

**THE BLOG**

# New Hampshire Primary To Be Held Next Tuesday

By Marty Kaplan

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CONCORD, N.H. — New Hampshire Secretary of State William “Billy” Gardner announced last night that New Hampshire, determined to maintain its first-in-the-nation presidential primary, will hold its primary election on Tuesday, March 6, 2007. Asked whether this dramatically accelerated timetable would still permit presidential candidates to meet a sufficient number of his state’s voters, Mr. Gardner replied, “You’re either with New Hampshire, or you’re with the terrorists.”

But at a hastily convened midnight press conference in Des Moines, Iowa Secretary of State Michael Mauro announced that the Iowa caucuses would be held this Sunday, March 4. “As goes Iowa,” said Mr. Mauro, “so go the networks.”

Senior officials of both Republican and Democratic presidential campaigns, who were surprised when reporters roused them, nevertheless committed to waging full-out efforts in both states. “New Hampshire looks like America,” said a top strategist at one campaign, “except for the blacks and Hispanics.” Said another, “Iowa looks like New Hampshire, except for the mountains.” Both spoke on background, in order not to be associated with either pandering or candor.

The hardscrabble Granite State and the heartland Hawkeye State have long had a hammerlock on candidates’ schedules. But plans by California and other states to move their primaries earlier in the year have changed the campaigns’ calculus. “The campaign can be shorter or longer,” said New Hampshire’s Mr. Gardner, whose broad, flat Yankee accent turns words like “shorter” into *shah-tah* and “order” into *otter*. “What matter is the otter,” he added, with a certitude as plain and simple as the peanut-butter-on-whole-wheat sandwiches he packs in his brown-bag lunch.

Representatives of David Geffen were unavailable for comment.

[h/t Mark Z. Barabak LATimes]

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