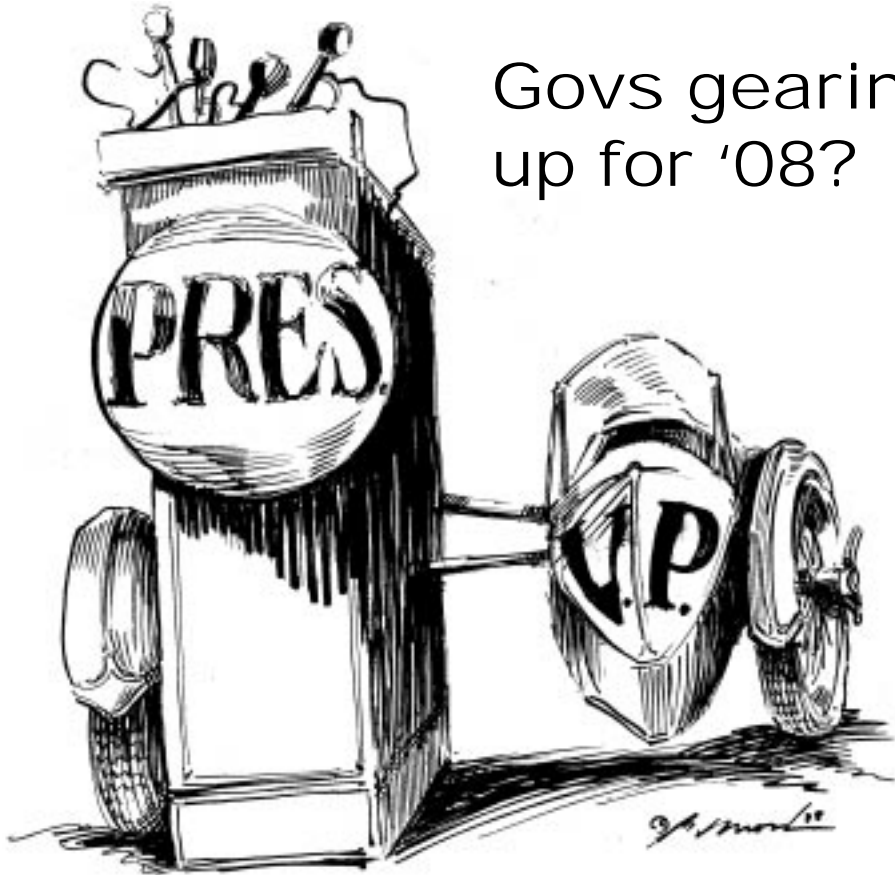


November 15, 2004

Govs gearing up for '08?



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Top Story

The once promising political career of NEW JERSEY Gov. James E. McGreevey (D) is over, but the good times are just beginning for several state governors with an eye on the White House.

SNCJ Spotlight

With the election over, the race is on

The votes are tallied and the winner decided in the 2004 presidential election, which can only mean that the first days of the 2008 campaign are now under way. Several current state governors are among the fashionably hot names being bandied about in the press and party circles for a spot on the 2008 ticket.

Given the results of recent presidential elections — not to mention statehouse and Congressional races — Democrats appear to be in the

greatest need of a breakout candidate who can capture voters' hearts and minds. The need is particularly pressing in the South, where in recent years the GOP has made enormous gains at all levels of government. That trend has Democrats looking for a charismatic leader with chief executive experience, a la Bill Clinton, to lead them back to prominence. The main possibilities in that regard are governors Phil Bredesen of TENNESSEE, Mark Warner of VIRGINIA and Mike Easley of NORTH CAROLINA. All three have significantly raised their national profile in recent times, most notably Warner with his successful dual earlier this year with the Republican-controlled Legislature that resulted in a dramatic revamp of the Old Dominion State tax code.

Several other Democrats have already received a lot of play nationally via their consideration as potential vice-presidential candidates for John Kerry's failed bid for the White House. While NEW MEXICO Gov. Bill Richardson, KANSAS Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, ARIZONA Gov. Janet Napolitano and ILLINOIS Gov. Rod Blagojevich all were mentioned, only IOWA Gov. Tom Vilsack made it to Kerry's short list. Vilsack is also being touted as a prime candidate to take over as the head of the Democratic National Party, as is former GEORGIA Gov. Roy Barnes.

Republicans, of course, have their own hot shots seeking their place at the top of the 2008 ticket. NEW YORK Gov. George Pataki has been courting the national scene for years, and could put the Empire State into serious play in 2008. Pataki is a social moderate, which makes him the polar opposite of MASSACHUSETTS Gov. Mitt Romney and COLORADO Gov. Bill Owens, both of whom are aggressive tax cutters and bedrock social conservatives. And there is still the possibility that FLORIDA Gov. Jeb Bush (R) will reconsider his oft-stated refusal to take a crack at putting a third Bush in the White House.

While there are numerous others who already have their share of name recognition and political capital, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R), Sen. Hillary Clinton (D), former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani (R) and INDIANA Sen. Evan Bayh (D), history points clearly to a governor as the most likely choice to actually win a presidential election. Since 1900, former governors have won 14 of the 27 presidential elections, either as a new candidate or as an incumbent. Four of the last five presidents — Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush — were governors first, and not one had previously held national office. In fact, you have to go all the way back to 1960 and John F. Kennedy to find a successful presidential bid that launched from Congress rather than from a statehouse or the White House. That trend could definitely play out again in 2008, which should — presuming Vice-President Dick Cheney holds to his pledge not to run — present the first election

since 1968 in which both parties will be running a candidate who is neither an incumbent president or vice-president.

Although governors can present a great advantage for parties, most notably by not having the baggage associated with being a Washington insider, neither party is likely to have at their disposal the gubernatorial candidate they most would like to have right now. For Democrats, that would be MICHIGAN Gov. Jennifer Granholm, who is high on everyone's list, but suffers from "birthplace deficiency," having been born in Canada. Ditto for CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), a native Austrian. Barring a sudden and speedy change in the U.S. Constitution, anxious party loyalists will just have to find other stars to shine come 2008.

(USA TODAY, US NEWS, ASSOCIATED PRESS, SACRAMENTO BEE, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE)

TRANSITION IN NJ: And just like that, it is over. NEW JERSEY Gov. James E. McGreevey (D) steps down this week, ending months of public shock and political infighting that was equal parts Shakespearean tragedy and silly sitcom. But nobody in the Garden State is laughing these days, as his replacement, Senate President Richard Codey (D), tries to bring stability to an office that had become increasingly racked with scandal and controversy even before McGreevey announced he was leaving office over a homosexual affair with a former administration official.

While most observers close to the scene have only good things to say about Codey, he was far from the Democrats' first choice to replace McGreevey. Party bosses desperately wanted McGreevey to step down right away after his announcement so U.S. Sen. John Corzine, a rising star in both state and national politics, could run for the job. But McGreevey refused to go quietly, insisting instead to stay in office until this week, negating any possibility of a special election to name his successor.

The act of defiance earned him stinging rebukes not only from frustrated Dems, but also from Republicans who figure they had a chance to capitalize on the salaciousness of the situation to regain the governorship. It also created a host of hard feelings, as many of the people who had been McGreevey's strongest supporters were conspicuously absent during the farewell speech he gave last week. Among the AWOL were Assembly Speaker Albio Sero (D), McGreevey campaign manager Steve DeMicco and McGreevey's wife, Dina Matos McGreevey. Not even a late offer from the governor to leave office a

*State Recaps
available this
week on the
State Net Web site*

AK, AL, CA, CO, CT, FL,
GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS,
KY, LA, MD, ME, MN, MO,
MS, NC, NE, NH, NM, OK,
RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VA, VT,
WA, WI, WV, WY

2003-04 State Session
Recaps showcase legislative
statistics for each state.

week early mollified angry Democrats, including Codey, who gave McGreevey's offer a stern "thanks, but no thanks."

Codey comes into office with his own agenda, which feature a plan to conduct an ambitious makeover of the Meadowlands Sports Complex. The renovation would include a new stadium for the NFL's Giants, a soccer complex and a minor league baseball park. All four of the professional franchises that currently play in the aging complex — the Giants and Jets of the NFL, the Devils of the NHL and the MLS's MetroStars — plan to leave for new environs within the next four years. Codey says the extreme makeover is necessary if the Meadowlands is to remain a prime venue on the national sports scene.

Although Codey is planning on the teams ponying up the bulk of the estimated \$850 million price tag for the upgrades, his stance still represents a major reversal in policy from the plans McGreevey had for the site. McGreevey wanted to push New Jersey out of professional sports by turning the Meadowlands into a \$1.3 billion retail and family entertainment center called Xanadu.

Getting something done with the Meadowlands — and preventing a mass exodus of New Jersey's sports teams across the river to New York or Philadelphia — is the kind of high profile move that could give Codey a chance to keep the job after 2005. He has hinted that he might seek re-election, but Corzine is also expected to make a run at it, as will at least six Republicans. But there are other significant issues to be dealt with as well, as lawmakers are still grappling with ethics reforms, an expected budget shortfall and whether to create the post of lieutenant governor. Codey will also inherit a state that has seen its credit rating downgraded twice over the last two years amid more than \$12 billion in borrowing by the McGreevey administration. The challenges are daunting, but at least one observer thinks Codey can handle it.

"Codey is by experience and temperament a good person to be taking over the office of the governor," said David Rebovich, a political analyst at Rider Uni-

The Week in Session

Regular Session: DC, NJ, OH, PA

Special Session: AL "a", WV "c"

Recess:

CA "d", CA "e", DE "c", MA, MI, NY

Non-Voting Session: NJ

Currently Prefiling (Drafts for 2005) :
CO, FL, IN, KY, MT, NH, NV, TX, VA

Adjourned: AK, AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD "2003 session", MD, ME, MN, MO, MS, NC, NE, NH, NM, OK, RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV, WY

Special Session Adjourned: AK "a", AR "b", CA "a", CA "b", CA "c", CT "a", CT "b", CT "c", CT "d", DE "a", GA "a", IA "b", IL "a-q", KY "a", LA "a", ME "a", ME "b", MS "a", MS "b", NC "c", NY "a", OK "a", OR "a", TX "d", UT "a", UT "b", UT "c", VA "a", VA "b", WA "a", WA "b", WA "c", WI "d", WI "e", WI "f", WI "g", WV "a", WV "b", WY "a"

Projected to Adjourn: IL, US

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions
Source: State Net, 11/12/04



versity. “He knows the way Trenton works, and he is serious but low-key. He’s not a hothead or a bossy personality, but someone who recognizes the need for consensus-building.” (ASSOCIATED PRESS, STAR-LEDGER [NEWARK], WASHINGTON POST, STATELINE.ORG, THE TIMES [TRENTON], PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER)

GOVERNORS IN BRIEF: At press time, **WASHINGTON**’s gubernatorial race was still too close to call, although Republican Dino Rossi had pulled into a slim lead over Democrat Christine Gregoire. More than 150,000 ballots remain to be counted and both sides are threatening court action, pending the outcome. (SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER). • **KANSAS** Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D) unveiled a \$50 million initiative aimed at extending health care benefits to more than 70,000 uninsured Show Me State residents. Sebelius proposed a state cigarette tax of 50 cents per pack to pay for the plan (LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD). • A politically-connected developer at the heart of a controversial real estate deal involving **MARYLAND** Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. (R) abandoned his plans to purchase the environmentally sensitive land. Ehrlich had come under intense criticism for green-lighting the deal, which could have opened the land to development while also earning construction magnate Willard J. Hackerman tax breaks potentially worth millions of dollars (BALTIMORE SUN).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Across state lines

Grading state welfare reform

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 gave states the chance to see if they could transition people off of welfare rolls more efficiently and effectively than the federal government. According to a new study released by the Washington D.C.-based Cato Institute, more than twice as many states have earned an “F” grade for their efforts than have earned “As.” The report grades the states on their policy choices regarding welfare reform implementation, rewarding most highly programs that encourage personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. Under that cri-

teria, only four states — IDAHO, OHIO, WYOMING and WISCONSIN — earned an overall A grade, while nine states garnered an F. The accompanying chart shows the overall score and letter grade for each state. To review the entire report, please visit the Cato Institute Web site at http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=2477.

— By RICH EHISEN

Grading the States: Welfare Reform					
State	Overall Score	Letter Grade	State	Overall Score	Letter Grade
Alabama	49	D	Montana	51	C
Alaska	40	D	Nebraska	38	F
Arizona	57	C	Nevada	43	D
Arkansas	50	C	New Hampshire	36	F
California	58	C	New Jersey	60	B
Colorado	55	C	New Mexico	52	C
Connecticut	63	B	New York	57	C
Delaware	52	C	North Carolina	55	C
Dist. of Columbia	36	F	North Dakota	36	F
Florida	68	B	Ohio	74	A
Georgia	56	C	Oklahoma	49	D
Hawaii	55	C	Oregon	50	C
Idaho	76	A	Pennsylvania	43	D
Illinois	61	B	Rhode Island	38	F
Indiana	60	B	South Carolina	57	C
Iowa	60	B	South Dakota	54	C
Kansas	53	C	Tennessee	46	D
Kentucky	49	D	Texas	40	D
Louisiana	54	C	Utah	37	F
Maine	36	F	Vermont	21	F
Maryland	58	C	Virginia	62	B
Massachusetts	44	D	Washington	55	C
Michigan	43	D	W Virginia	50	C
Minnesota	40	D	Wisconsin	71	A
Mississippi	53	C	Wyoming	72	A
Missouri	36	F			

Source: The Cato Institute



Budget & taxes

OWENS URGES EXTREME MEASURES: COLORADO Gov. Bill Owens (R) called on lawmakers last week to ask voters to forgo their expected tax refund checks and sell off future payments from the tobacco settlement to alleviate the state's continuing budget woes. The recommendations were part of Owens' 2005-06 budget presentation before the Joint Budget Committee last Tuesday, during which he said that despite the state's improving economy, it still faces huge budget shortfalls as a result of constitutional limits on the amount it can collect in taxes and federal and state requirements on how much it must spend on Medicaid and education. Owens said the sell-off of the tobacco settlement would raise \$800 million, which would allow the state to balance next year's budget as well as provide an emergency fund. Owens projected his other proposal — seeking a one-time bailout on the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, or TABOR, which requires the state to return surplus tax revenue to taxpayers — would provide another \$200 million for education and other programs. The governor actually proposed a similar plan earlier this year, but it was killed by the Legislature. However, as a result of this year's elections, Democrats, who favor the sale, now control both chambers and hold a 4-2 majority on the Joint Budget Committee. Still, some lawmakers are skeptical that Owens' plan does enough to avoid future budget problems. The budget committee's new vice chair, Rep. Tom Plant (D), for instance, said the plan "is not going to quite get us there. It's someplace we can start from." (DENVER POST)

NY COUNTIES NEARING TAX LIMIT: The NEW YORK state comptroller's 2004 annual report on local governments released back in June warned that five counties were in danger of reaching their constitutional property tax limit. The report stated that those counties had "exhausted more than 80 percent of their tax limit — a threshold that indicates a serious reduction in revenue-generating capacity." No one paid much attention to the news at the time because it only concerned five of the state's 62 counties. But more people took notice after a report by Moody's Investors Services in October projected a bleak outlook for 53 of the state's counties due to skyrocketing Medicaid expenses and the rising costs of health care and pensions. Of particular concern to some observers is the growing number of counties seeking to increase their sales tax in lieu of a property tax hike in order to provide enough revenue to cover rising expenses. The Oneida County Board of Legislators, for example, recently voted to raise its sales tax

from 8.25 percent to 9.75 percent. Although it is not one of the counties near its constitutional property tax limit, county officials said they would have had to increase property taxes 45 to 50 percent to generate enough revenue, even after cutting spending by \$12 million.

Upcoming Elections (11/10/2004 - 11/24/2004)

There are no elections scheduled during the next two weeks.

Experts say it's only a matter of time before counties exhaust the sales tax option and bump up against the property tax limit. What would happen then is uncertain. Jennifer Freeman, a spokeswoman for the state comptroller's office, said only cities and villages have gone over the limit in the past, and when they have done so, state aid has been withheld. She said that wouldn't be the case with counties. They could be sued by taxpayers or by the state, but she said it was unlikely the comptroller would take that step. Ultimately, she said, "state lawmakers must examine the mandates local lawmakers are dealing with — especially Medicaid — and determine what steps can be taken to help them address their rising costs." (ALBANY TIMES UNION)

BUDGETS IN BRIEF: ILLINOIS lawmakers returned to Springfield last week for their abbreviated fall session. Although they are planning to take up such controversial issues as education spending, a bailout of the Chicago Transit Authority and expansion of gambling, many say those issues are unlikely to be resolved during the two weeks (CHICAGO TRIBUNE, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES). • The **MISSISSIPPI** House failed last Tuesday to adjourn its special session — which began only the day before — without voting on Gov. Haley Barbour's (R) proposed \$103.7 million bond package for economic development. Democrats who control the chamber contend the action is unnecessary with the regular session just two months away (CLARION-LEDGER [JACKSON]). • Three state gaming agencies in **WASHINGTON** — the State Gambling Commission, the State Lottery and the Horse Racing Commission — will contribute \$200,000 to combat problem gambling. The money will be used to expand a problem gambling help line, distribute educational materials and promote National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, among other things. According to the State Gambling Commission, about 5 percent of Washington residents have a gambling problem (SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*



Politics & Leadership

S TAKES RISING IN JUDICIAL RACES: Money has become such an integral part of political contests that even the campaign expenditures of those seeking top government posts don't seem to hold much shock value. Court watchers, however, are a little alarmed by the amount of money spent this year on state supreme court races, and they say running for judicial office may soon be as expensive as running for governor or even the U.S. Congress. Two candidates in a hotly-contested supreme court race in ILLINOIS raised over \$8.9 million in contributions, a new record for state judicial campaigns — and more than some candidates for the U.S. Senate spent this year. Observers are also concerned about the influx of special interest money into state judicial races. Interest groups contributed more than \$3.5 million to a race in WEST VIRGINIA, for example, which substantially exceeded the \$2.8 million raised by the candidates themselves. And experts say total spending for the 20 states that filled high court seats Nov. 2 could exceed \$45 million. The increase in campaign spending parallels a rise in the amount of television advertising in judicial races. TV ads for supreme court candidates appeared in 15 states this year. That's up considerably from the nine states in 2002, and the four in 2000, the year TV advertising was first used in judicial campaigns. "The transformation of judicial elections is almost complete," said Jesse Rutledge, communications director for the Justice at Stake Campaign, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that advocates for an impartial judiciary. "In a majority of states now, the races are dominated by special interests, television advertisements and record sums of money. That's an unfortunate transformation." (STATELINE.ORG)

PARTIES AGREE TO SHARE IA SENATE: Democratic and Republican leaders in IOWA's Senate tentatively agreed to a plan to share control of the chamber, which was split evenly between the two parties by voters on Nov. 2. The Republicans held a 29-21 majority going into the election, but Dems picked up four seats, giving each party 25 seats apiece. The power-sharing proposals agreed upon last Tuesday included configuring committees so they consist of an equal number of Dems and Repubs, with Republican and Democratic co-chairs; requiring bills to be approved by caucus leaders before they can be debated by the full Senate; and allowing each party to control the chamber's top post, president, for one year of the two-year session, with a member of the alternate party serving as

president pro tempore — the order possibly being determined by a coin toss. With neither side possessing a majority, Senate leaders predict the 2005 agenda will be pretty tame. “We can’t get out too far either way. We’ve got to find common ground,” said Republican leader Stewart Iverson. As much of an adjustment as sharing control of the Senate might be for the Republicans, things could have been worse; voters nearly forced them to do the same thing in the Iowa House, cutting their 54-46 majority in that chamber to 51-49. House Speaker Christopher Rants (R) conceded that result makes things “a little tighter than I’d like.” But he also indicated he wasn’t too worried about his party’s narrowed majority, stating, “we’ve demonstrated an effort to work in a bipartisan manner in the House in the past.” (DES MOINES REGISTER, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL)

NEW MAPS AID GOP TAKEOVER IN

GA: Republicans have been on the rise in GEORGIA in recent years, and the Peach State overwhelmingly favored President Bush on Nov. 2. But some say it was new legislative district maps that actually allowed the GOP to take control of the House of Representatives, and with that victory, consolidate their command over both the executive and legislative branches for the first time since Reconstruction. Nine months ago, a three-judge panel of federal judges struck down legislative maps drawn in 2001, when the Democrats still controlled the statehouse. And new court-drawn maps were used for the first time in this year’s elections. Charles Bullock, a political scientist at the University of Georgia, said the new maps played “a tremendous role” in the elections. “The Democratic gerrymander had suppressed the Republican vote. Republicans had been getting a majority vote since 1996, but couldn’t convert that into a majority of seats,” Bullock said. State Democratic Party chairman Bobby Kahn disputes that assertion, however. Kahn, who as a chief aid to then-Gov. Roy Barnes (D), helped develop the 2001 district maps, claims his party’s loss of the statehouse had less to do with new maps than with John Kerry’s poor performance in the state. “When the [Democratic] presidential ticket gets 23 percent of the white vote, seats are going to fall,” he said. (MACON TELEGRAPH)

In the Hopper

State Net’s database tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states at any given time. Here’s a snapshot of what’s in the legislative works:

- **Number of prefiles/intros this week:** **384**
- **Number of prefiles/intros overall in 2004:** **124,353**
- **Number of bills enacted/adopted this week:** **91**
- **Number enacted/adopted overall in 2004:** **26,170**
- **Total number of measures in State Net database:** **192,296**

— Compiled By GINA HUMMELL
(2003-04 data current as of 11/5/04
Source: State Net)



POLITICS IN BRIEF: NEVADA Gov. Kenny Guinn (R) called the Legislature into special session last week to begin impeachment proceedings against Controller Kathy Augustine (R). Augustine has already admitted to violating the state’s ethics law by allowing members of her staff to work on her 2002 re-election campaign on state time (LAS VEGAS SUN). • Republicans retained control of the **MONTANA** House last week after a tally of six provisional ballots gave Constitution Party candidate Rick Jore a two-vote edge over Democrat Jeanne Windham. Jore’s 1,559-to-1,557-vote victory — subject to a recount that starts this week — leaves the GOP with a 50-49 majority in the chamber. Should that result hold up, it will spoil the Dems shot at a sweep of Treasure State government, having seized both the Senate and governorship on Nov. 2 (STATE-LINE.ORG, BILLINGS GAZETTE).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

Hot issues

B **USINESS:** A **NEW JERSEY** Senate committee unanimously approves AB 3005, which would restore legal status to “Ladies Night” promotions at Garden State bars. The State Division on Civil Rights declared Ladies Nights, which feature discounted drinks for women only, a form of sexual discrimination earlier this year (STAR-LEDGER [NEWARK]). • **CALIFORNIA** insurance officials give their blessing to the \$16.4 billion merger of Anthem and WellPoint Health Networks, which will create the nation’s largest health insurer. California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi initially blocked the deal, saying it would provide a massive payoff to company executives, the cost of which would be passed on to consumers. The companies resolved the issue by promising to spend \$265 million to improve health services in the Golden State (NEW YORK TIMES). • A **TEXAS** court overturns a directive from state insurance officials to the State Farm and Farmers Insurance companies to significantly roll back their homeowners policy prices in order to come into line with reform laws passed in 2003. The two companies sell about 40 percent of all homeowners insurance sold in the state (DALLAS MORNING NEWS).

CRIME & PUNISHMENT: The U.S. Supreme Court rules that drunk driving is not a “crime of violence” that should subject immigrants to automatic deportation, which rejects just such an interpretation of the law by both the Bush and Clinton administrations. The Court’s decision was based on the case of a legal permanent immigrant in **FLORIDA** who was deported after being convicted of drunk driving in an accident that injured two people. The man served two years in



jail before being sent back to his native Haiti, despite having lived in the U.S. for 20 years (NEW YORK TIMES). • The high court also declines to hear cases from **NEW YORK** and **WASHINGTON** that question whether states violate the federal Voting Rights Act when they bar convicted felons from voting. The suits claim that stripping felons of the right to vote disproportionately affects minorities, particularly black men (NEW YORK TIMES). • A **NEW JERSEY** Assembly committee approves a measure that would abolish immunity from lawsuits for Garden State charities that carelessly hire child molesters. It moves now to the full Assembly (STAR-LEDGER [NEWARK]).

EDUCATION: Textbook publishers in **TEXAS** and **NEW YORK** agree to honor a request from Lone Star State education officials to change health books to describe marriage as only being between a man and a woman. But critics of the new books say they fail to meet curriculum requirements to inform students about pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease prevention (USA TODAY, HOUSTON CHRONICLE, DALLAS MORNING NEWS).

ENVIRONMENTAL: Federal wildlife officials decide not to place prairie dogs on the list of protected animals covered under the federal Endangered Species Act. Environmentalist groups seeking the listing

claim the dogs — who are really a large member of the squirrel family — now occupy only 8 percent of their historic territory in **WYOMING, COLORADO, UTAH** and **MONTANA**. They vowed to take the matter to court (CASPER STAR-TRIBUNE). • A study group in the **SOUTH DAKOTA** Game, Fish and Parks Dept. issues a report recommending that farmers and ranchers be allowed to shoot mountain lions that wander out of the Black Hills. A final vote on the study is set for the end of November (ARGUS LEADER [SIOUX FALLS]). • Lions also take a blow in **FLORIDA** after U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials indefinitely delay the adoption of a plan designed to

Quote...

“We have a responsibility to have books that encourage a young man to grow up and become a husband, and a young lady to grow up and become a wife.”

— **TEXAS State Board of Education member Don McLeroy explaining why he asked textbook publishers to make last-minute changes to books for middle and high school students that define marriage as only being between a man and a woman.**

... unquote

“It’s a real shame that the board is not focusing on how to get the 4 million teenagers who are going to use these books the information they need to keep themselves healthy. Instead, we see a hateful agenda sidetracking the issue.”

— **The response from Samantha Smoot of Texas Freedom Network. (DALLAS MORNING NEWS)**



protect the big cats from encroaching development. The agency halted the plan after concerns were raised over the legitimacy of some of the science used in its development (MIAMI HERALD).

HEALTH: A **CONNECTICUT** court rejects a plea to overturn the Constitution State’s new law banning smoking in bars and restaurants. The suit was brought by bar owners who claimed they are losing significant amounts of business to Indian gaming casinos and private clubs that can legally allow their customers to smoke. The court said the Legislature was correct in creating the exemptions (HARTFORD COURANT).

SOCIAL POLICY: The **FLORIDA** Supreme Court rules unanimously that judges can approve the adoption of foster children even when child protection workers object. The court said judges could overrule the Florida Department of Children & Families in cases of children who were placed in the agency’s care due to abuse or neglect by their birth parents (WASHINGTON POST).

POTPOURRI: The **ILLINOIS** Senate approves a bill that would increase the speed limit for truckers traveling the Prairie State’s rural highways to 65 mph. Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) has already vetoed the measure once, but the Senate vote sends it to the House for reconsideration (CHICAGO SUN-TIMES). • **NEW JERSEY** officials approve moving nearly \$10 billion in state holdings out of the stock market and into less traditional investments like real estate, hedge funds and private equity. Unions representing teachers and other public employees — whose pension funds make up the bulk of the portfolio — have filed suit to stop the move (STAR-LEDGER [NEWARK]).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Once around the statehouse lightly

AND MILES TO GO... He lost the state by 335,000 votes, but presidential candidate Ralph Nader has demanded a recount in NEW HAMPSHIRE. According to *The Washington Post*, Nader doesn’t think a re-tote will give him the state’s 4 electoral votes. But he does think a recount will expose what he claims are widespread “irregularities” with electronic scanners that may have given Pres. George Bush more votes than he really earned in the Granite

State. Nader is willing to pop for the cost of the recall, which required a \$2,000 deposit. No word on when elections officials will start the process.

MONEY, MINE. Scott McInnis spent almost nothing this election season. As *The Washington Post* reports, McInnis' re-election campaign forked out a modest \$150,000. Of course, the COLORADO Republican wasn't running for re-election to Congress, which may account for his frugality. But some critics have grumped that \$150,000 was too much to spend for someone not on the ballot, and they have called attention to the campaign's sole employee — Lori McInnis — who was paid \$40,000, plus \$1,150 a month in benefits and the use of a car and cell phone. And yes, that would be the former congressman's wife. McInnis says his wife worked out of their home and was instrumental in helping him close down his political operations — a legal expense for left-over campaign money.

JUST MONEY. In CALIFORNIA's Silicon Valley, billionaire Steve Poizner threw nearly \$7 million of his own money at an attempt to win a seat in the state Legislature. By the time he was done, reports *California Journal*, Poizner had paid just shy of \$100 per vote. At one point during the fall, he was the single largest advertiser on Bay Area cable television — more ubiquitous than Budweiser, Dodge trucks or Viagra. His name ID was astronomical, but he had one fatal flaw: He was a Republican in a district dominated by Democrats. Poizner lost, despite smashing all records for personal spending.

HANDOVER WENDOVER. An historic meeting took place last week to decide the fate of Wendover, UTAH. The town sits on the Utah border, directly opposite West Wendover, NEVADA, and according to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the two burgs are about to merge. If all the "i's" are dotted and "t's" crossed, Wendover, Utah, will cease to exist because the two-state compact will cede the Utah portion to Nevada. Consideration must be given to schools, parks, social services and transportation — as well as municipal debt. If it comes off, it will be the first time in modern American history that a state boundary will change to stitch one city to another state, says a spokesman for the process.

CLIMATE CONTROL. Want a bargain as a college student? Want to attend a school that's desperate to attract more students? How far will you go, and what will you put up with once you get there? Those are questions that a lot of Sun Belt students are asking themselves these days. Schools in states such as SOUTH DAKOTA, WISCONSIN, KENTUCKY and others are making a concerted effort to lure students from states such as CALIFORNIA, where the under-25 population



is booming. And according to *The Christian Science Monitor*, kids from the Golden State are responding. A dozen students a year, for instance, head to South Dakota from Santa Ana — in the heart of sun-dappled Orange County. The big downside? Weather. The temperature can hit forty below in Brookings, South Dakota, on deep-winter days. It can be beach weather in Santa Ana.

POPULARITY CONTEST. IOWA has seven electoral votes. CALIFORNIA has 55. But over the final two weeks of the 2004 presidential campaign, notes *California Journal*, the 131,000 residents of Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa, were treated to visits from George Bush, John Kerry and their running mates — Dick Cheney and John Edwards. During the final two *months* of the campaign, only Cheney and Edwards came anywhere near California, and then just to raise money. Reason? Iowa was a battleground state to the bitter end; California had fallen in Kerry's camp long before Election Day.

— *By A.G. BLOCK*

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