

States that vote early can reap big bucks if they pick a winner

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The 2008 presidential campaign season had the earliest statewide primaries and caucuses in memory, starting with the Iowa Caucus on Jan. 3. Now research from North Carolina State University shows that states may have good reason to push for an early contest. States that hold early presidential primaries or caucuses get a larger share of per capita federal procurement spending compared to other states, the new study says. But being early is not enough, study author Dr. Andrew Taylor says - states must also pick the winner.

"Obviously this has real-world ramifications," Taylor says. "Here is some evidence that order does matter, and that there is some incentive for [states](#) to try to move forward in the presidential nomination process."

Evaluating data from 1984 through 2004, the new report finds that the earlier a state holds its primary or caucus, the more federal procurement funding it receives per capita - as long as it backed the candidate who ultimately won the White House. Taylor explains that states receive minimal benefit if they vote early but back a candidate who ultimately drops out of the race or loses the election. Federal procurement is federal funding for goods and services, such as defense contracts.

States that hold later contests, after the field of candidates has been narrowed, have a better chance at picking the winning candidate. But Taylor says that advantage is effectively negated, because states with later primaries or caucuses won't receive much - if any - added benefit for backing the winner.

For example, Taylor's research shows that "If the first state chooses the ultimately victorious presidential candidate in a competitive nomination ... it receives \$35.29 more in procurement per capita than if it had picked a loser." In comparison, the benefit if the eighth state picks the eventual winner would be approximately \$22.05 more in procurement per capita. Beyond the ninth contest, Taylor says, the benefits are no longer statistically significant.

More information: The paper, "Does Presidential Primary and Caucus Order Affect Policy?" was published online in *Political Research Quarterly*.

Source: North Carolina State University

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