

Clips from Ellis Island Event with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton July 17, 2000

SAMPLE OF MAJOR COVERAGE

(Most coverage of the event was in the context of Mrs. Clinton's comments at the press availability after the event, similar to the following articles.)

Washington Post, 7/18/00

The Record (Bergen County, NJ), 7/18/00

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS PHOTOS USED TO ACCOMPANY MANY ARTICLES

Yahoo! News Photo Matches, 1-4

ARTICLES ABOUT SENATOR BOB GRAHAM AND THE EVENT

Miami Herald, 7/18/00

St. Petersburg Times, 7/18/00

Gannett News Service, 7/18/00

Associated Press State and Local Wire, 7/18/00

Confronting the Damage-Control Dilemma

Clintons Moved Quickly to Rebut Charge of Slur, but Did Strategy Work?

By JOHN F. HARRIS
Washington Post Staff Writer

One of the cardinal rules of modern politics is: Don't give tabloid tales the dignity of a response. Another rule is: Don't let damaging allegations fester without an answer.

The two rules rammed headlong against each other over the weekend, as a new book alleging that Hillary Rodham Clinton hurled an antisemitic slur 26 years ago sent her Senate campaign into a crisis of how to respond. It was a classic dilemma in an age of news media frenzies: Having the candidate rebut the charge ran the risk of amplifying it.

That is exactly what happened. Clinton's response, in a voice choked with emotion and anger, that the book was "so outrageous and so unfair" inevitably prompted news organizations in New York and nationally to cover a controversy they had been ignoring. That decision continued to echo yesterday, as advisers acknowledged it was too early to say whether their strategy toward the book by former National Enquirer reporter Jerry Oppenheimer had been the right one. Even the White House was thrown into turmoil: President Clinton called the New York Daily News on Sunday to defend his wife without telling his staff, aides said; Hillary Clinton's campaign also was caught off-guard by the president's impromptu intervention.

The controversy was a moment of unexpected drama in a Senate race that had fallen into a scripted slumber. As the political world assessed the Clintons' decision to speak out, a rough divide emerged: Observers in Washington thought they may have reacted too hastily, those in New York thought they had little choice.

"This is not politics 101; this is graduate school politics," said one adviser to Hillary Clinton, describing the anguished deliberations the campaign went through over the weekend.

While campaign aides agreed that Hillary Clinton's impassioned denial that she uttered the slur got far

more coverage than the allegation, they also noted that plenty of people were familiar with the charges in Oppenheimer's book.

That's because of an unsuccessful effort on Friday by Clinton's campaign to persuade the New York tabloids to take a pass on the story. Howard Wolfson, the campaign press secretary, used a combination of hecktoring and high-minded appeals to fairness to the Daily News and New York Post, arguing that the allegations were scurrilous and deserved no coverage, according to people at the papers.

Oppenheimer quotes three people on the record saying that on election night in 1974, when a still-unmarried Bill Clinton lost a race for Congress, his girlfriend flew into a profanity-laced rage. Paul Fray, a campaign aide, and his wife said Hillary Rodham called him a "Jew bastard"; a third person, Neil McDonald, claimed to have heard the exchange from outside the room.

Clinton aides said none of the three sources has credibility. Hillary Clinton remembered that Paul Fray had written her three years ago asking for forgiveness for calling her "unmentionable" names, making accusations that were "without factual foundation." Staff aides exhumed the letter and released it Sunday. But Fray told reporters he stuck by this particular charge. The Daily News decision to publish was especially damaging, Clinton aides believed, because unlike the Post it does not have a reputation as a conservative organ. By Sunday, New York television stations were preparing stories.

Hillary Clinton hastily summoned reporters to her Westchester County home. "We wanted everyone who heard this charge to know that it was untrue and that Hillary unequivocally rejected it," said Wolfson. "We did not want anyone to wonder."

Dan Schnur, a veteran Republican operative living in New York, said it was wise to confront a story with huge potential for damage—especially in a state where almost 10 percent of the electorate is Jewish, and critics have questioned Hillary Clinton's support for Israel. "It was definitely the right thing to do," he

said. "It was a huge story here."

But Larry Sabato, a University of Virginia political scientist who wrote a book on the phenomenon of news media "feeding frenzies," said he found the campaign's decision "odd because it brought attention" to the allegations: "This really guarantees the book will sell well." He said the campaign may be anticipating more sensational disclosures and was perhaps "cutting off a megafrenzy with a minifrenzy now."

"It's only July. There's going to be a lot more of this," Hillary Clinton said yesterday at an appearance at Ellis Island. "I've been in public life for a long time. I've been accused of a lot of things. This one really cut to the core of who I am."

She said she would not pursue legal action against the publisher, HarperCollins, saying her highly public role would make it difficult to pursue a libel case and a lawsuit would not curb the "strong and intense feelings" toward her.

President Clinton first called Daily News Co. Publisher Mortimer B. Zuckerman in Europe, then called Managing Editor Michael Kramer. Frantic press aides called the paper for a transcript of what their boss had said. Clinton said he remembered an election-night row, and that his wife may have called Fray "a bastard," but that she has never uttered antisemitic remarks.

In a news conference held over a subway grate in front of Hillary Clinton's headquarters, a half-dozen ultra-Orthodox rabbis and Jewish political figures yesterday stressed that they could not say for sure if the first lady had uttered the anti-Jewish insult—and proceeded to excoriate her anyway.

Clinton's GOP opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio, earlier declined to comment on the controversy, but yesterday waded partly in. "It's a very disturbing comment," he said. "Three people saying Mrs. Clinton said one thing, Mrs. Clinton saying she did not say it. I don't know who to believe, quite frankly."

Staff writers Christine Haughney and Michael Powell in New York contributed to this report.



BY STAN HONDA—AGENCE FR

Hillary Rodham Clinton tours Ellis Island with Diane Dayson, superintendent of the landmark, and Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg (

July 18, 2000, TUESDAY; ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A4

LENGTH: 679 words

HEADLINE: FIRST LADY SEES 'WAREHOUSE OF INSULTS ;
LAZIO1 CASTS DOUBT ON HER CREDIBILITY

SOURCE: The Record

BYLINE: BETH J. HARPAZ, The Associated Press

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

Hillary Rodham Clinton portrayed herself Monday as the victim of a "warehouse of insults" from the Republican Party as the controversy continued over whether she uttered an antisemitic slur 26 years ago.

Her Republican opponent in the New York Senate race, Rep. Rick Lazio, expressed doubts about her denial, saying: "I think this is a very disturbing comment. This is sort of a 'she said, they said' situation."

He added, "I don't know who to believe. New Yorkers don't know who to believe."

But Clinton got a vote of confidence from a major non-partisan Jewish organization, the Anti-Defamation League, which said there was no credible evidence that she had made the offensive comment.

Clinton did not directly accuse the Republicans of being behind the allegation that she directed an antisemitic slur at one of her husband's campaign aides in 1974.

But she complained that the GOP was trying to tar her in general, saying: "I've been accused of a lot of different things. I'm sure they'll come up with a lot more. You just have to look at my opponent's fundraising letter, the chairman of the Republican Party's letter, and the head of the Conservative Party's charges. Apparently they have a whole warehouse of insults."

She added, "It's only July. There's going to be a lot more of this."

Just get ready."

A Lazio fundraising letter recently mailed by state Republican Chairman Bill Powers called Clinton "cold-blooded and hotheaded" and a "shrill and scheming person." Last week, state Conservative Party Chairman Mike Long, who has endorsed Lazio, compared the first lady to the West Nile virus.

The allegation that the first lady used an antisemitic term appears in a book out this week called "State of a Union: Inside the Complex Marriage of Bill and Hillary Clinton," by former National Enquirer reporter Jerry Oppenheimer.

Oppenheimer quotes Paul Fray as claiming that Hillary Clinton used the slur in a fight with him after Bill Clinton lost a Congressional election that Fray had worked on.

Fray is not Jewish, but one of his grandparents was. Oppenheimer said the account was confirmed by Fray's wife and another campaign worker who heard the argument through a closed door. Fray did not immediately return a call made to a phone number listed in his wife's name.

On Monday, Clinton said "any reasonable person looking at the evidence in this case would conclude there's no credibility on the other side.... I have a lot of confidence in the fundamental good judgment of New Yorkers to see through this."

The Anti-Defamation League backed her, saying: "Her public record shows no evidence of antisemitism and we do not believe her to hold negative views about Jews."

But a dozen representatives of right-wing Jewish groups gathered outside Clinton's campaign office and criticized her.

"These remarks made 26 years ago are the tip of the iceberg," said Dr. Joseph Frager, who identified himself as president of the Jerusalem Reclamation Project. Frager accused Clinton of "a bias against the state of Israel."

The first lady would not comment on the fact that Lazio cast doubt on her credibility, but she said: "I'm committed to running a campaign based on issues, not insults."

Meanwhile, at the Camp David peace talks between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, presidential spokesman Joe Lockhart called the allegation "scurrilous and untrue" and said it showed "how deep in the gutter some people can go."

The president also defended his wife in an interview in Monday's New York Daily News.

"She might have called him a b-----," Clinton told the newspaper.

"I wouldn't rule that out. She's never claimed that she was pure on profanity. But I've never heard her tell a joke with an ethnic connotation."

The first lady went to Ellis Island Monday to announce \$400,000 in new funding to further the restoration of some of the dilapidated buildings that are now closed to the public.

GRAPHIC: ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO - Hillary Rodham Clinton sharing a laugh with Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, D-N.J., during a tour of Ellis Island's dilapidated buildings Monday.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: July 18, 2000

Search Result Found 7 photos for **Ellis Island****Yahoo! FinanceVision** - streaming financial news from silicon valley

Categories	Web Sites	Web Pages	Photos	Related News
----------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------	------------------------------

Yahoo! News Photo Matches 1 - 7 of 7

Senate candidate and first lady Hillary Clinton reacts to a reporters question while on a campaign stop at New York's **Ellis Island**, July 17. Clinton was questioned over allegations of having made an anti-Jewish slur 26 years ago. Clinton was reported in a new book to have blamed Bill Clinton's 1974 Congressional race loss on his campaign manager, Paul Fray, supposedly calling him a 'Jew bastard'. (Brad Rickerby/Reuters)

- Jul 17 7:07 PM ET



Senate candidate and first lady Hillary Clinton (L) stops to have her picture taken with Elaine Estervig (R) of Madison, Wisconsin, during an event to promote the restoration of **Ellis Island**, in New York, July 17. Clinton again denied to reporters at the event the allegation that she uttered an anti-Jewish slur 26 years ago. Clinton was reported in a new book to have blamed Bill Clinton's 1974 Congressional race loss on his campaign manager, Paul Fray, supposedly calling him a 'Jew bastard'. (Brad Rickerby/Reuters)

- Jul 17 7:07 PM ET



Senate candidate first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton sits quietly alone as she listens to a speech before being introduced, Monday, July 17, 2000, on **Ellis Island**, N.J. Clinton announced \$870,000 in donations as part of "Save America's Treasures" to preserve and continue renovation of the buildings on **Ellis Island**. (AP Photo/Beth A. Keiser)

- Jul 17 6:15 PM ET



U.S. Senate candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton pauses as she answers questions during a news conference on **Ellis Island**, N.J., Monday, July 17, 2000, about an alleged anti-Semitic slur 26 years ago. The accusation is made in a book due out this week that says the first lady uttered the slur the night President Clinton lost a congressional bid in Arkansas in 1974. (AP Photo/Beth A. Keiser)

- Jul 17 6:00 PM ET

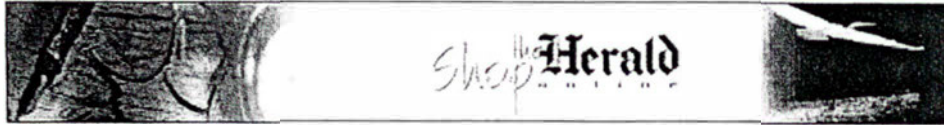


New Jersey Gov. Christie Whitman responds to one of several questions about a photograph showing her patting down an unarmed black man during a news conference at **Ellis Island**, N.J., Tuesday, July 11, 2000. A defiant Whitman refused to apologize for searching an unarmed black man and she issued a warning to activists who plan to use a photograph of that pat-down against her. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

- Jul 12 10:55 PM ET



New Jersey Gov. Christie Whitman responds to one of several question about a photograph showing her patting down an unarmed black man during a news conference at **Ellis Island**, N.J., Tuesday, July 11, 2000. Whitman refused to apologize for searching an unarmed black man and she issued a warning to activists who plan to use a photograph of



FLORIDA

Published Tuesday, July 18, 2000, in the Miami Herald

First lady announces Ellis Island aid package

Sen. Graham joins Clinton

BY FRANK DAVIESfdavies@herald.com

ELLIS ISLAND, N.J. -- Flanked by a Florida senator and New York area politicians, Hillary Rodham Clinton boosted efforts Monday to save the crumbling buildings of this island landmark, the nation's gateway to 12 million immigrants.

"This was the golden door so many walked through," said the first lady and U.S. Senate candidate from New York, gesturing toward the main building of Ellis Island, restored and reopened as a museum in 1990.

"But it's painfully obvious that a lot more buildings need help," she said, announcing a combination of federal grants and private donations that can start to refurbish a hospital and 28 other buildings where millions were processed.

Historic preservation and election-year politics mixed on what the first lady described as "hallowed ground," an outpost in New York Harbor now shared by New York and New Jersey after a long, contentious court battle.

Sen. Bob Graham, a Florida Democrat who has become the focal point of speculation as a possible running mate for Al Gore, cited personal history: His wife Adele's father, Gabriel Khoury, left Lebanon and came through Ellis Island.

Graham continued to say he was flattered by the vice presidential talk but emphasized he is happy in his current job as he chatted with tourists and signed autographs on the Circle Line boat to Battery Park.

Graham was more eager to talk about the \$100 million he hopes the Senate Energy Committee will approve today "to meet the needs of a national park system that have been ignored for too long."

The money would come from federal oil revenue from the Outer Continental Shelf that now goes into the general Treasury.

Graham had sought closer to \$500 million in a bill he sponsored last year, but said he was satisfied the smaller amount had bipartisan support and a good chance of passage.

The funds would aid National Park Service land from Ellis Island to the Everglades, based on the need for improvements.

Just a few feet from Graham, Geraldine Ferraro -- who ran unsuccessfully for vice president 16 years ago as the first woman on a major party ticket -- tried to assess this year's Senate race, with Clinton trying to become the first presidential spouse to win elective office.

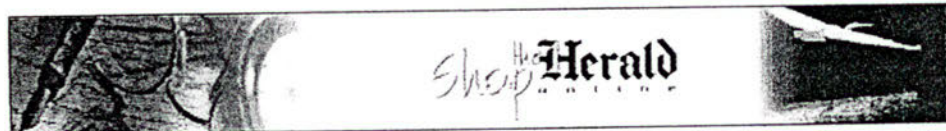
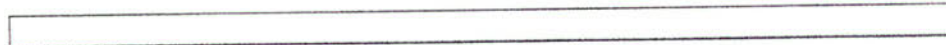
"It will be a tight race and a nasty race -- it's hard being a pioneer," said Ferraro, who lost her own Senate race in 1992.

"People will come after her with everything, but she just has to keep moving on."

For the first lady, Monday's event was nonpolitical, but it reminded New York voters that she can deliver more than celebrity.

She has spearheaded the Save America's Treasures program, a public-private partnership that has awarded \$60 million in federal grants and raised about \$50 million in private donations to save or repair more than 500 landmarks.

The National Park Service estimates that 40 percent of all Americans have at least one ancestor who came through this 27.5-acre gateway.



[Contact Us](#)
[Copyright 2000 Miami Herald](#)

July 18, 2000, Tuesday

SECTION: NATIONAL; Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 1751 words

HEADLINE: Trying Graham on for size

BYLINE: BILL ADAIR

BODY:

This is an awkward time for Florida Sen. Bob Graham. He has said he is interested in becoming vice president, but the unwritten rules of politics say he shouldn't look eager.

ELLIS ISLAND, N.J. - With first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton a few feet behind him, Sen. Bob Graham pointed to the dilapidated buildings at Ellis Island and said they are "a national shame."

The Florida Democrat told the crowd of 400 people that he was "stunned at the state of disrepair" of many of the buildings and that the nation has an obligation to repair them.

Monday's event was supposed to draw attention to Graham's efforts to repair national parks, but it was also part of his unofficial tryout to be Al Gore's running mate, an opportunity to show he can play the many roles of a vice president.

At a fundraiser Saturday night in Nashville, Tenn., he played the loyal Democrat, firing partisan zingers at Texas Gov. George W. Bush. Two weeks earlier on Meet the Press, he played the legislative architect, discussing his Medicare drug plan.

Graham and his aides say he is not campaigning for the job. They say that they had been planning the Ellis Island event for months and that his high profile on Medicare is a coincidence caused by the timing of congressional votes.

Still, the flurry of public events has put Graham in the spotlight at a convenient time, introducing him to many Democrats who knew little about him. But the burst of attention has also shown Graham the perils of the national spotlight, as he has been the subject of several unflattering stories in the past 10 days.

Last week, a Washington Post columnist made fun of Graham's habit of writing mundane details about his life in little notebooks. A New York Times columnist said his decision to release the notebooks to reporters showed he was desperate to get on the Democratic ticket.

Graham's Nashville speech helped to fuel speculation about his chances because the Gore campaign invited him to substitute for the vice president. Florida Democratic chairman Bob Poe said the invitation showed that Graham is under serious consideration.

"It's Gore's home state," Poe said. "He could have asked anybody."

The Tennessee fundraiser provided a glimpse of the scrutiny and challenges Graham could encounter if he's picked.

Outside the event Saturday night, Republican protesters handed out fliers that made fun of Graham's notebooks. The fliers had mock entries that said he had called Gore adviser Naomi Wolf for advice on footwear ("Loafers or cowboy boots?"), and had revised his speech to "stay away from Buddhist Temple jokes."

At the event inside the cavernous Wildhorse Saloon, a country music hall, Graham found a surprisingly tough crowd.

It was filled with loyal Democrats, but many of them came to drink beer and chat with friends rather than listen to Florida's senior senator. The program began with speeches from more than a dozen Tennessee Democrats, so by the time Graham came on stage to deliver the keynote address, the crowd was restless.

Graham began with a story about Jimmy Carter's mother - he even imitated her Georgia accent - but the joke fizzled. He got a better response to his jokes about the football rivalry between the University of Florida and the University of Tennessee, and his partisan jabs at the growing budget deficit under Bush.

"When you look at what's happening in Texas today, you better be scared and hold onto your wallet!" Graham said.

Many people weren't listening. Realizing he wasn't connecting with them, Graham tried to liven the speech by picking up the microphone and walking around the stage. But people in the back had difficulty hearing him because so "When you look at what's happening in Texas today, you better be scared and hold onto your wallet!"

- SEN. BOB GRAHAM

Speaking at a Democratic fundraiser Saturday night in Nashville, Tenn.

many others were talking loudly at the bar.

Later, Graham acknowledged that he had trouble, but joked, "I felt I had the first 10 rows of the crowd."

The hall had at least 20 rows, however.

This is an awkward time for Graham. He has said he is interested in becoming vice president, but the unwritten rules of politics say he should not look eager.

His willingness to discuss the No. 2 job backfired on him last week.

The New York Times Magazine portrayed him as overly eager, quoting him as saying that he was qualified because he had been a governor and senator and knows the "personalities" of Congress and the executive branch. Graham's detailed answer contrasted with that of Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana, another top candidate, who declined to talk with the New York Times reporter because he was afraid he would be seen as posturing for the job.

Graham said he was merely being responsive to the reporter.

"He asked me a question. The thing I said is historically obvious," he said.

On Monday, Graham was content to stay in the background. As the first lady toured Ellis Island with other Democrats at her side, Graham walked behind her and wrote in his notebook.

The spiral pad made him the subject of ridicule last week. Time magazine published segments from one notebook that showed he watched Ace Ventura: Pet Detective on the day a grandson was born.

Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen parodied Graham by writing a minute-by-minute account of his own day, saying that Graham "is either the dumbest man in Washington or the most honest." He concluded that Graham is honest because "1. He does not act dumb, and 2. He is related to my boss." (Katharine Graham, the former chief executive of the Post, was married to the senator's half brother.)

New York Times columnist Gail Collins skewered Graham for showing his notebooks to Time magazine, saying that he was "apparently searching for a really dramatic coup to put himself back in contention" to become running mate.

Graham, who has allowed many reporters to see the notebooks over the past two decades, said he was merely responding to a request.

"Our general policy is one of openness," he said. "I believe as a public official or a candidate, you have an obligation to give the public the information they think is relevant."

But Graham also got favorable press coverage over the weekend. The Nashville Tennessean had a front-page story that said state Democrats were "fairly salivating" over the prospect of a Gore-Graham ticket.

All the attention didn't faze Graham during his weekend trip.

"I've been in this business a long time," he said during an interview on the plane to Nashville. "I don't get emotionally affected by what other people do or say."

When reporters ask about the vice presidency now, he politely sidesteps the question and reminds them of his responsibilities as senator.

"I am working hard at the job I've got and I'm not going to be distracted by speculation."

When a reporter asked Clinton if she thought Graham would make a good vice president, she replied: "I am very fond of Sen. Graham. I've really admired him as a governor, because I knew him very well as a governor, and as a senator. He's just first rate, as you all in Florida know."

When Graham's plane arrived back in Washington on Monday afternoon, he got another reminder that he was under the spotlight.

Graham asked Sen. Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat who happened to be sitting several rows behind him, to hand him a suitcase.

"I'll be happy to carry the bag of the future vice president," Baucus replied. "Can I carry another bag?"

- Times political editor Tim Nickens contributed to this report.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 18, 2000

July 18, 2000, Tuesday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: Pg. ARC

LENGTH: 449 words

HEADLINE: Graham's stand-ins for Gore could be vice presidential tryout

BYLINE: LARRY WHEELER; Gannett News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., appears to be "trying out" for the role of Vice President Al Gore's running mate, political observers said Monday.

After standing in for Gore at a weekend fund-raiser in Nashville, Tenn., the 63-year-old Democrat flew to Ellis Island in New York Harbor Monday where he joined first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at another high-profile event.

"I think the Nashville speech was a tryout or maybe even a signal that the discussion about running mates has moved fairly far along, and Graham is still a definite contender, maybe the front-runner," said Lance deHaven-Smith, a Florida State University political science professor.

While the Ellis Island event with the first lady was on Graham's schedule for months, the senator's Saturday speech to the Tennessee Democratic Party was not.

The Gore campaign called Graham last week and asked if he could step in for the vice president at the fund-raising dinner, said Chris Hand, Graham's spokesman.

"Senator Graham went because the next president of the United States asked him to," Hand said. "He's committed to seeing Al Gore elected president, and he will do whatever he can to help out."

This was the second time in recent weeks that Graham obliged a Gore campaign request. Two weeks ago, he served as a surrogate for the vice president during a conference call with reporters on the issue of Medicare.

Both times, Graham -- known in the Senate as a cautious moderate who prefers consensus to confrontation -- stepped out of character and launched a partisan salvo at Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the presumptive GOP nominee.

"I guess it's true what they say, like father, like son. Because if George W. Bush enacts a big tax cut as president, we can expect a return to the days of red ink and record high deficits," Graham told nearly 1,000 party loyalists attending the annual Jackson Day dinner.

If Graham's performance in Nashville was a trial balloon set up by the Gore campaign to take the measure of the former Florida governor, it would be an unusual event in the annals of presidential campaigns, said Merle Black, Emory University political scientist.

"I can't think of any tryouts in the past that would have been so obvious," said Black, noting that would-be presidential nominees typically rely on the tried-and-true technique of floating a name and studying the reaction.

"Graham is clearly one of the people the Gore campaign is looking at," Black said. "I don't know how much help Graham would be outside Florida. He's not a charismatic figure, and he's not someone who would bring a lot of name recognition."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 19, 2000

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

The materials in the AP file were compiled by The Associated Press. These materials may not be republished without the express written consent of The Associated Press.

July 18, 2000, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Political News

LENGTH: 548 words

HEADLINE: Many Florida delegates want Bob Graham as running mate

BYLINE: By RACHEL LA CORTE, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: MIAMI

BODY:

Many of Florida's delegates to next month's Democratic National Convention would like to see U.S. Sen. Bob Graham as Al Gore's No. 2 man.

Of 162 delegates who responded to a survey by The Associated Press, 33 percent said they want Gore to pick Graham. Most of the delegates, 55 percent, were undecided. Twelve percent chose others, such as Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh and California Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

Nationally, Graham ranks fifth as a favorite, behind Bayh, Feinstein, former presidential hopeful Bill Bradley and Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, according to the AP survey of all Democratic delegates.

Though Graham is known to most Floridians, he's much less visible outside the state.

"He's nearly a complete unknown outside of Florida and that regional area," said Larry Sabato, a political science professor at the University of Virginia and an expert on Southern politics. "He has not been a showhorse, which is to his credit."

But Sabato said that regardless of what the delegates think now, they will all support whomever Gore chooses.

"Like Pavlov's dogs, you ring the bell and they'll salivate," Sabato said.

Graham joined Gore twice on the campaign trail, in recent days speaking at the annual Jackson Day dinner in Tennessee, and at the Jefferson-Jackson dinner in Bal Harbour, Fla.

Monday, he joined Hillary Clinton in New York as she announced an aid package to restore Ellis Island.

Sabato said that even though Graham may shy away from talking about the vice presidency, he's definitely thinking about it.

"He will take that nomination in a nanosecond if offered, there's no question about it," he said. "But even if he's not selected, the Gore folks will need him badly if they have any chance of carrying Florida."

But while in New York, Graham was less interested in talking about the vice presidency and more interested in talking about the \$100 million he hopes the Senate Energy Committee would approve to aid National Park Service land from Ellis Island to the Everglades, based on the need for improvements.

Graham's spokeswoman, Kim James, said nothing should be read into his recent appearances, and that Graham's trip to New York had been planned for several months. Graham has said he's happy in his current job.

Dean Trantalis, a 46-year-old attorney who is part of the delegation, said he likes Graham because he's the best chance to counteract Republican opponent George W. Bush's edge in the state, due to his brother's position as governor.

"While he may not be the sexiest of the candidates, he makes the most sense politically," he said. "He comes from a strong southern state with a lot of electoral votes and he's not quite as liberal as Al Gore is, so he might appeal to a larger base of voters."

In interviews with Florida's delegates to the Republican convention, Elizabeth Dole's name came up most often as the best choice of running mate for George W. Bush.

Of the 37 Republican delegates who had an answer for the question, seven named Dole as the best choice.

Nationally, Republican delegates named Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge as their top choice for Bush's running mate. In Florida, Ridge's name came up four times, the same as retired Gen. Colin Powell and U.S. Rep. John Kasich of Ohio.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 19, 2000