

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

Waiting for the chance to count

Pennsylvania's late primary may still be relevant, experts say

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Posted: 2/6/08

Yesterday may have been Super Tuesday across the country, but here in Pennsylvania, it wasn't much different than any other day of the week.

That's because this state will not hold its primary until mid-April, and by that time, some experts say, both the Democrats and Republicans may already have clear choices for their nominations.

Though McCain dominated the Republican vote, no clear front runner emerged in the Democratic party as the Penn Democrats and College Republicans watched the CNN results from neighboring Huntsman Hall rooms.

"It's going to be very, very close," College sophomore and Penn Dems Communications director Mukul Sharma said. "At the end of the day, it's probably going to be split fairly evenly" between Sen. Hillary Clinton and Sen. Barack Obama.

Don Kettl, director of the Fels Institute of Government, said the Quaker State "debated moving its primary to Super Tuesday, but decided not to."

However, because a clear winner has not been named among Democrats, Pennsylvania could still play a key role in deciding which candidate receives the eventual nomination.

"There's a real chance that Super Tuesday will not settle the nominees, especially on the Democratic side," Political Science professor Rogers Smith said. "Earlier it looked like the Republicans would be more up in the air, though McCain now is in a stronger position."

"So there is a chance ... that Pennsylvania's primary may matter after all," he added.

If that happens, Philadelphia residents and Penn students could be treated to visits from candidates angling for votes.

"If Pennsylvania is a key state, the candidates will likely be stopping by Penn or at least be in Philadelphia," Sharma said.

Kettl said that if nominations are still in play by mid-April, Pennsylvania "will be a huge battleground" and winning the state would be "a real prize."

Sharma added that members of the Penn Dems will support whichever candidate eventually wins the Democratic nomination by canvassing, registering voters and even interning for the campaign.

"We're intimately involved with these campaigns and with these candidates to make sure they ultimately

end up winning," he said.

But some Penn students have already declared their support for one candidate and have been hitting the campaign trail hard.

College senior and College Republicans chairwoman Abby Huntsman is also the co-chair woman of Pennsylvania Students for McCain, and College sophomore Andrew Remley spent about 12 hours in southern New Jersey yesterday working for the Obama campaign.

Huntsman said she thought McCain would emerge as the overall Republican winner last night, but wasn't sure if he would win by enough to knock the viability out of the other GOP candidates left in the race.

She acknowledged that whoever wins the nomination faces a fierce opponent in both senators currently vying for the Democratic nomination.

"I think the Republican nominee is going to have a tough time against either Hillary or Obama," she said.

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