

Plurality and the 50 States



Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

Presentation to the

Government Operations Interim Committee

June 17, 2015

Roadmap

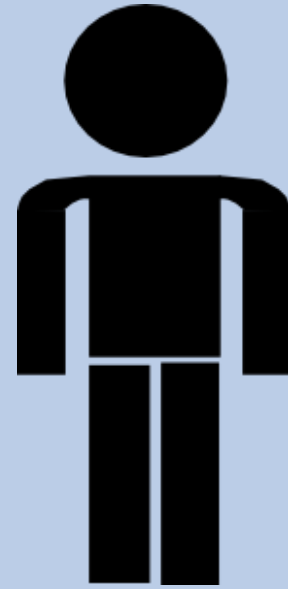
- What is plurality?
- Why is it an issue now?
- How do other states address it?

What is Plurality?

Majority



51%

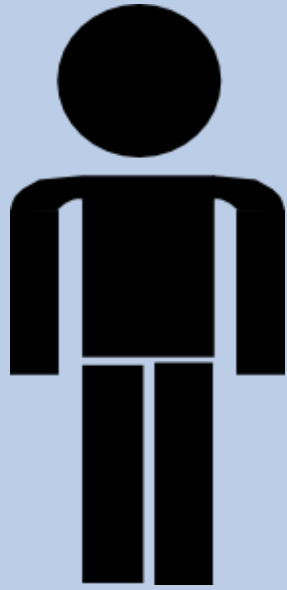


49%

Plurality



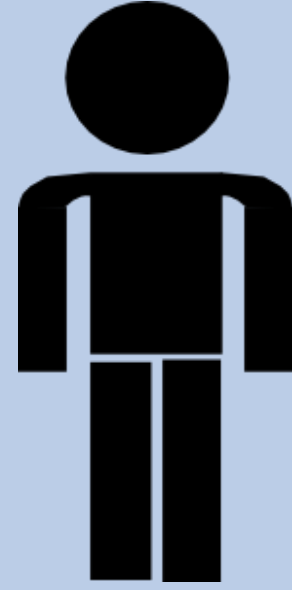
15%



35%



40%



10%

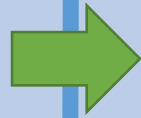


Why Now?

Party Convention



Party Convention



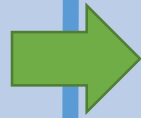
Primary Election



51%

49%

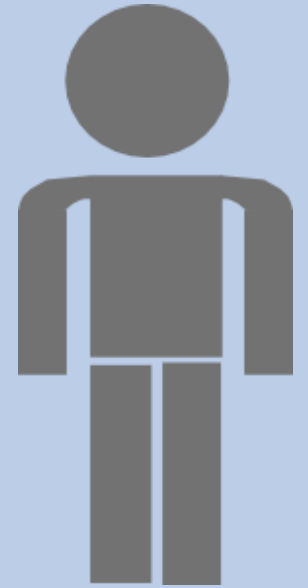
Party Convention



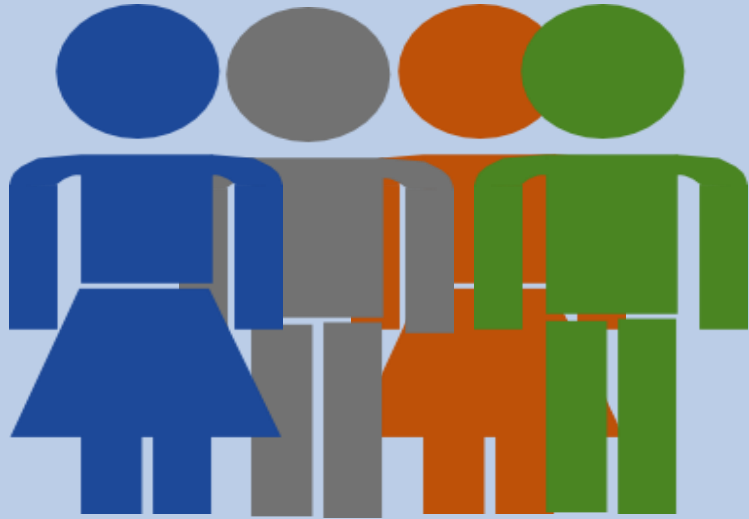
Primary Election



General Election



Party Convention



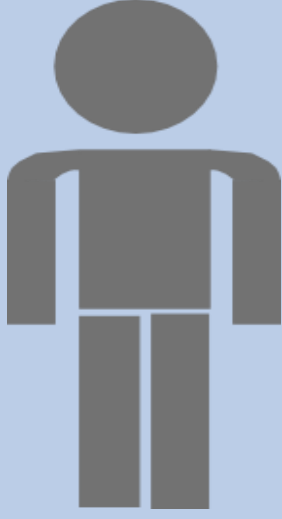
Primary Election

General Election

Party Convention

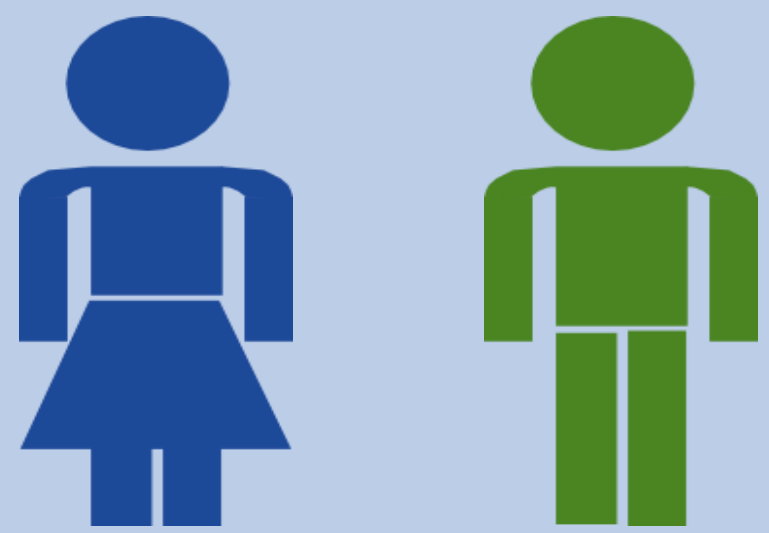


Primary Election

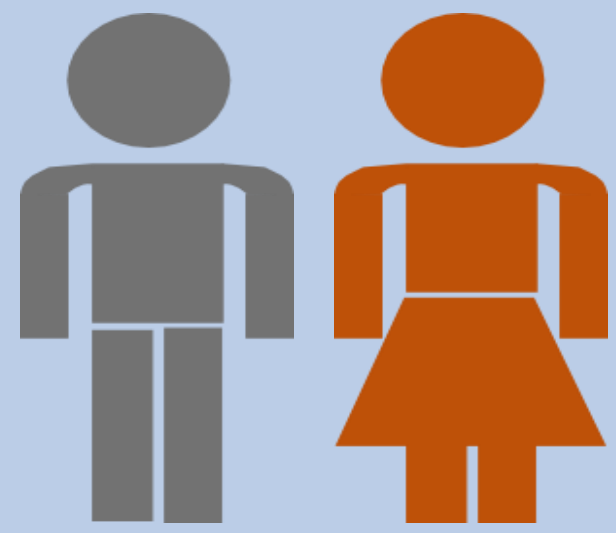


General Election

Party Convention



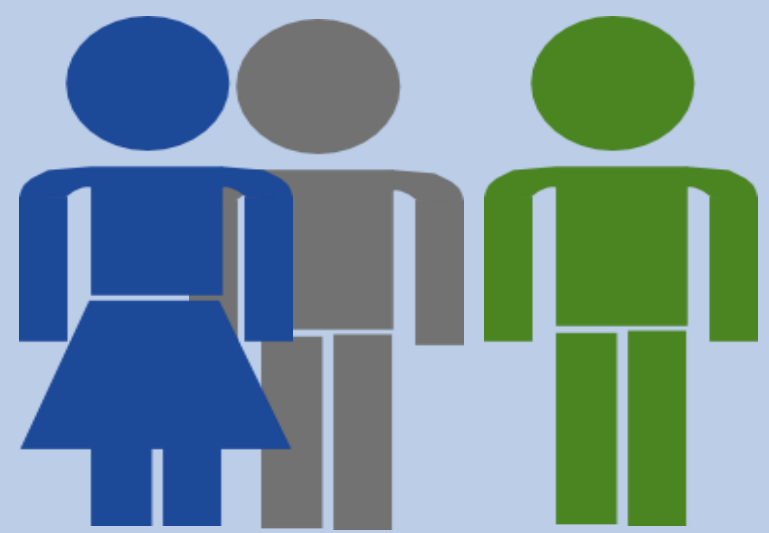
Primary Election



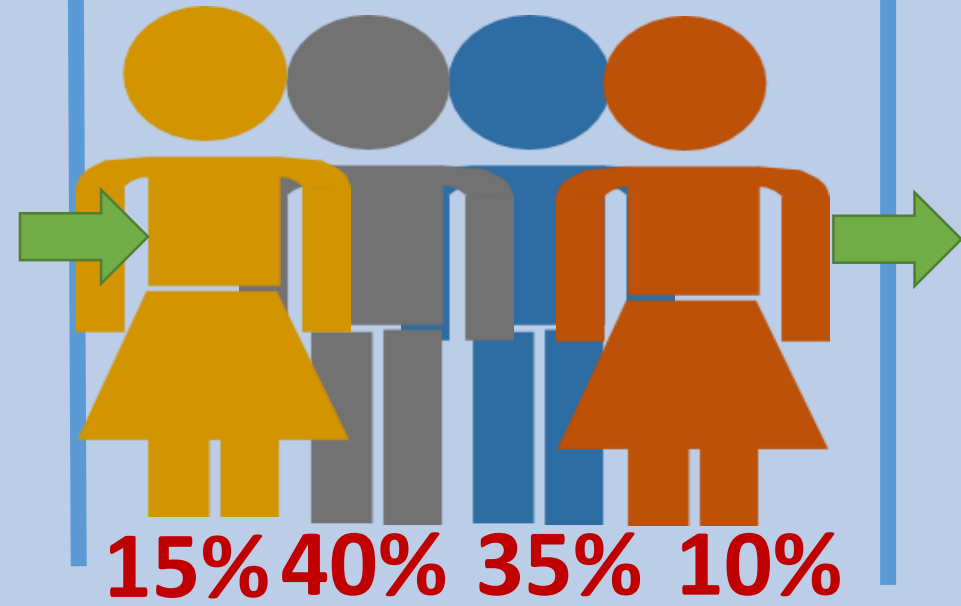
General Election



Party Convention



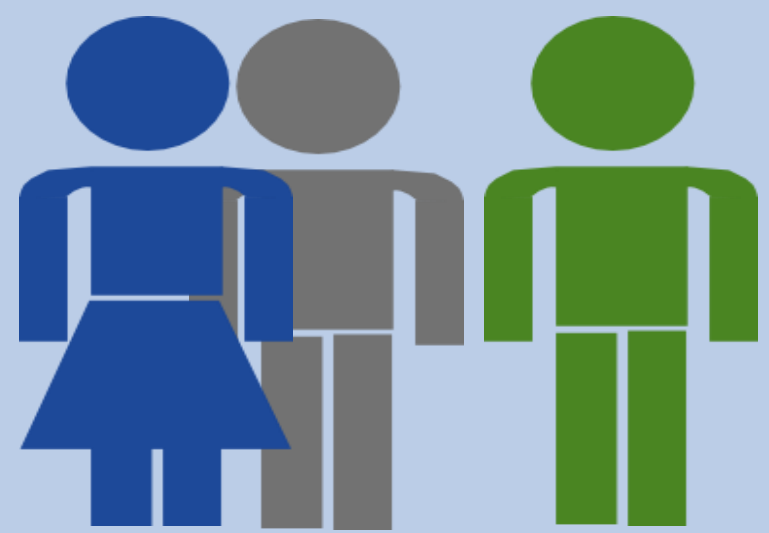
Primary Election



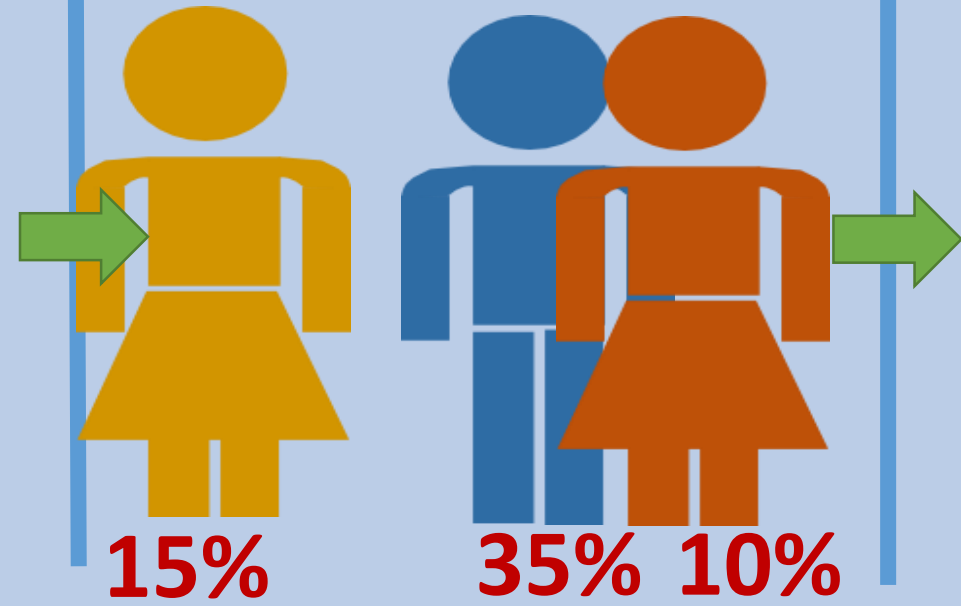
General Election

Petition

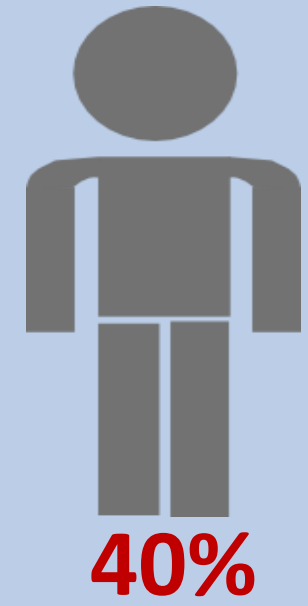
Party Convention



Primary Election



General Election

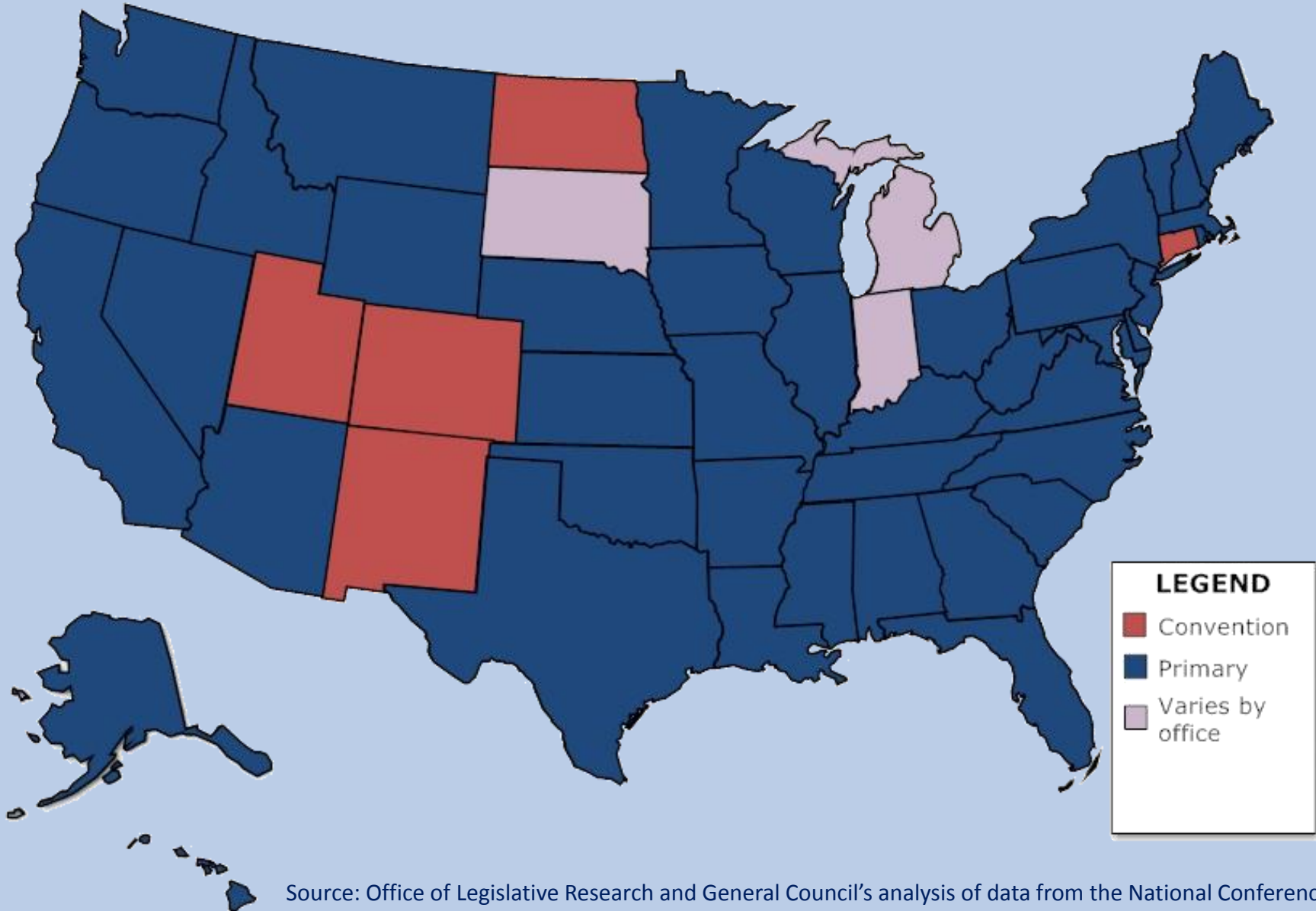


Petition

What are
Other States
Doing?

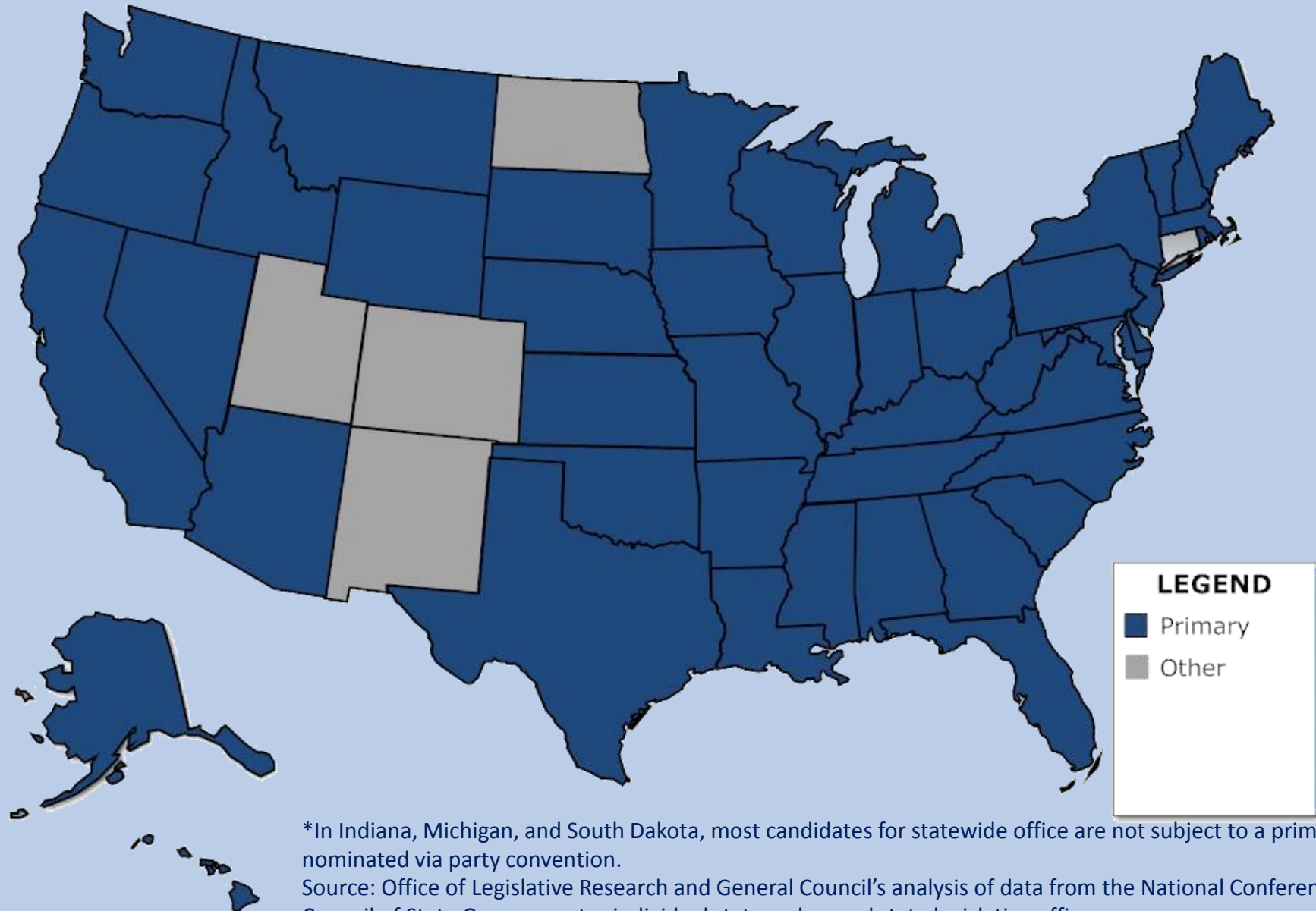
Pause

Initial Candidate Narrowing Method



Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

States using Primary as Initial Nomination Method



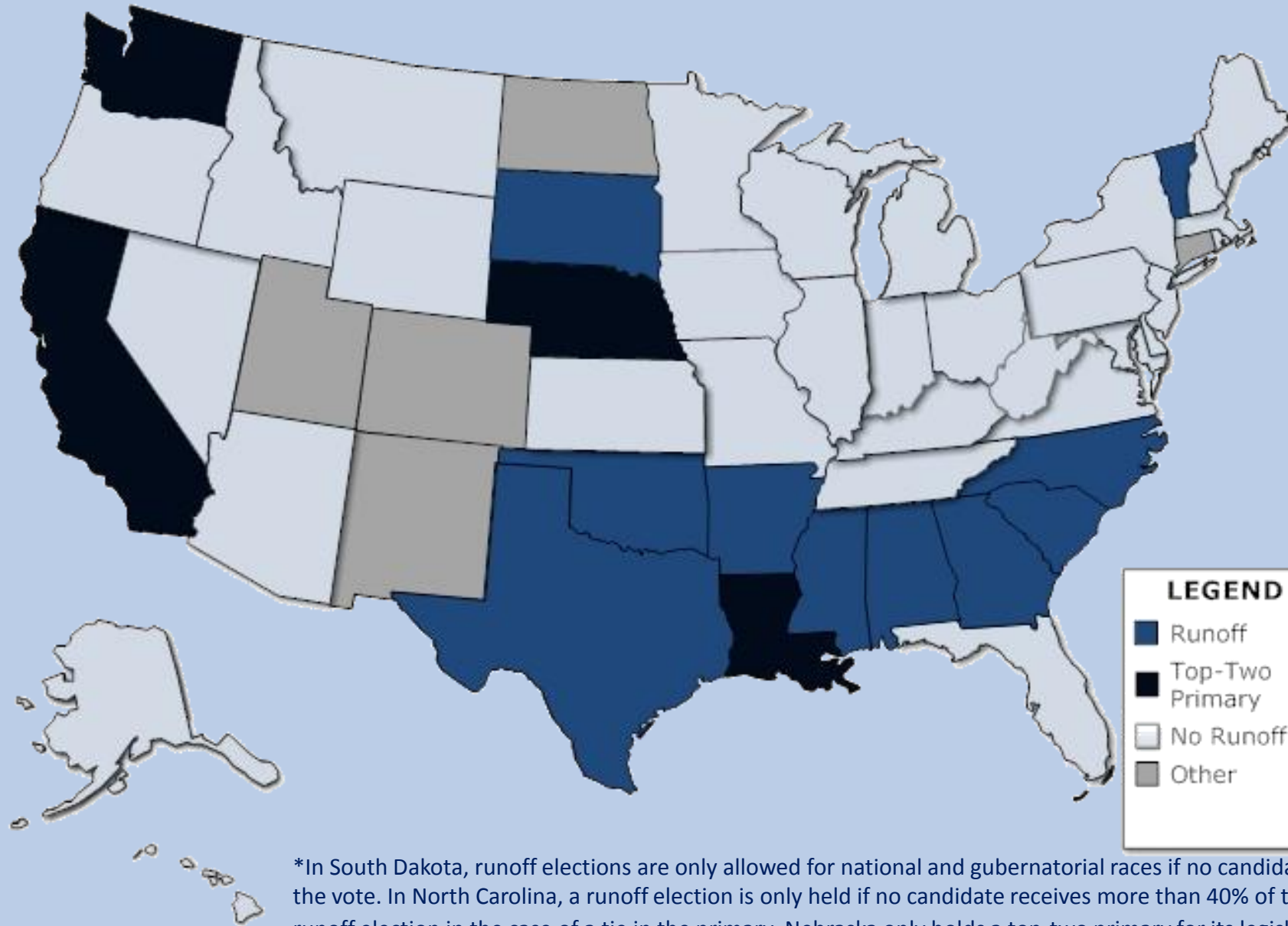
*In Indiana, Michigan, and South Dakota, most candidates for statewide office are not subject to a primary election and are nominated via party convention.

Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

How Primary States Address Plurality

- Runoff Elections
- Top-Two Primary
- No Method

Primary States Addressing Plurality



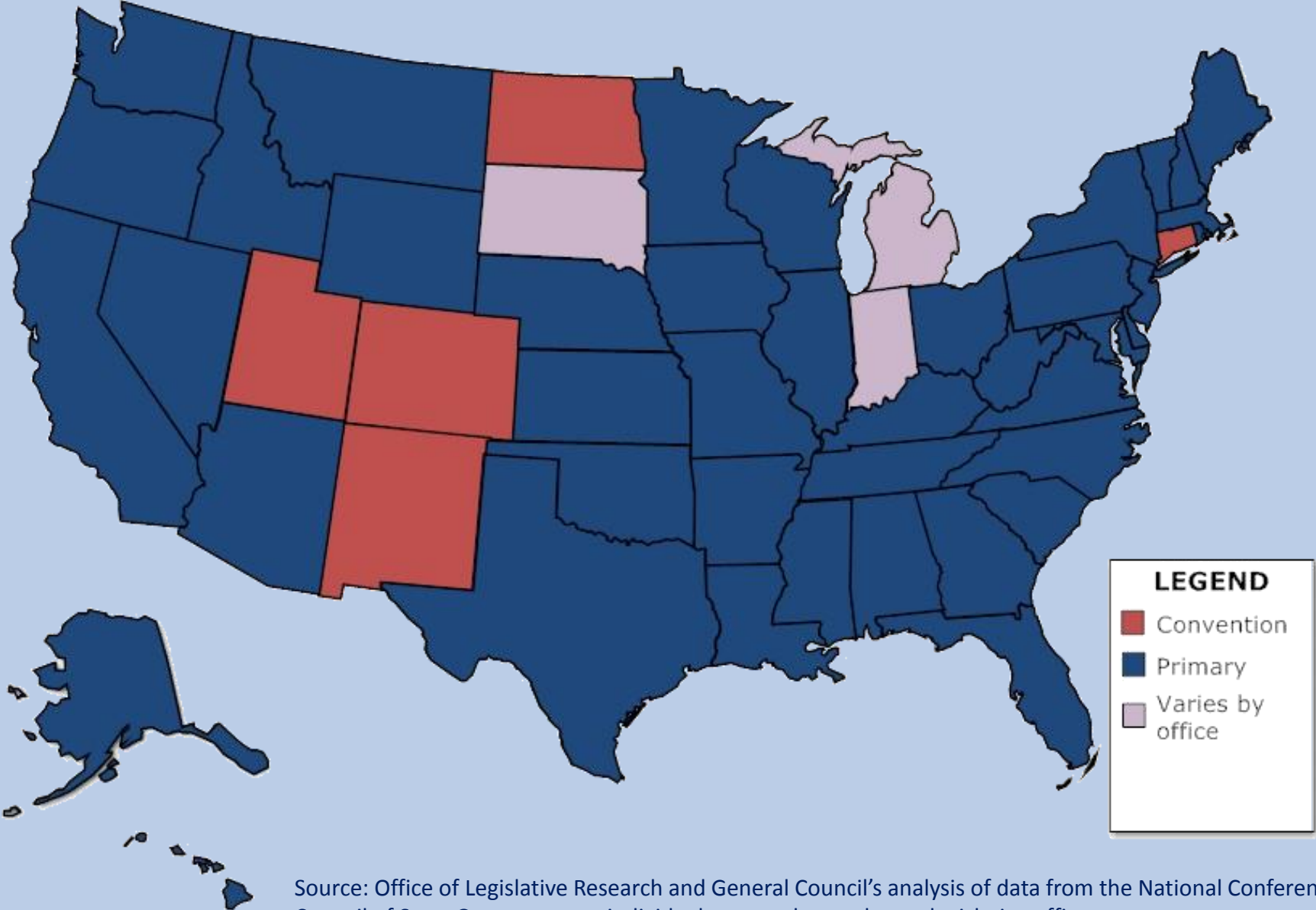
LEGEND

- Runoff
- Top-Two Primary
- No Runoff
- Other

Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

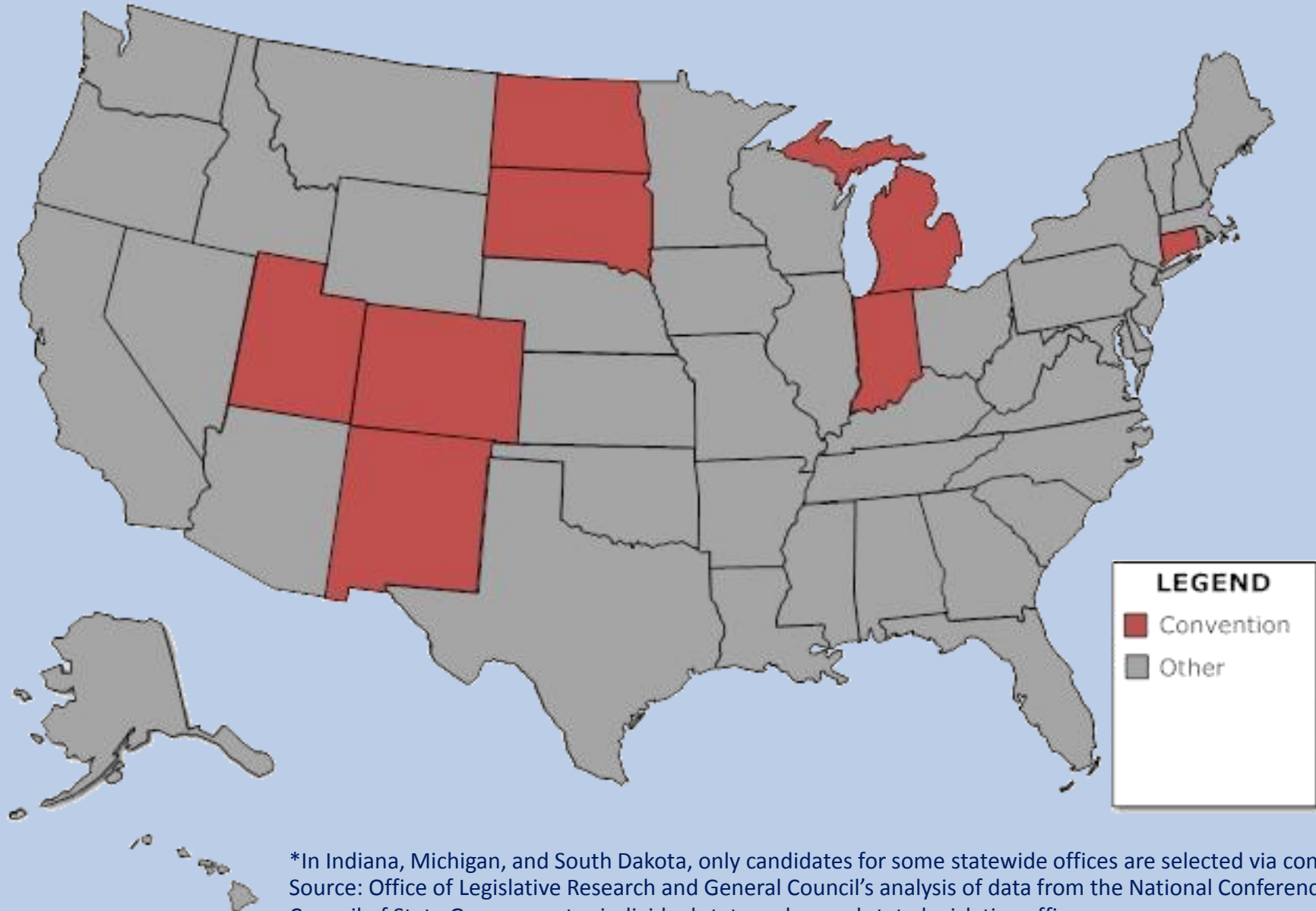
*In South Dakota, runoff elections are only allowed for national and gubernatorial races if no candidate receives greater than 35% of the vote. In North Carolina, a runoff election is only held if no candidate receives more than 40% of the vote. Vermont only holds a runoff election in the case of a tie in the primary. Nebraska only holds a top-two primary for its legislative offices.

Initial Candidate Nomination Method



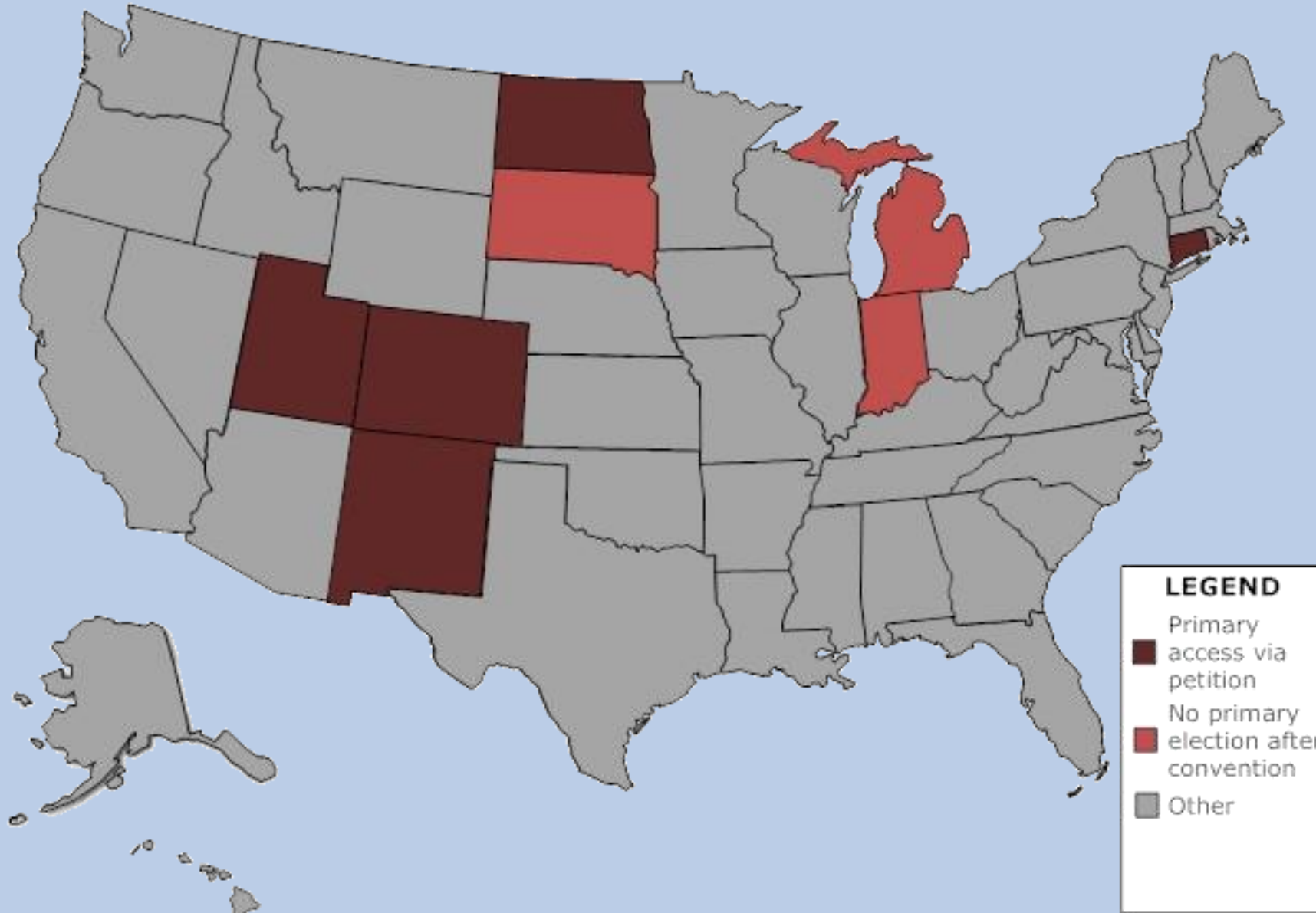
Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

Initial Nomination Method is Party Convention



*In Indiana, Michigan, and South Dakota, only candidates for some statewide offices are selected via convention.
Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

Primary Access After Convention



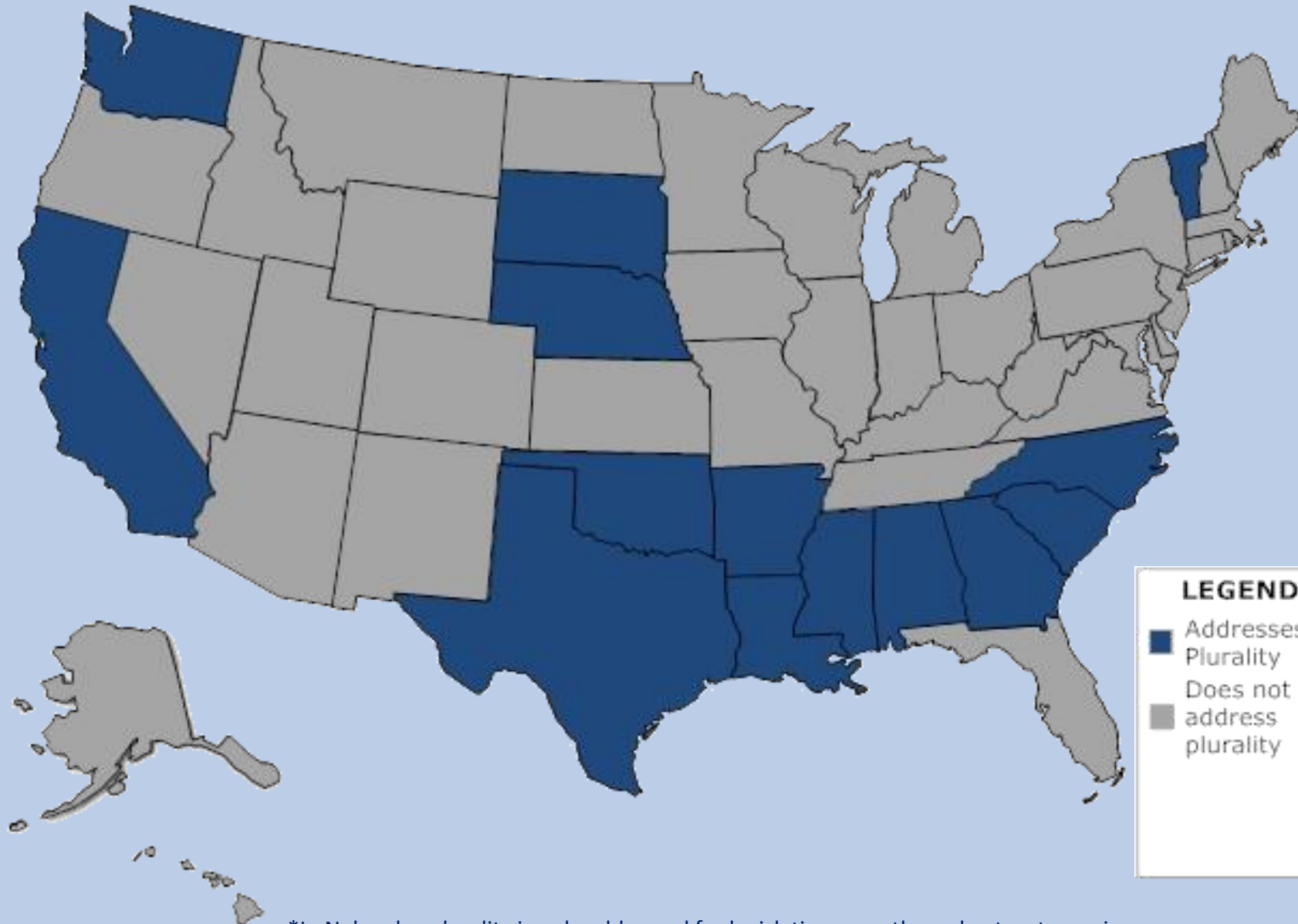
LEGEND

- Primary access via petition
- No primary election after convention
- Other

Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

*In Indiana, Michigan, and South Dakota, only candidates for some statewide offices are selected via convention.

States Addressing Plurality



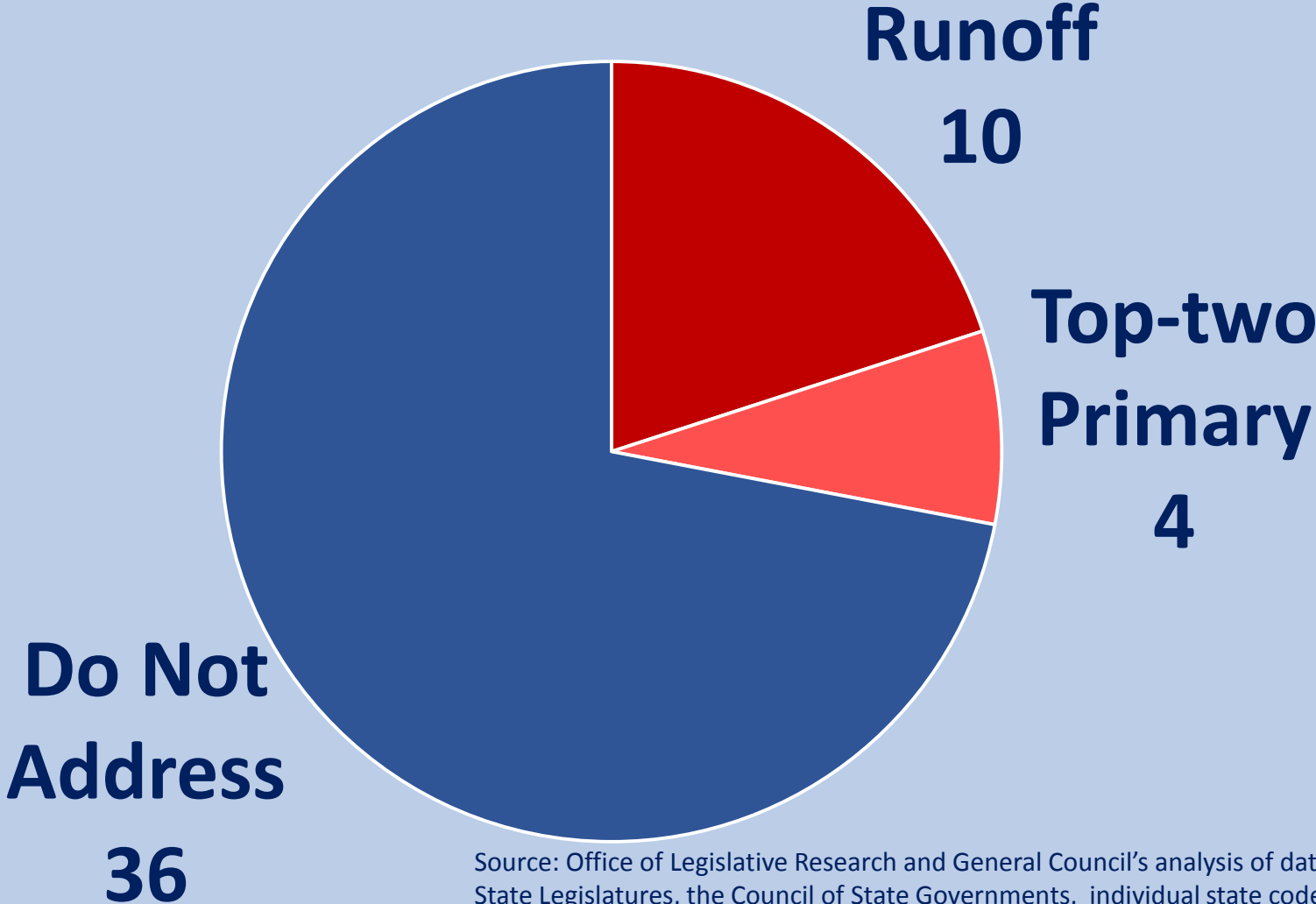
LEGEND

- Addresses Plurality
- Does not address plurality

Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

*In Nebraska, plurality is only addressed for legislative races through a top-two primary.

How States Address Plurality



Source: Office of Legislative Research and General Council's analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, individual state codes, and state legislative offices.

Key Takeaways

- 14 States address plurality
 - Runoff (10 states)
 - Top-two primary (4 states)
- 36 States do not address plurality
- Four states have systems similar to Utah's

Contact and Resources

- Council of State Governments
<http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/6.3%202014.pdf>
- National Conference of State Legislatures
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/primary-runoffs.aspx>
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/primary-types.aspx>

For more information contact:



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