

## Diverse Democratic ticket marks history, preps for '08 elections

By Neal Brown  
STAFF WRITER

With the presidential election a little less than two years away, a diverse Democratic ticket begins to take shape in preparation for the 2008 race to the White House.

"I think the image of the American president as a white Christian male needs to be edited," said Sydney Roberson, junior political science student.

Sen. Hillary Clinton, New York, is among the first of the Democrats to announce she will run in the 2008 elections, according to an official statement on her website.

Sen. Barack Obama, Illinois, and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson also announced the launching of each of their presidential exploratory committees, closely trailing Clinton's announcement of her candidacy, according to official statements from their camps.

The three Democrats, Clinton, Obama and Richardson, mark political history as the first



Sen. Hillary Clinton  
New York

woman, black and Latino, respectively, to earn major presidential nominations.

The political climate suits these three more now than ever before, according to Roberson.

Minorities will become more and more prevalent, and they will become a natural part of the election process, according to John Noor, political science and economics student and student body president.

"I think it is great (they are running), and I think that it is

about time," Noor said. "I would expect it from the Democratic Party, unfortunately much before the Republican Party."

The three politicians might face difficulties, considering there are so many people on the Democratic ticket already, according to Noor.

"None of these candidates will ever be elected president unless they can expand beyond liberal, Democratic women, African American voters or Hispanic voters," said Bill Sabo, political science professor. "An ethnic candidate has a natural constituency in the sense that there is a core block of voters out there that they can count on. A candidate's ability to get votes beyond their core block is what will determine how far they will ultimately go in their campaigns."

Politics is based on a candidate's strengths and weaknesses, according to Sabo.

"It is more about fate than luck," Sabo said. "Fate enters by throwing up circumstances or situations that either bring forth



Sen. Barack Obama  
Illinois

those strengths or bring forth those weaknesses."

Americans are hungering for more compassionate politics, according to Roberson.

"The American public cannot help but feel neglected because so much of the government's attention has been focused abroad," Roberson said. "This country needs politics that are more concerned with people than with oil."

But, according to Sabo, the American public is hungry for an

illusion.

"An illusion where everybody agrees and cooperates and that we all embrace the same common values, goals and ways to get there," Sabo said. "That is ridiculous and that is naive."

Everyone believes in peace, prosperity and social justice, but how a person defines these things are key, according to Sabo.

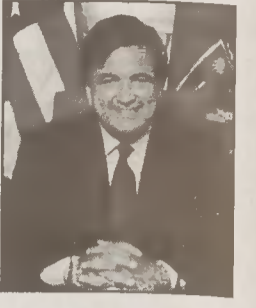
"What it becomes is a struggle to try and figure out what the best common pursuit is," Sabo said.

People want a change in foreign policy and a change in Iraq, according to Noor.

"I think that Americans do not like losing, they like winning," Noor said. "If the United States were winning the war, foreign policy would be a totally different issue right now, but it is not. We are getting our butts handed to us."

Elections are generally fought over domestic issues, according to Sabo.

"In the long run, you build a coalition of support around com-



Gov. Bill Richardson  
New Mexico

mitment to certain issues and positions on those issues," Sabo said.

Based on political skill, Clinton is the best choice, according to Sabo.

"There is no comparison between her and the other two," Sabo said. "She is a far better politician and has very good political instincts. She also has the name recognition as well as the 'Clinton connections.' No one has been hit harder than she has been hit and survived."

## Clinton, Obama and Richardson weigh in on important issues

### Sen. Hillary Clinton, New York

- **On Abortion.** Clinton respects Roe v. Wade, but continues to push to make adoption and getting Plan B emergency contraceptives easier. She also believes in safeguarding constitutional rights, including choice. "Our core beliefs and values can guide us in reaching our goal of keeping abortion safe, legal and rare into the next century," Clinton said in a speech in Jan. 1999.

- **On Budget & Economy.** Clinton wants to cut taxes within a balanced budget. The economy creates consumers, but not citizens, according to Clinton. "Some think that the market can do anything if left alone. Others undermine the benefits that free enterprise brings. We have to create a balance," Clinton said at the Sorbonne in Paris in June, 1999.

- **On Civil Rights.** Clinton pushes for a privacy bill of rights. She voted no on the constitutional ban of same-sex marriages and yes to adding sexual orientation to definition of hate crimes. Clinton also said military service should be based on conduct, not sexual orientation.

- **On Environment.** Clinton stands for clean air and wants to reduce air pollution to improve children's health. She also pushes for the Environmental Protection Agency to better clean up mercury.

- **On Education.** Clinton wants to transfer tax cuts from wealthy and big corporations to student aid. "We were making progress in narrowing the gap between high tuition and costs and what the average student and his or her family could pay. We ought to be making sure every qualified student can go to college and pursue his or her dreams," Clinton said during a conference in June, 2006.

- **On War.** Though Clinton is a critic of the Iraq war, she will not recant her 2002 vote in its favor. She also regrets Bush's handling of the war, but not her vote for it. "I regret the way the president used the authority that Congress gave him. I thought it made sense to get inspector back into Iraq, and backing it up with coercive diplomacy," Clinton said during a senate debate in 2006.

### Sen. Barack Obama, Illinois

- **On Abortion.** Obama supports a woman's right to choose and urges passing of the Stem Cell Research bill. He also voted yes to a \$100 million plan to reduce teen pregnancy by education and contraceptives.

- **On Budget & Economy.** Obama believes Bush's economic policies are not working and supports federal plans to protect rural economy. "Effective federal programs are necessary to protect the rural economy," Obama said on his official campaign Web site in 2004.

- **On Civil Rights.** Obama opposes gay marriage, but supports civil unions and gay equality. He also wants to include sexual orientation in anti-discrimination laws and feels the civil rights movement was a success. He also supports affirmative action in colleges and government.

- **On Environment.** "I spent three months working for a Ralph Nader offshoot up in Harlem, trying to convince the minority students at City College about the importance of recycling. Then a week passing out flyers for an assemblyman's race in Brooklyn - the candidate lost and I never did get paid," Obama wrote in his book in 1996.

- **On Education.** Obama sponsored legislations that recruit and reward good teachers. He wants to address the growing achievement gap between students and supports charter schools and private investment in schools. He is also pushing free public college for any student with a B-average. "I try to avoid an either/or approach to solving the problems of this country. There are questions of individual responsibility and questions of societal responsibility to be dealt with. The best example is an education," Obama said in an interview in 2004.

- **On War.** Obama is a longtime critic of the Iraq war and said invading Iraq was a bad strategic blunder. The war in Iraq was an ideologically driven war. "I think Bush was sincere and is sincere about his desire to maintain a strong America, but there was a single-mindedness to this process that has led our country into a very difficult position," Obama said in an interview in 2004.

### Gov. Bill Richardson, New Mexico

- **On Abortion.** Richardson supports a woman's right to choose. "I've been at the forefront with issues that affect women. I fought discriminatory wage policies in the federal government, supported legislation to help women-owned businesses and voted to fund breast and cervical cancer screening. I have also resisted any effort to weaken a woman's right to choose," Richardson said on his campaign Web site in 2002.

- **On Budget & Economy.** Richardson wants to grow the trade link to Mexico and attract Hollywood business to the country.

- **On Civil Rights.** Richardson supports minority preferences to minority-owned businesses in granting of government contracts. He also believes the government should provide affirmative action programs as long as they do not include quotas.

- **On Environment.** Richardson wants to reverse global warming and make serious commitments to renewable sources of energy. He also wants to expand and create new state parks as well as develop comprehensive water management plans. "We are expanding and creating new state parks, because there is no greater responsibility given to government than the preservation of our environment-our way of life. I will never shirk from that responsibility," Richardson said in a speech in 2004.

- **On Education.** Richardson wants to increase the salary of school teachers and believes charter schools show promise. He also voted no on giving federal aid to only schools allowing voluntary prayer.

- **On War.** Richardson wants the U.S. out of Iraq and relinquish control to Iraqis. He also believes in a Homeland Security Department at federal and state levels. "We should have a cabinet level officer for Homeland Security in New Mexico. Last month I announced my intention to consolidate existing emergency preparedness personnel in New Mexico under a single Director. Today, I am in total agreement with the President and I propose we give our Homeland Security Director state cabinet status," Richardson said on his campaign Web site in 2002.

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