majority of them voted not to certify Biden’s election victory following Trump’s failed coup.



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