

IOWA HAS IMPORTANT ROLE IN POLITICAL PROCESS

Gentry Collins of Des Moines is a busy man as the Iowa campaign manager for presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Collins explained he graduated from Iowa State Univ. in 1997 with a degree in political science and has worked for the Speaker of the Iowa House. He also was an intern for Governor Branstad. Collins was chair of the Iowa Republican Party in 2003-2004 and chaired an Iowa Governor's Conference. Collins was also in charge of redistricting in Iowa taking place as a result of the last population census. From his perspective Collins stated the Iowa Caucus is probably the most important political event in the U.S. Both political parties are working to keep the Iowa Caucuses first in the nation. Twenty-six states will vote for a presidential nominee before the New Hampshire primary compared to four years ago. In the opinion of Collins Iowa takes the presidential election process more seriously than other states. Collins remarked that it appeared that all major presidential candidates will visit Iowa this year as part of their campaign strategies. Collins noted that Iowa has a Republican Straw Poll event on August 11 in Ames. This is the largest attended political fund raiser in the nation, and all presidential candidates are expected. In 1999 40,000 Iowans attended and four candidates dropped out of the running after the event.