



Super Tuesday is Coming to Missouri

JEFFERSON CITY — Next November 4th, people across this country will go to the polls to exercise a right fought for and won by our forefathers: the right to vote for who will lead this country in the future. It's a right that no one should take lightly, but unfortunately, too many of our fellow citizens don't take the few minutes it takes to get involved in the process. Along the way, the primaries act as a culling process to give the people a manageable number of candidates from which to choose.

While the campaigns for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations have been in full gear for what seems like more than a year now with caucuses in Iowa and Wyoming and primaries in New Hampshire and Michigan (taking place at press time) already grabbing the headlines, there's a lot more of the race yet to be run. Missouri will get its chance to have its say during the February 5th presidential primary. Super Tuesday, as it is known, will have voters going to the polls in 24 states to decide the nominees in the Republican and Democratic parties... the biggest one-day primary of all time. Some pundits are predicting whoever walks away with the big win on that day will walk away with the nominations of their respective parties. The only question might remain: how many of us will exercise our right?

If history is any indicator, too many of our fellow Missourians just don't take time to vote. In February of 2004, only about 21 percent of those eligible chose to go to the polls to cast their vote for nominees for president. Even in the hotly contested gubernatorial primary in August later that year, less than 30 percent reported to the polls. That means between 70 and 80 percent of those who could make their voices heard chose to remain silent. The numbers did get better for the November, 2004 general election as more than 63 percent turned out. But I believe too many of my fellow Missourians left too much of the process up to chance. They needed to get involved much earlier and not just accept whoever came their way after the primaries.

Our forefathers fought a war of independence so we could have a voice in how we are governed. We cannot shirk our responsibility of making sure that dream of representative government truly represents all of the people. If you are already registered to vote, I heartily encourage you to go to the polls on February 5th, no matter your political stripe, so that Missouri's voice is heard in the presidential primaries. Super Tuesday is designed to give a larger amount of states more sway in choosing a presidential nominee. Let's make sure the candidates know where this state truly stands.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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