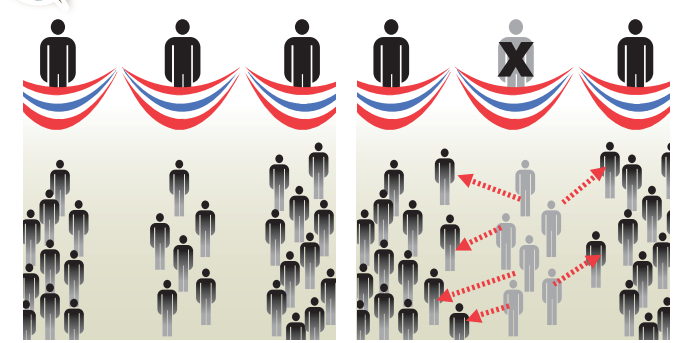


# A guide to the Iowa caucuses

On Thursday night, Iowans will take part in the first step of the 2008 presidential race. But it's more complicated than a primary election. Republicans and Democrats in the state's 1,700-plus precincts will hold caucuses in schools, churches, businesses, even private homes — sometimes spending hours in the process. Here's a guide to how the caucuses work and why they're important.

## Dems Democrats



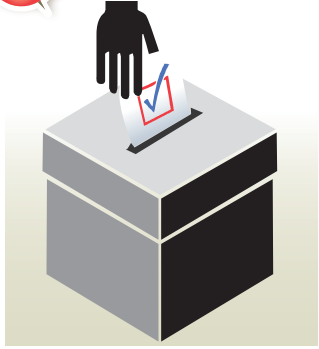
**1** Caucus-goers have 30 minutes to join "preference groups" based on which candidate they support ("undecided" also is an option); a candidate group generally must have 15 percent of the total number of caucus participants to be "viable"

**2** After the caucus chairman determines which groups are viable, participants have another 30 minutes to join a different caucus group; supporters of a candidate try to persuade other voters, especially backers of nonviable candidates, to join their group



**3** When the preference groups are set, the caucus chairman will determine the number of county convention delegates each group is entitled to elect; when those numbers are totaled at the state level, the winner of the Democratic caucus is the one with the most delegates

## \*GOP\* Republicans



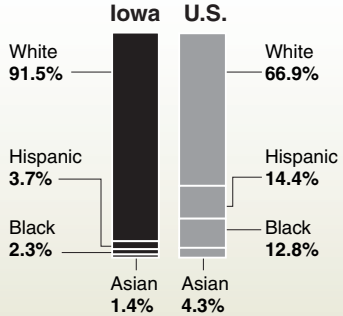
**One-step process**  
Republican caucus-goers vote for president in a straw poll — by paper ballot or show of hands — and the results are tallied statewide



### Iowa at a glance

- **Population:** 2.966 million
- **Median household income:** \$55,735
- **Poverty rate:** 10.9%
- **Major religious groups:** Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, evangelical Christian
- **Chief industries:** Agriculture, communications, construction, finance, insurance, trade, manufacturing

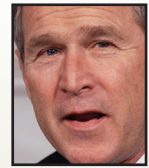
### Demographics



Only two candidates have won here, then won the presidency:



**Jimmy Carter**  
1976



**George W. Bush**  
2000

Source: The Des Moines Register, The Cedar Rapids Gazette, World Almanac, MCT Photo Service, Dallas Morning News research  
Graphic: Kyle Alcott and Michael Hogue, Dallas Morning News