

Despite poor showing, Sharpton vows to stay course

Continued from page 1A

haps the biggest critic has been University of Maryland political scientist Ron Walters, who has supported the idea of a Sharpton presidential candidacy but rejects his association with Right-wingers.

"It damaged his credibility in the eyes of a lot of people," Walters says of the Sharpton-Stone association. Walters says it appears that Sharpton is being used as a pawn by Republicans intent on disrupting a Democratic challenge to George W. Bush.

Sharpton sharply disagrees.

"If the Republican Party was going to try to influence me, one, I wouldn't need any money. They would be putting up the money," he says. "Two, they would be trying to get me to run as an independent because then I would be taking votes from the Democrats. Why would they want me to run in the Democratic primary, committed to supporting the winner if I don't win and helping to bring in new voters?"

Sharpton says Stone and his associates did write him campaign checks, but no more than four or five small contributions.

"He and some people wrote \$250 checks, yeah, but I raised \$400,000. For him and four or five other people to write \$250 checks, that's like someone tinkling in the Hudson River. How does that finance my campaign?" he says. "Black people have got the sense to know that \$250 ain't gonna buy Al Sharpton."

The latest Federal Election Commission report shows that Sharpton has campaign debts of \$485,969, including \$55,000 owed former campaign manager Frank Watkins. As of Jan. 31, Sharpton's campaign had just \$1,039 in the bank, the FEC said.

Sharpton says his primary fundraisers have been Black media moguls, Cathy Hughes, Earl Graves and Bob Johnson, all three of whom were listed as sponsors of a Washington, D.C. reception for Sharpton in the early months of his campaign.

However, Sharpton also acknowledged that Stone had a hand in raising money through business associates for his separate non-profit organization, the National Action Network. Those amounts will become public when the organization files its annual report.

He argues that no one questions the fundraising of other candidates. "I guarantee you that [presidential candidates] John Edwards and John Kerry gets more Republican money than I could ever count. Certainly a lot more than \$250."

Walters scoffs that it's not different standards - just different constituencies.

"Forget about Kerry and Edwards. Al Sharpton pretends to represent the interests of the Black community," Walters says. "You can't do that in this kind of a ball game and not expect to be questioned on it. Either he doesn't know where he is or he simply does not get it."

Walters adds there is a difference between taking Republican money or advice and taking money and advice from Right-wing conservatives.

"There are a lot of Republicans who don't have a spear out for the Democratic Party," Walters says. "Roger Stone is part of the conservative movement. And he's a bona fide part of that movement. That movement is not good for Black people and he is trying to kill the Democratic Party through Al Sharpton."

Sharpton's former campaign manager, Frank Watkins, who quit the cam-

paigned after seven months, agrees.

"Roger Stone's name came up only one time while I was there. And I indicated to Sharpton that I hope that he was not in any way involved in the campaign because he was basically an extreme Right-wing sleaze ball is what I said to him," Watkins recalls. "I can't remember whether it was before or after I had that conversation that I had one press inquiry asking me if Roger Stone was involved in the campaign and I said he was absolutely not because I had been assured by Al that he was not."

Watkins declined to comment on the subsequent disclosure that Stone was more involved with the Sharpton campaign than he had been aware.

"I still like Rev. Sharpton. I think he has made some positive contributions to the Democratic Party through the debates, through his speeches and sermons in churches," he says. "I'm not trying to damage his campaign in any way. And I wish him all the best."

Meanwhile, Sharpton is

moving ahead with his campaign, vowing to stay in until the Democratic National Convention in July.

"I expect to be put in nomination because I have delegates," he says.

At the beginning of this week, Sharpton had only 16 of the 2,162 delegates needed to win the Democratic nomination. Sen. John Kerry (Mass.) had 613. John Edwards (N.C.) had 192 and Rep. Dennis Kucinich (Ohio) had two.

Sharpton says he expects to win more in the Super Tuesday primaries, which

will include 10 states on March 2, including California and New York.

"You still have Illinois. You still have Texas. You still have Alabama. Three-quarters of Black America hasn't even voted yet," says Sharpton.

African-Americans made up almost half of the electorate in South Carolina yet Sharpton got only 18 percent of the Black vote there, according to exit polls.

"We had hoped to get all we could. We didn't get all we wanted, but we got a lot more than critics even

thought we'd get," Sharpton says.

"We're not comparing Kerry with Bush yet, we're comparing him to Sharpton," he says, referring to himself in the third person. "And the issue is, does Black America want to now say, 'We do not want leverage at the conven-

tion. We will go with whatever liberal we think is going to win?' And if we are saying that, then we will say we no longer believe in empowerment. We would be saying we don't need a Black Caucus. We don't need nothing. Let's just let liberals run everything from now on."

**"Count on us for Quality
At A Low Price"
KEZIAH FUNITURE**

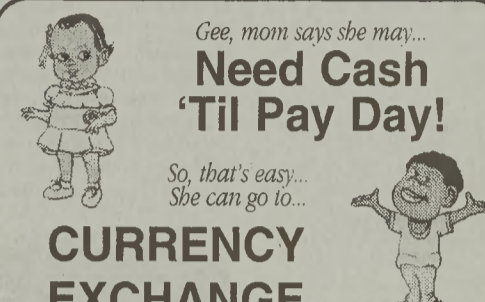


Luxurious All Leather Deep Seated Sofa NOW **\$699.00**
Rego. \$999.00
Loveseat \$679.00

Open Mon. - Sat. 9am - 6pm
2914 Gibbon Rd. Charlotte, N.C. **Financing Available**
704-596-7427
We Give Our Customers The Best Price!

Gee, mom says she may...
**Need Cash
'Til Pay Day!**

So, that's easy...
She can go to...



**CURRENCY
EXCHANGE**

They have "6" convenient locations:

And, she only needs to take: a valid driver's license, social security card, recent utility bill, checking account statement, paycheck stub, and leave her personal check.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-5

In Just Minutes, She'll Have The CASH!

Charlotte Transit 310 E. Trade St., Ste A-110 Freedom Mall 3205 Freedom Drive, Ste. 13 Graham Street 2020 N. Graham St., Ste A	Lancaster, S.C. 679 Lancaster Bypass East Salisbury 123 North Main St., Ste B Hickory 1836-2 Startown Road
--	--



**"ONE THING LED
TO ANOTHER &..."**

**THE CONVERSATION NEVER ENDS WITH &.
THAT'S WHY THERE'S & FROM AT&T.**

With & you can get unlimited local & unlimited long distance from home, together on one bill. And it's only \$54.95 a month, that's just \$1.83 a day. So now you can talk on & on & on. Call 1 800 ATT 4ALL today and ask for unlimited local & long distance. It's another example of how the many ways we communicate all come together with & from AT&T.



Call 1 800 ATT 4ALL
and bring it all together with &.
att.com/home

UNLIMITED LOCAL

&

UNLIMITED LONG DISTANCE
\$54.95 A MONTH...ONLY \$1.83 A DAY

Local & Long Distance & International & Wireless & Internet & VoIP

For domestic, direct-dialed calls. Not available in all areas. Must subscribe to AT&T Local, Local Toll and Long Distance to be eligible. Wireless Services provided by AT&T Wireless Services, Inc.