

The election eye . . .

Idaho Democrats fail to heed voter choices

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The Idaho Democratic Party took forthright stands on a number of controversial issues. But whether or not it will help them in the general election campaign is highly questionable.

Most of the 300 delegates on hand for the party's state convention at Pocatello last week-end did not exactly portray the hard conservative outlook which appears prevalent in Idaho at this time.

Party candidates, if past records are a criterion, will not be particularly helped or hindered by the party platform and resolutions. Certainly they are free to accept what they want, just as their predecessors have done in the past.

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Most of the party planks and resolutions followed what many believe is a general liberal stance, although the use of labels is an odious but a generally acceptable practice in the political arena.

State Auditor Joe Williams likely sounded the party goals in a talk he gave at the Saturday morning business session when he told Democrats it is up to them to reverse the strong right-wing trend.

The fact the Democrats had enough temerity to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment when it wasn't necessary and take strong stands for wilderness protection, nuclear power research and development and many other issues must draw admiration.

The convention was poorly handled by a screening committee that was suppose to boil down the platform and resolutions to a workable quantity. As a result, there were 18 pages of them that took most of Saturday to digest.

Too many of the arguments centered on semantics, rather than facts, but there was little doubt that the mood of the delegates was to adopt what they thought was progressive if not popular goals, and let the chips fall where they may.

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The Democrats must be sharply faulted for their choice of delegates in the face of their May 27 primary election which overwhelmingly favored President Carter over Sen. Ted Kennedy.

The primary election gave Carter 31,983 votes, or 62 per-

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cent; Kennedy only 11,148, or 22 percent, and undecided 5,824, or 12 percent.

In the April 17 statewide caucuses, 186 delegates were chosen for Carter, 111 for Kennedy and 84 uncommitted. This was before the presidential primary, however, and it came about by the fact the Kennedy forces were much more active than the Carter supporters. In terms of state proportion, it was figured eight delegates for Carter, five for Kennedy, and four uncommitted.

The Kennedy forces were still more forceful at the convention but what they did only adds to the suspicion they are ignoring the voters.

The four uncommitted delegates have indicated they favor Kennedy, which would mean that when the Idaho delegation casts its votes at the national convention at New York City in August, it will be 9 for Kennedy and 8 for Carter. This is hardly in line with the 62 percent of the votes Carter won in the primary. It makes a good case to junk the

National Democratic Committee caucus system, something most Idaho Democrats want to do anyway.

John Greenfield, Boise attorney and former state party chairman, and Sen. Cy C. Chase, St. Maries, State Senate minority leader, were the leaders in this pro-Kennedy effort. The Carter supporters led by Gov. John V. Evans did not appear to exert much push to woo the uncommitted.

Actually, if the Democrats are to follow their party voters wishes at least three of the four uncommitted votes should go for Carter. This would give Carter 11 compared to 6 for Kennedy. This would total to about 63 percent for Carter, almost identical to the 62 percent popular vote he received.

But it doesn't make much difference nationwide. Carter is reported about 300 delegate votes over the number needed for nomination. Four votes are hardly likely to change the results, but no thanks to the Idaho Democrats.