Texas caucuses create ruckus

by UPI

HOUSTON - The second step in allocating Texas' Democratic presidential delegates was marred by confusion and lack of preparation, critics say. In a complex exercise being called the "Texas Two-Step," Democrats give 126 delegates based on Tuesday's primary vote. Another 67 delegates are doled out according to the outcome of a series of caucuses held after the polls closed Tuesday, The Dallas Morning News reported.Critics say the process has be fraught with problems, ranging from logistics mix-ups to caucus locations that were unprepared for an overwhelming turnout, the newspaper reported. For their part, presidential hopefuls Sens. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and Barack Obama, D-Ill., have accused their rivals' supporters of trying to sign in voters before caucuses began. Sixty-seven delegates -- about one-third of Texas' 228 Democratic convention delegates -- were up for grabs in caucuses in more than 8,000 precincts after polls closed.Dallas County elections administrator Bruce Sherbet said there was "some bottleneck in the caucus process," but overall things went well."In fairness, when you get 1,000 people showing up at the same time, I think they did a pretty good job with the challenges they faced," he said. "We don't handle the caucus process and the political party should address some of the issues."Democratic officials too acknowledged there were snafus Tuesday night."Probably the most common complaints were there wasn't enough room, it was crowded, that they had to stand in line too long to sign in. But when you're signing in 500 or 600 people, it takes time," said Darlene Ewing, Dallas County Democratic Party chairwoman.

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