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## Justice Talking Radio Transcript

**Presidential Primaries: How Will New Schedules Affect the 2008 Election?—Air Date:  
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*Iowa and New Hampshire are losing their lock on being the first states in the nation to decide the major party candidates for president. California, Oregon and Montana have moved their primaries to February 5th and other states are hoping to either join these states on that date or weigh in with their votes earlier in the process. What effect will early primaries have on the 2008 presidential race? Will well-funded candidates who can afford to campaign on television in many states at one time have an advantage? Is the dark horse finish from Iowa or New Hampshire less likely to make a difference? Join us on this edition of Justice Talking as we look at the presidential primary process and how new changes will affect the upcoming presidential race.*

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking, the public radio show about law and American life. I'm Margot Adler. On today's show we're talking about presidential primaries, why we use the primary voting system to begin with, and whether it works well. We'll hear from New Hampshire voters about why getting to vote in a presidential primary first before the rest of America is part of what makes living in the Granite State so special. Later in the show we'll look how presidential hopefuls are spreading their message to voters through the Internet, but also how voters have used the internet to get out messages of their own.

RECORDING OF HILLARY CLINTON: ...about what I'm believing and trying to do, and really help this conversation about our country get started. [SOUND OF EXPLOSION]

MARGOT ADLER: Lots about the 2008 presidential election cycle is changing, from candidates campaigning methods to the election calendar. The country could end up having a Super-Duper Tuesday and knowing who the presidential candidates are as early as February 6, 2008, nine months before the general election in November. To find out more about how the presidential primary cycle is changing, I talked to Larry Sabato. He directs the Center for Politics at the

University of Virginia and is the author of over 20 books on American politics. His latest is "The Sixth Year Itch: The Rise and Fall of the George W. Bush Presidency." Welcome.

LARRY SABATO: Thank you so much.

MARGOT ADLER: More than 20 states have moved or are considering moving their primaries to February 5, 2008. Big states like California and New York have already done this. What's this all about?

LARRY SABATO: It's about each of these states trying to gain more influence in the presidential nominating process. For years they have watched Iowa and New Hampshire soak up media attention, get the candidates to spend millions of dollars and make dozens of promises, and generally seen Iowa and New Hampshire take the spotlight during presidential years. They want a piece of the action. They're all front-loading; that is moving to the beginning of the election year. And they think it's going to give them more attention. They may be very wrong.

MARGOT ADLER: I know that New Hampshire's secretary of state has said that the state is committed to moving up its primary, possibly even to this year to protect its turf. And Florida intends to move its primary up to January 29th. What has been the reaction of some of the early primary states to all of this reshuffling?

LARRY SABATO: The one thing you can be absolutely sure of is that New Hampshire will win. They're the only state that has a law permitting one individual, the long-serving secretary of state, to on his own volition set the date of the primary, and he can do so very late in the process. So other states may try to crowd New Hampshire. But if New Hampshire decides to become uncrowded and to make certain that its primary gets the maximum amount of attention, then they will do so.

MARGOT ADLER: And what date do you think New Hampshire will try to move it to?

LARRY SABATO: Uh, look, it's possible it could stay where it is in mid-January. It's possible it could be moved to early January and it's not impossible, though it's unlikely, that they will move into December of 2007.

MARGOT ADLER: The national Republican and Democratic Parties have said they will penalize states who hold their primaries before February 5th. What power do the parties really have?

LARRY SABATO: Well, the parties are doing two different things. One party is forbidding candidates from campaigning in the states that are violating the rules about the scheduling of the primaries and caucuses, the Democrats. And if candidates do actually campaign in those states they're supposed to have any delegates that are won taken away from them. On the Republican side you have the possibility of states having reduced delegations to the Republican National Convention. Now does it matter? Well, sure it matters. I suppose you could say that candidates would be concerned if they had delegates taken away, or a state would be concerned if they had fewer delegates at the convention because they'd have fewer people to reward by sending them

to the convention. On the other hand, this process is likely to be over very quickly. Does it really matter if a candidate has had delegates taken away if he or she has won the key Florida primary? It's much more important to get that media momentum, to get the headlines, to be able to say in the other states "I just won Florida." The delegates probably won't matter in the end. And beyond the individual delegates who plan to go to a convention, does it really matter to a state if their delegation is cut in half? Who would know except for the delegates who end up not going?

MARGOT ADLER: Let's talk about the impact of having a front-loaded primary calendar. I've seen it predicted in different ways that New Hampshire and Iowa will lose power, that they will gain power, that we will know the candidates by February 6th and will be bored with them by the election, that we won't know the candidates by February 6th and the later primaries will have more power. What do you think is the reality?

LARRY SABATO: No one knows for sure. No one could know for sure, but the odds are, and we're just talking odds here, we will know the identity of the candidates, the two party nominees, on the evening of February 5th, because by then it's very likely that between 20 and 25 states will have chosen their delegates, including most of the mega-states, will have two-thirds, maybe even 70 percent of the delegates, selected by that time. Is it possible that all of these candidates will split up the primary results and the delegates so that you'll have an even split, a relatively even split, and no one will have anything approaching a majority? Yeah, that's possible but it's more probable that the winners of the early primaries and caucuses will continue that momentum forward and will end up gaining the party nomination in effect by February 5th. Remember, these candidates in winning primaries and caucuses open the money spigot for themselves by winning but they also turn the money spigot off for the candidates who are losing. And at a certain point a candidate simply has to withdraw because he can't pay the vendors, or he can't pay his staff. He can't pay for the TV ads.

MARGOT ADLER: How will the early primaries affect the campaigns more generally? Aren't the candidates going to be forced to spend even more money than they had in the past?

LARRY SABATO: The candidates are already raising and spending more than candidates have ever done in the past because the campaign is already longer than any of our previous campaigns, at least the public campaign. Look, there have been sometimes, I think of for example 1952 to 1956 when it seemed entirely possible and then became reality that we'd have a rematch between Democrat Adlai Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower, the Republican who won in 1952. So I guess you could say that was a four-year campaign. But it wasn't a four-year public campaign. It was a public campaign that was really scooped into oh, six months, something like that. This campaign started approximately four months ago and it will continue for two full years, the primary campaign for more than a year. Candidates have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars a day to support the travel and the staffs and the consultants and to plan the TV ads and to take the early polls and all the rest of it. So the money equation is absolutely incredible.

The other consequence that I don't believe people are fully considering at the moment is that if we do indeed have nominees on February 5th, we have guaranteed the country the longest, most

intense day-to-day presidential general election campaign in American history. In February the two party nominees are going to be running as though it were late October. They're going to be exhausted. We the voters are going to be exhausted by November.

MARGOT ADLER: Tell me a little bit about the primary calendar. Traditionally, what's it look like? In 1980 only one state had a primary or caucus by the end of February. But since then it's progressively been accelerating. Talk about that.

LARRY SABATO: Well, I'd like to go back even further. I'd like to go back to the '50s when you had a process starting essentially at the end of March or the beginning of April and being finished by early June with the candidates by then the likely nominees taking some time off, the voters getting to take some time off, the conventions being held one in July, one in August. It was a much more leisurely pace and people weren't so burned out. By 1968 you had 16 primaries plus the District of Columbia. That was a manageable number. Again they were held between mid-March and early June. Today in 2008, for this cycle, we're going to have a minimum of 42 primaries. Some states will have primaries and caucuses. They will begin in early January. The whole process should be over, as I say, by February 5th. At the very most it will be over by the end of February, very beginning of March. And then you have that permanent campaign. So the intensity of the presidential process, the amount of money needed to run the campaigns, all of this has changed dramatically, and I would argue for the worse.

MARGOT ADLER: And what about the voters? Is it a boon or a horror for the voters?

LARRY SABATO: Well, there are some winners in this process: you the media, me the analyst, the political consultants who get very lucrative full-time contracts, the staffers who are paid very, very well. I think I've just exhausted the winners.

MARGOT ADLER: Right. So you're saying the general public is the loser?

LARRY SABATO: The general public would be right at the top of the list. They hear not only the politics day in and day out, but they hear negative attacks day in and day out.

MARGOT ADLER: Why isn't there one day for a national primary?

LARRY SABATO: A national primary probably wouldn't be a very good thing. It would be a television primary. Candidate's personal appearances wouldn't matter anywhere. For that matter, they could just campaign from a TV studio. They could pick one, any one, and use satellites to communicate with everybody or they could fly tarmac to tarmac from airport to airport around the United States. They'd never get to know real people and real problems.

MARGOT ADLER: So they wouldn't have to "press the flesh," as they say.

LARRY SABATO: They wouldn't press the flesh, and that is an advantage of Iowa and New Hampshire. By the way, I don't think it always has to be Iowa and New Hampshire, but there is something to be said for having candidates start out in a couple of small states where the people there expect to meet the candidates personally. Iowans and New Hampshireites won't think of

voting for a candidate unless they've personally talked with the candidate. Some voters joke that if they haven't met a candidate three or four times they're not going to seriously consider the candidate. But that's to the good. They get to look eyeball to eyeball with the candidate. They get a chance to evaluate personally whether this person is real or not.

MARGOT ADLER: Larry Sabato directs the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. He's the author of over 20 books on American politics. His latest: "Divided States of America: The Slash and Burn Politics of the 2004 Presidential Election." Thank you so much for coming on our show.

LARRY SABATO: Thank you very much. I enjoyed it.

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MARGOT ADLER: Coming up on Justice Talking, we'll have a debate between the Republican Party chair in New Hampshire and a Maryland state senator about the importance of New Hampshire getting to vote first in the presidential primary. We'll also find out how some New Hampshire residents feel about it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: New Hampshire had it first. They should keep it. They've been starting it for years and it should just stay that way. It's tradition.

MARGOT ADLER: The politics of presidential primaries--stay with us. [MUSIC] MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. 2008 may go down as the longest general election for a president in history. For voters in New Hampshire, the primary season is a time when their state steps into the national spotlight. All of the candidates are there. The media are crawling all over the place and citizens get to feel like their vote really counts. We talked with some Keene, New Hampshire residents about how they feel about getting to vote for a presidential candidate before the rest of America.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm a native. So I'm so used to it that it's hard to imagine it being any other way.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: New Hampshire doesn't have a lot of exciting things going on so once every four years it's nice to get everybody out and talking about something.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think people get really excited about it here and it really creates a lot of civic involvement and a lot of democracy.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The more that TV and media become a big part of campaign coverage, the more convinced I am that the need to meet people on a one-on-one basis is only possible in a smaller state.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: If you're engaged at all and interested in politics at all, you can actually shake hands with every president because they're all at one point coming through New Hampshire.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: New Hampshire had it first. They should keep it. They've been starting it for years and it should just stay that way. It's tradition.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't think it matters who goes first. Yes, traditionally we've always been there. Does it matter if we continue to be the first? I don't believe so.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: There are more people lined up, more states, dates that are lined up with New Hampshire's and you get a broader perspective on the country. So I don't think New Hampshire should be threatened by it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We'd be disappointed that the spotlight, you know, wasn't on us in some ways, but I still think you'd see people who really care about the political process and expect direct answers from their leaders.

MARGOT ADLER: Much to the chagrin of many New Hampshire residents there are several proposals to change the presidential primary election system.

To talk about these suggestions and to find out why some think that changing the system is important for a democracy, I'm joined by Fergus Cullen and Jamie Raskin. Fergus Cullen is chairman of the New Hampshire Republican Party. He's also a small-business owner, a high school coach, and a newspaper columnist. Jamie Raskin is a professor of constitutional law at American University and a Democratic state senator from Maryland, representing Silver Spring and Takoma Park. He is on the board of Fair Vote, an organization that promotes fair elections.

Welcome both of you to Justice Talking.

FERGUS CULLEN: Thank you. Glad to be here.

JAMIE RASKIN: Thanks for having us.

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus, why is important to keep the primary system the way it is with New Hampshire and Iowa having such influence in the primaries?

FERGUS CULLEN: Well, because it has served our nation well. You know, New Hampshire's interest is not in being more important or anything like that. It's an historic, traditional role that our state has played that vets candidates with a highly participatory and very well-informed electorate in a role that the state takes very seriously. And again, looking back historically, it is one that has served the nation well. And that's why it's so important to keep it the way it has been.

MARGOT ADLER: Jamie, why do you think we need to change the existing primary system?

JAMIE RASKIN: Well, I think we need to make it more democratic and more participatory and a bit less random. I mean, you know, I love New Hampshire as much as the next American, and it's picturesque and beautiful and snowy in the winter. And, you know, the tradition has its

charms and in some sense that's why I think people like it just because, you know, we can count on it. It's been there and so on, but if you think about what we're really doing, we're choosing a president. And there's no particular reason that New Hampshire of all the small states should necessarily have priority of place, and there's no reason that small states should necessarily come before other states. But if they do, you know, maybe the right way to do it is to rotate the small states and then move to the medium size states and the bigger states. But there's just something arbitrary about the way we've evolved our system now.

MARGOT ADLER: Now some would argue that New Hampshire has the tradition, the infrastructure, the local media, they know how to do this well. So why should you fix something that isn't broken?

JAMIE RASKIN: You know, New Hampshire and Iowa are not demographically representative. I mean they don't look like America necessarily and they're obviously part of America. And, you know, we should be asking in a much broader sense what is it we want from our system for choosing the president. And so many people are left out. So what's happening in this current cycle is that a whole bunch of states have moved to February the 5th, which means it's likely to be over on February 6th. There's no overall coherence to the system. It's sort of like every state is in it for itself and will do whatever it can to move itself up to try to game the system to get more influence and more power. And I just think we need to go back to the drawing board and ask: What are the values that we're trying to vindicate in setting up a primary process?

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus, tell what it's like to be part of the New Hampshire primary process.

FERGUS CULLEN: Well, it definitely is exciting and I can understand why other states are covetous of the attention that individual voters and communities receive in New Hampshire. You know, it is true that, you know, every week a major candidate for U.S. President is in New Hampshire, often touring small towns. And it's very important that this process happen somewhere. And I'd argue that it's best to happen in a place like New Hampshire that, you know, in the early part of this year's campaign, Senator Clinton and Senator Obama had 3,000-person rallies here in New Hampshire, and I'll be the first person to say how impressed I was with those. But at those kinds of events that are impersonal, they can happen in any airport hangar anywhere in the country.

MARGOT ADLER: Since the primary system began in earnest in the late 1960s, state delegates around the country have become committed to a candidate earlier in the process. In 1972, just 17 percent of delegates were committed to a candidate by mid-April. In 2004, 71 percent of delegates were committed to a candidate by mid-March. So if things are that tied up by March we'll have an eight-month general election. Can Americans tolerate that? I'd like to ask you both. I'll start with you, Fergus.

FERGUS CULLEN: Of greater concern than the moving up earlier and earlier in the calendar to me is the compressed nature of the calendar, the fact that so many events happen so quickly. I think it increases the likelihood of an unintended consequence happening where one party or the other wakes up with buyer's remorse, having galloped off to nominate one candidate who everyone understands is not electable in a general election. Historically, it could have happened

to the Republicans in 1996 when Pat Buchanan was an early winner in New Hampshire. It could've happened to the Democrats in 2004 when Howard Dean, you know, looked like he was on his way to winning in a place like New Hampshire before he collapsed in Iowa. And the idea that there is not enough time for a candidate who stumbles to recover or for the nation to meet candidates who are suddenly new to them, that's a greater concern to me.

MARGOT ADLER: Jamie, if we know all the candidates by February 6th, are we going to tolerate the next eight months?

JAMIE RASKIN: The real problem here is that it's sort of like everybody's trying to game the system. It's all of this "strategery," if you will, by the states, trying to make themselves important in the process. And you don't know whether what you do is going to work or not because there is no overall coherence. So there are some plans out there. There's the so-called Delaware Plan. There's a plan called the American Plan, which I like, which basically says why don't we have a day where we have several of the small states go together so the effects that, you know, you're describing in New Hampshire can be replicated in different parts of the country so we could have, you know, a smaller Southern state, a New England state, we could have a Southwest state, we could have a Midwestern state, a farm state. But there would be a series of steps rather than New Hampshire being kind of the make-it-or-break-it point for the vast majority of candidates. And maybe there's a front runner and one other person standing who would likely be knocked off on the February 5th date, where a bunch of the states have now tried to, you know, insinuate themselves at the front of the line.

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus, what do you think about this American plan where you would start small in small population states and then grow to larger ones over time?

FERGUS CULLEN: Well, here's why I think the idea of the New Hampshire primary can't just be transplanted to any other state: You know, it's the informed nature of the electorate here that over decades, over now since 1952, holding the first-in-the-nation primary, the people here have gotten used to the role of vetting candidates. And I've seen this in action so many times where, you know, even a candidate with star power like Senator Clinton will be asked a question at a relatively small gathering with a 100, 150 people. And the questioner will receive, will believe that they didn't receive a satisfactory answer and then will, you know, hit the candidate between the eyes with a tough follow-up. And that kind of thing where the voters come to these meetings having done their homework, having gotten on to the Web, having researched the candidates and their positions, and presents or confronts the candidate with it. That's something which you can't just replicate in some other state.

MARGOT ADLER: So you don't think it can be done elsewhere? That people in other parts of the country are not as informed, not as intelligent about the electoral process?

FERGUS CULLEN: I will say less participatory, and yes, I'll say less informed. I'm not going to say less intelligent. That certainly isn't the case. But it's a role that people here take very seriously, a responsibility to go to these events and make sure that they've done their homework in advance. And also, you know, we have a higher participation rate, a greater percentage of



people in New Hampshire vote in elections, vote particularly in the presidential primary, than you see in other states.

MARGOT ADLER: Jamie, did you want to respond?

JAMIE RASKIN: Well, if I could just respond to that. I mean it may be that people vote in higher numbers in New Hampshire because their vote means a lot more. And you see a drop off in turnout in places towards the end of the process where the nomination is already a fait accompli. And I don't know whether it's actually empirically true that New Hampshire voters are better educated and more politically sophisticated. But if so, that might also follow from the fact that they enjoy this incredible perk of being, you know, as you're describing, kind of the designated, educated voters, like the representatives of the rest of the country. And I just don't know if that's the most sensible way to discuss the incredible issues facing the country in terms of national security, the war in Iraq, the imperial overreach we've gotten into, poverty, and healthcare, and the environment, and so on. I'd like to see a longer campaign where these issues are debated all over the country and we get different kinds of communities engaged in the discussion.

MARGOT ADLER: What will changing the primary landscape, all this front-loading, mean for the Democratic candidates in terms of fundraising, Jamie?

JAMIE RASKIN: Well, what's happening is if all of this is practically going to be over by February, you know, this campaign started in January of this year. I remember, you know, I won my campaign in November and I was, I remember the day after I won waking up and reading articles about the Democratic candidates going to New Hampshire and Iowa already. I couldn't believe we'd just finished the 2006 cycle and already the candidates were starting. But they were doing what they have to do. It's a question of necessity. If the campaign is going to be over in January and February of '08, they've got to spend all of 2007 campaigning. And more specifically raising the money to try to deal with that mega-primary that has sort of spontaneously evolved, that national primary on February the 5th.

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus, how will it change things for Republicans?

FERGUS CULLEN: Well, for those who are concerned about the role of money in politics, then having a state like New Hampshire going early is in fact--should be part of the dream. You know it makes fundraising less important because any candidate who can raise a million dollars, and I'm not saying that's no small task, but that person can run a fully funded campaign in a state like New Hampshire, have an equal opportunity to get their message out and demonstrate an ability to earn support. So it's absolutely true that when you have mega-state or multi-state primaries going earlier and earlier in the process, it makes establishment candidates that much more powerful. It decreases the ability of a lesser known candidate, say a Jimmy Carter in 1975, say a Bill Clinton in 1991, to get the kind of traction they need to demonstrate that they're worth looking at from a national perspective.

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus Cullen is chairman of the New Hampshire Republican Party. Jamie Raskin is a professor of constitutional law at American University. We're talking about Election

2008 and the primaries on Justice Talking. Less than one percent of New Hampshire voters are African-American, compared with 12 percent nationwide. There certainly aren't that many Latinos in New Hampshire. Wouldn't changing the primary system allow for more minority voters to be better representative of the electorate, Fergus?

FERGUS CULLEN: Sure, the diversity argument. You know, the key question here is actually does the Republican Party within New Hampshire and the Democratic Party within New Hampshire reflect or represent their national parties, because that's what the real key is in terms of is New Hampshire representative. And it is true that New Hampshire is a state with less diversity in terms of ethnicity--on the Republican side we may have fewer religious conservatives than one might see in other parts of the country--but no state is a perfect microcosm of the country as a whole and so I really just don't think that argument holds water.

JAMIE RASKIN: Well, it's true that no state is a perfect demographic microcosm of the entire country but some states come much closer to being that than New Hampshire does. I mean, New Hampshire is one of the whitest states in the union and I think Iowa is pretty close to being in the same neighborhood. And again, that's in no way to diss New Hampshire but it does mean that the primary politics has a certain kind of skew and it begins to distort the picture.

MARGOT ADLER: Do you think that voter fatigue is a real issue if the nominations are essentially wrapped up before the election? I'd like both of you to respond. And if you do believe that, is there any way to compress the election cycle? Start with you, Jamie.

JAMIE RASKIN: I think we've got the opposite of voter fatigue. I think we have voter frustration in large parts of the country where people are reduced to spectator status. You know, it just, it doesn't feel right to people in other parts of the country that the election is either completely over by the time their primary or caucus happens or that their vote really doesn't mean anything because it's, you know, so late in the game that the die is already cast. I think that one reason that we might want to rotate it or at least break it up to give some power to everybody is that it will increase people's engagement with the process.

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus, I wanted to ask you about voter fatigue and the idea of--is there any way to compress our election cycle?

FERGUS CULLEN: If it's any consolation, Jamie, you know New Hampshire gets very little attention when it comes to the general election. New Hampshire has four Electoral College votes. And what we've seen obviously in the last couple of closely contested presidential elections is everyone knows which states are in play, which states really matter. And the candidates spend virtually, you know, a hugely disproportionate amount of their time in places like Ohio and Florida--

JAMIE RASKIN: Well, you know, but we have a solution for that in Maryland--forgive me for interrupting--which I'd love you to take up with the New Hampshire legislature which is the National Popular Vote plan, which creates an inter-state compact for all the states to say that they will give their Electoral College votes to the winner in the national popular vote. And so this

puts every part of the country into play whether you're a traditionally red state or blue state or a swing state.

FERGUS CULLEN: Yeah, a constitutional reform like that, I think, that recognizes the modern era, you know, I think is worth some discussion. But in terms of voter fatigue, I do worry that the compressed nominating process, again, increases the chance of an unintended consequence where one party or the other nominates a candidate. You know, polls come out three weeks later showing that the race is effectively over and unlikely to change and candidates already start thinking about, ah, we just, we've got to get it right next time in 2012. We better start today. Literally 11 months before the next President is inaugurated, people have already written off that election and are planning on the following one.

MARGOT ADLER: Fergus Cullen is chairman of the New Hampshire Republican Party. Jamie Raskin is a professor of constitutional law at American University and a Democratic state senator from Maryland. Thank you both for being on the show.

FERGUS CULLEN: Thank you.

JAMIE RASKIN: Thank you so much.

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MARGOT ADLER: Coming up on Justice Talking, we'll find out why all the presidential candidates are refusing to accept public financing of election campaigns. And we'll hear how MySpace, YouTube, and other sites on the Internet are replacing some old methods of running for President. And we'll visit Arizona and find out why that state's governor is considering moving its primary up as a way to get some attention from presidential candidates.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Normally we just see the underbelly of the plane as it flies from the East Coast to California.

MARGOT ADLER: Why the 2008 election feels like it's right around the corner and why Americans might be feeling that way for a very long time.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking, where we make the connection between law and American life. I'm Margot Adler. Today we're looking at why the 2008 primary election is changing. More than 20 states have decided to move or are considering moving their primaries up on the calendar, including Florida, California, and New York. It's an election year chess game, with some states trying to gain more power by moving their primaries up. Amidst all of the leap-frogging and jockeying are smaller states who hope to have more influence on the presidential election than they've had in the past but could end up getting lost in the shuffle. Rene Gutel reports on how Arizona could join the many that are moving their primaries up.

RENE GUTEL: Talk to Arizona's governor, Janet Napolitano, and she'll tell you what primary season here is usually like. Every four years as campaign jets crisscross the country, the view from the desert is the same.

JANET NAPOLITANO: Normally we just see the underbelly of the plane as it flies from the East Coast to California.

RENE GUTEL: It's as though Arizona, with its 10 electoral votes, was at best a political afterthought. That's why there's been talk of the Grand Canyon State moving its primary to February 5th. Maybe the line of reasoning goes Arizonans vote would matter more. According to state law, the primary falls on the fourth Tuesday of February. That's February 26 in 2008, but the governor has the power to move that date up as she did in 2004.

JANET NAPOLITANO: You know, I moved it up last time and we ended up getting a lot of visits from the candidates and actually having a primary debate held in Phoenix. And that was kind of a first for us.

RENE GUTEL: Arizona's Democratic Party is asking Napolitano to move the primary up to the 5th to be part of this so-called Super-Duper Tuesday. Until recently it seemed like a foregone conclusion, but now with so many states in on the same game Napolitano is weighing her decision carefully.

JANET NAPOLITANO: I need to think my way through that because the Super-Duper Tuesday, as you call it, is a relatively new development. You know, if you were asking me these questions three or four months ago and we were having a February 5th primary, we would have been virtually by ourselves. But now of course you have a number of states that have moved up their dates, so that has to be put into the calculus.

RENE GUTEL: Regardless of when the election is held, presidential campaigning is already underway in Arizona.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So let's dig right in. First of all, campaign news.

RENE GUTEL: At this meeting of about two dozen Barack Obama supporters gathered at the student union of Arizona State University in Tempe, volunteers split into small groups to strategize. Karen Similaro is in charge of campaign outreach, and she's showing off her latest creation, a new twist on the campaign button, small pebbles she calls "Baracks."

KAREN SIMILARO: All we do is we write [www.BarackObama.com](http://www.BarackObama.com) on the back, and then we put anything from a peace sign to a flower, and people go through it and kind of find the one that best suits them.

RENE GUTEL: Other groups talk about the web campaign or voter registration drives. Most of the Democrats here, like organizer Ken Chapman, aren't at all sure Arizona should join the mega-primary.

KEN CHAPMAN: I would hope to say that we're going to see the candidates show up and pay Arizona some attention. Realistically, maybe, maybe not. I mean, maybe it doesn't change anything at all. I certainly hope it doesn't get any worse.

RENE GUTEL: Chapman says an early focus on Arizona means the candidates might address important regional issues like immigration and water rights. Campaign volunteer Dave McKinney shares another concern. For the first time ever, Arizona's neighbor, Nevada, is holding caucuses early, January 19th, after Iowa but before New Hampshire. It's a big move that signals the growing political importance of the West, but McKinney feels it may not bode well for Arizona.

DAVE MCKINNEY: I've been talking to some folks and they really think that, you know, Nevada is going to be the key state for the West, and that even the national campaigns will ask us as Arizonans to drive to Nevada and campaign in Nevada for them. You know, that's fine. We're willing to do that. But that's where the emphasis seems to be from the national campaign, which is too bad.

RENE GUTEL: On the GOP side, Arizona Republicans don't seem to mind much one way or the other.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I guess I don't have a preference.

RENE GUTEL: Randy Pullen is chairman of the Arizona Republican Party. Most analysts say it's a foregone conclusion. Arizona Republican primary voters will opt for John McCain. McCain's been an Arizona senator for more than 20 years.

RANDY PULLEN: Senator McCain is pretty well already known in Arizona so I don't think it matters on February 5th or 26th if we have the primary because I think the voters are still going to know who he is.

RENE GUTEL: Political analyst Bruce Merrell of Arizona State University says there's actually one scenario where Arizona might be better off, if it simply leaves the primary on the fourth Tuesday of February.

BRUCE MERRELL: Strange as it may sound, it may very well be that if after Super-Duper Tuesday there's no decisive outcome, particularly in the Democratic Party, that if Arizona is more by itself, we could get a lot more attention actually by having it later.

RENE GUTEL: That could mean a quick hit of national media attention and maybe the economic boost of a sudden glut of TV ads. And comparing these different scenarios is all part of the political calculus Governor Napolitano is considering as she tries to make sure Arizonans see more than just the underbelly of the campaign jets. She has 'til the fall to make her decision. For Justice Talking, I'm Rene Gutel in Phoenix.

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MARGOT ADLER: As the presidential election season gets longer as a result of earlier primaries around the country, it's costing candidates more. To help sort out why elections cost so much and why this election could be the country's first billion-dollar election, I talked with Fred Wertheimer. He's the president and CEO of Democracy 21 and the Democracy 21 Education Fund. He's spent more than 30 years working on the issues of money and politics, government accountability, and reform of the political system. He was the president of Common Cause from 1981 to 1995. Thanks for coming on Justice Talking, Fred.

FRED WERTHEIMER: It's good to be with you.

MARGOT ADLER: For every candidate there is the option to receive public funds to help finance their primary campaigns. How much money is available to candidates and where does it come from?

FRED WERTHEIMER: Well it comes from a tax check-off on taxpayers' forms that authorizes the money to be used in campaigns. And it provides matching funds for small contributions in the primaries with an overall spending limit on the whole campaign and a full grant for the general election. It's a voluntary system and if you take the funds you have to agree to the spending limits. The problem this time around, however, is that the system is now outmoded because the spending limits, particularly for the primaries, are far too low compared to what candidates have to spend in a modern-day campaign. That's because the Congress never adjusted the system in the 30 years-plus since it was enacted in 1974.

MARGOT ADLER: So how much is available for a candidate in the primary? And how much is available in the general election?

FRED WERTHEIMER: Well, if a candidate went into this system, they could spend roughly \$50,000,000 in the primary in return for getting matching funds to match every contribution of \$250.00. The grant in the general election would be roughly \$90,000,000. Now in order to understand how out-of-sync this is with modern campaigns, if you look at the amount that Senator Kerry raised for the whole period of the primary in 2004 it was \$225,000,000. President Bush raised \$275,000,000. To go into this system today you would only be able to spend \$45,000,000 during that whole primary period. So as a practical matter it means that none of the frontrunners will go into the system because they could not be competitive with people who are not in the system.

MARGOT ADLER: Presently just 10 percent of taxpayers check the box on their income tax returns asking that part of their taxes be used to finance political campaigns. Why isn't there more public support for this concept?

FRED WERTHEIMER: Well, I think there are multiple reasons and I don't know that you can use the check-off as a poll.

MARGOT ADLER: Particularly because I would imagine that many tax preparers prepare these things and people don't even see the box.

FRED WERTHEIMER: Well, and most of the software that is used to prepare tax returns automatically defaults to “no.” You have many people not even aware of why it’s there on the tax form. You have many people not aware that you don’t have to pay extra money to support the check-off. But even with that small check-off, that 10 percent of people who are basically saying we want our money used for the presidential campaign is a far greater number than the number of individuals who actually make private contributions to the presidential campaigns.

MARGOT ADLER: And it’s what, \$3.00, or what is it? What’s the number now? Is it \$3.00 a person?

FRED WERTHEIMER: It’s \$3.00 a person or \$6.00 a couple.

MARGOT ADLER: And if no one uses it, where does the money go?

FRED WERTHEIMER: The money stays there and it’s available for future use and would be available for a revised system to fund elections in the future.

MARGOT ADLER: Fred Wertheimer is the president and CEO of Democracy 21 and the Democracy 21 Education Fund. Thank you for talking with me, Fred.

FRED WERTHEIMER: Well, it’s been a pleasure. I appreciate the opportunity.

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MARGOT ADLER: In order to run a 21st-century campaign, a candidate needs a lot of money. But a candidate also must have a sizable Internet presence as well. In the 2008 presidential election, candidates are using the Web in ways not seen before. To get a sense of how the Web can work both in favor and against a candidate is Andrew Rasiej. He’s the co-founder of the blog TechPresident, which covers how the 2008 presidential candidates are using the Web, but also how content created by voters is affecting the campaign. Welcome Andrew.

ANDREW RASIEJ: Pleasure to be here.

MARGOT ADLER: Andrew, I thought we would start the interview by playing an excerpt from a video clip of Hillary Clinton. It’s been seen over 3,000,000 times on YouTube. This can only be viewed on the Internet. It uses an Apple ad and shows Hillary Clinton on a Big Brother-esque screen speaking to thousands of very regimented people in an Orwellian world. Let’s listen to it.

RECORDING OF HILLARY CLINTON: I hope you’ve learned a little bit more about what I’m believing and trying to do, and really help this conversation about our country get started. I hope to keep this conversation going all the way to November 2008. [SOUND OF EXPLOSION]

MARGOT ADLER: So what’s the story behind this?

ANDREW RASIEJ: Well, Phil de Vellis, who at the time when this video first hit the net was anonymous, created a piece of what we like to call “voter-generated content,” that he put on the

web and sent around to some people, who then proceeded to send it around to other people to the point where almost 500,000 people watched it on the Internet. And then when it got to that level it started getting picked up by the mainstream media, which then started playing it on television. And it was then seen by millions of people, demonstrating that voter-generated content is going to be the wild card in the 2008 presidential election.

MARGOT ADLER: Why do you think this clip resonated so much?

ANDREW RASIEJ: The content, the message of the video, actually resonated very highly with the Internet community as a whole, because the Internet community felt that Hillary's attempt to use the Internet to quote-unquote "have a conversation" was a little disingenuous. In fact, maybe a lot disingenuous, in that she was really talking down, using the medium to reach an Internet audience and saying that she was going to have a conversation, but there really wasn't an opportunity for the talking back that the Internet is known for, which is the two-way, side-to-side conversation between users.

MARGOT ADLER: Let's talk about MySpace. It's a huge portal to young voters. On your blog, TechPresident, you list the number of MySpace friends each candidate has. Who cares how many friends a candidate has?

ANDREW RASIEJ: Well who cares about polls? You know, MySpace friends is an indicator of enthusiasm for a particular candidate and it shows that something that they've either said or done is pulling interest. And so we think it's significant because this kind of tool wasn't available before.

MARGOT ADLER: Which candidate, in your opinion, or which candidates, are using the new technology most effectively?

ANDREW RASIEJ: Well, surprisingly, the John Edwards and the Barack Obama campaigns have probably done the most to reach out to the Internet community and allow the content that their supporters want to produce to be included on their site. And so there's a little bit more openness on the part of those two campaigns in incorporating blog posts, comments, video, podcasts, and other kinds of media.

MARGOT ADLER: And we even have a clip of Edwards in which he does this. Let's play that.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: President Bush isn't listening to us.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's time to end the war.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Congress passed a plan to end it

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: and bring our troops home.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: But the President vetoed it.



UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We want Congress to know

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: we are with you.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Don't back down to President Bush.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Send him the same bill again and again.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We the People

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We the People

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We the People

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: will stand with you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Because stopping a President who believes he can do no wrong

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: takes people with courage to do what's right.

JOHN EDWARDS: I'm John Edwards and I approve this message.

MARGOT ADLER: So what has he managed to achieve here through this clip?

ANDREW RASIEJ: Well, this actually is a very interesting new effort by the John Edwards campaign where they are producing a what would be a traditional political television commercial, and then at the end after the section where John Edward says "I'm John Edwards and I approve this commercial," or this message, the campaign then invites other Americans to add their voice, to add their video to this commercial, gathering their voices in demanding the end to the war.

MARGOT ADLER: And do you think that that kind of message resonates or does it come off as being a little hokey?

ANDREW RASIEJ: I think Americans in general welcome the opportunity to participate in the political process much more than simply voting. And that's one of the reasons why the Internet is so, such an exciting new arena in the political environment, because the tools now exist for the citizen to demand and to take hold of the process and the discourse, where before they were simply asked to either send money or vote.

MARGOT ADLER: Andrew Rasiej co-founded the blog TechPresident to cover how the 2008 presidential candidates are using the Web and how content created by voters is affecting the campaign. Thank you so much for talking with us.

ANDREW RASIEJ: Pleasure to be here. Thank you.

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MARGOT ADLER: We've talked a lot about the role of New Hampshire in the presidential election, but Iowa also has a big influence. As we saw in the 2004 election, the Iowa caucus can catapult a candidate or send him spiraling. I interviewed Christopher Hull, who's the author of a forthcoming book called "Grassroots Rules: How the Iowa Caucus Helps Elect American Presidents." He reminds us how Howard Dean's performance in the Iowa caucus was the beginning of the end for his candidacy.

CHRISTOPHER HULL: Dean's performance after the caucus when he, if I may, ahem, quote him, "YEAH!"

MARGOT ADLER: Our conversation and more about presidential primaries can be found on our website, [justicetalking.org](http://justicetalking.org). While you're there let us know what you think. You can also check out our blog. You can also podcast our show. Thanks for joining me. I hope you'll tune in next week. I'm Margot Adler.

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