



Iowa Democratic Party Family Conversation Survey Report
Submitted to the State Central Committee: December 6, 2026

Background

Since the certification of the 2024 caucus results, Chair Hart has promised Iowa Democrats that our 2028 nominating process will include a “family conversation” among Iowa Democrats. This year, at central committee meetings, IDP regional events, in the press, and on social media, there has been a steady back-and-forth about when, where, and how Iowa Democrats should hold our 2028 presidential nominating process.

In August, the Iowa Democratic Party added another mechanism for Democrats to weigh in - a survey on our website. We have received over 750 responses from Democrats across the state. Remarkably, the results have stayed fairly consistent from the first day rolling out the results.

From the beginning Chair Hart has been clear about how this tool will be used as we decide the best path forward: “...*this is not a poll. As all of you know, there are far too many moving pieces to lock into a course of action today.*”

Instead, our goal is to get a better understanding of the values that Iowa Democrats want reflected in our 2028 process. This is also an opportunity for Iowa Democrats to better understand the trade-offs leaders will have to make in 2027.”

This document includes the results of the survey, an update on the DNC process, and recommendations on next steps. It absolutely does not end discussions among our grassroots Democrats and our party’s leaders about when and how Iowa Democrats’ 2028 presidential nominating process will take place.

Topline of Survey Results

Clear themes that stand out from the survey:

- 65.3% of respondents support Iowa Democrats being first or early in 2028 and expressed a preference that Iowa play an influential role in the 2028 presidential selection process.
- 74.4% of Iowa Democrats want an inclusive party-run process and want to maximize participation or provide accommodations for Iowans who cannot participate on caucus night.
- Half of respondents want presidential candidates to build campaign organization in over 1600 precincts and would like to see some kind of traditional “in the room” caucus night experience.
- More than 60% of respondents support Iowa Democrats standing up to any attempt by Republicans in the legislature or Brenna Bird to force action on our party-run caucus process.

- Iowa Democrats are divided on “going rogue” - As the DNC process unfolds, respondents split almost down the middle on how the Iowa Democratic Party should respond if the DNC creates a calendar that excludes Iowa.

Survey Results

First Question:

The Iowa Democratic Party State Central Committee will be responsible for setting the date of 2028 Iowa Caucuses. The Iowa Caucuses could potentially be first, in an early window with three or four other states, or Super Tuesday or later. Do you have a preference for Iowa's role in the nominating process or do you not care?

Results

- *First:* 44.7%
- *Early window:* 20.6%
- *Super Tuesday or later:* 12.6%
- *Don't care:* 22%

Second Question:

Critics of the Iowa Caucuses have said that the historical caucuses make it difficult for Iowans to participate. Caucus goers must arrive at a specific place by 7:00pm on the day of the caucuses. This can disenfranchise voters who work third shift, have kids, are challenged by health care issues, or are first responders. People in favor of Iowa's historical process argue that it requires candidates to build organization in all 1600 precincts and maintains Iowa's historical alliance with New Hampshire to be early in the calendar. What would you say is closest to your views?

Results

- *IDP should focus the nominating process on maximizing participation measured by the total number of voters or caucus goers: 45.9%*
- *IDP should figure out accommodations for voters that cannot participate on Caucus Night and to alleviate overcrowding in urban precincts, but generally needs to maintain the historical "in-the-room" caucus process: 28.5%*
- *IDP should focus the nominating process on candidates' ability to organize in all 99 counties and 1600 precincts to win: 12.5%*
- *IDP should focus the process on maintaining its alliance with New Hampshire: 3.3%*
- *IDP should focus the nominating process on candidates' ability to organize in all 99 counties and 1600 precincts to win: 9.7%*

Third Question

Organizing the caucus requires a significant investment of both time and financial resources. Past competitive caucuses have cost millions of dollars and required substantial staff time and effort. Some say the work of the caucuses makes Iowa Democrats stronger in the General Election. Some people say this takes away time and resources from organizing to win the general election. Which comes closer to your view?

Results

- *The caucuses help build the Party organization. It is ok for the IDP to devote resources it might otherwise spend on organizing and communicating with unreliable Democrats and swing voters, on the Caucus because the national attention of the Caucuses is valuable and sets the stage to do the necessary organizing work to win: 54.7%*
- *The caucuses divert attention from winning elections. It should not spend money that might otherwise go to organizing and communications, even if that means presidential candidates will not come to Iowa: 45.3%*

Fourth Question

The DNC Rules & Bylaws Committee will establish a formal petition process for states seeking early-state status in the 2028 presidential nomination cycle. If Iowa is not selected, the RBC will/may sanction Iowa for a “rogue” process and refuse to credential our delegates to the National Convention. Which comes closer to your view?

- *IDP should work within the DNC process and accept the outcome, even if it means Iowa is not in the early window: 51.1%*
- *IDP should work within the DNC process, but ignore the outcome if Iowa’s plan is not accepted, like New Hampshire in 2024: 34.4%*
- *IDP should give no consideration to the DNC process: 14.4%*

Final Question

Iowa law requires that political parties hold their caucuses at least eight days before the first presidential primary. It does not speak to whether presidential delegates must be tied to precinct caucuses. The 2024 Iowa Democratic Caucuses did comply with state law. However, future Republican legislatures could tighten this law. Meanwhile, some lawyers argue this portion of code is an unconstitutional infringement on the political right of free assembly. If there is a disagreement over interpretation of state law, which is closer to your view?

- IDP should be willing to go to Court if it disagrees with an interpretation of state law, even if litigation is time consuming and expensive: 61.7%
- IDP should avoid being sued by the state, even if it disagrees with the interpretation of state law: 38.3%

Additional Analysis

We were able to match responses to unique voters registered to vote in the State of Iowa. This provided us with detailed respondent demographics, including previous caucus participation, age, voting history, location, and party affiliation. We were then able to conduct a deeper analysis on how these demographics corresponded to different responses.

A plurality of every demographic group examined supports the Iowa Caucus being first in the nation in 2028. The 18 to 24 age group showed the most support of all demographics, with 75% favoring Iowa being first. Conversely, those 50 to 64 were the most indifferent of the age groups, as 30% indicated they did not care. Support for Iowa being first was lowest among respondents who have never attended a presidential caucus, with only 34% supporting it and 32% responding they did not care. No significant difference existed based on rural classification or county.

Almost every demographic group had plurality support for the Iowa Democratic Party focusing on maximizing participation in the caucus. This sentiment was strongest with those who had never attended a presidential caucus, at 58%. The only group with a sufficient sample size to diverge from this consensus was the 18 to 24 age group, with a 42% plurality favoring the historical in-room process with accommodations. While rural voters were more likely to prioritize organizing every precinct, it remained a minority view at 18% compared to 8% urban voters.

Opinions on the caucus's value varied significantly by age, prior participation, and rural classification. The strongest support came from the 18 to 24 age group, with 79% stating that devoting more resources to the caucus is worth it to help build the party. This sentiment remained high with those aged 25 to 34 and those over 65, hovering around 60% for both groups. In contrast, respondents aged 50 to 64 were evenly split, while 56% of those age 35 to 49 considered the caucuses a distraction. Skepticism regarding resources was highest among those who have never

attended a presidential caucus at 59%. A significant geographic divide also was seen, as 59% of urban voters supported devoting more resources to the caucuses compared to 48% of rural voters.

Broad support across most demographics exists for the Iowa Democratic Party to work within the DNC process and accept the final outcome. This sentiment was strongest with those who had never attended a presidential caucus, at 64%, followed closely by the 50 to 64 age group at 63%. Those aged 18 to 24 were again the only group with a sufficient sample size to diverge from this consensus, with 67% favoring working within the DNC, but ignoring the outcome if Iowa's plan is not accepted.

A majority of every demographic group believed the Iowa Democratic Party should be willing to go to court if it disagreed with an interpretation of state law regarding our caucus process. While this sentiment peaked at 71% among those aged 25 to 34, no significant difference was found between different demographics.

Recommended next steps

Participate in DNC process for waiver

Iowa Democrats clearly want Iowa to play an early role in the 2028 nominating calendar. The Iowa Democratic Party will respond to the DNC RFP by Jan. 16, 2026 seeking a waiver to participate in the early window. Our submission will emphasize the value of a party-run process and the

importance of states like Iowa being in the early window in order to win sustainable majorities nationwide.

Briefings with candidates and elected officials

Candidates and elected officials have weighed in throughout the year with their thoughts on what they would like to see in a 2028 presidential nominating process. Throughout 2026, Iowa Democratic Party staff will continue briefing our future elected leaders on the status of the calendar and the budget necessary for a successful party-run process.

Continue soliciting feedback on caucus process and early window discussions

Iowa Democrats will continue talking about what should happen in 2028 throughout 2026. The family conversation will not end based on the due date for a report. The survey will remain on the Iowa Democratic Party website and Chair Hart will keep listening as she travels the state in 2026. The Iowa Democratic Party will keep doing the work to ensure that all options are on the table when the 2028 calendar is finalized in 2027.