

The Issues That Matter

Primary Redo and the Implicit Consequences

By: Jessica McDonald

This year's Presidential election campaign trail has been troubled with trivial and unimportant issues, and to some degree has left a bitter taste in the mouths of voters and campaign supporters. As the election campaign nears an end, miniscule and minute issues have become sensational news spectacles, and vainly enthusiastic political jargon.

In the midst of many of these news spectacles the media forgets the seemingly important issues that matter. The Democratic Party has been in center of many of the heated debates, and controversial issues that have plagued the 2008 election.

One critical issue, that does however take a front seat, and has created an uproar that presents many ethical implications, is the possibility of primaries being held in both Michigan and Florida for a second time. The votes from both of these states were not counted during the first primaries because each state broke the National Democratic Conventions rules regarding when to hold them.

Each state was required to have their primaries after Feb 5, and did so January 15 (Michigan) and (Florida) January 29 respectively. The issue, now, is does the DNC override the established rules that all states and parties agreed to, in order to let voters from both of these states be heard, and delegates seated?

As of March 17, 2008, the state of Florida has withdrawn from pursuing a redo, but Michigan is playing it till the very end. Democratic party Chairman Karen L. Thurman sent a letter announcing that a party-run primary has been ruled out and it is simply not possible for the state to hold another primary. However, Democrats from Michigan have not given up so easily.

On March 31 Michigan congressman Bart Stupak (D-Michigan) proposed a new plan of action to divide the delegates. In his proposal letter to the DNC Chairman Howard Dean he suggested that Senator Hillary receive 47 of Michigan's 83 Delegates and Barack Obama 36 since Hillary Clinton received 55 percent of the votes. The remaining 73 delegates would be awarded based on percentage of popular vote.

At stake are Florida's 210 delegates and Michigan's 156, delegates that each candidate could benefit from greatly. An agreement between both Senator's Obama and Clinton camps to reach a resolution has not been forthcoming.

Obama's campaign spokesman Tommy Vector said, "It's pretty apparent that Clinton's campaign views on voting are dependent on their own political issue."

Clinton campaign feels that a revote is the only way Michigan can be assured its delegates will be seated. Clinton's campaign aide Harold Hicke's said earlier this month, "If

the Obama campaign thwarts a fair election process for the people of Michigan, it will jeopardize the Democratic nominees ability to carry the state in the general election."

The important question is will a redo happen and if not why? Most objections to the second primary are that it will have to be privately funded and public run, and the financial burden placed on local and county clerks. Another major issue is the costly price tag of \$12 million. Where would this money come from, because the states will not fund this inquired cost?

Elizabeth City State University Political Science Professor at Dr. Margery Coulson-Clark feels that having another primary in either of these states presents far more important issues than cost that could possible result in major social and ethical consequences.

Coulson-Clark says that having a primary may not be fueled by the best interest of the people, but a "democracy of people making decisions in their own political best interest." She also feels that having a redo may have unintended future consequences of created cynicism if the rules are allowed to be broken. Who has out weighed the cost and benefits of having a primary redo, and would it actually benefit the people as a posed to being more beneficial for the candidates? These are questions that Dr. Coulson-Clark posed. Dr. Coulson-Clark says that this "is a power struggle not a people struggle."

Dr. Jahi Uchee Issa History professor at ECSU concedes with Dr. Coulson-Clark that there are major consequences to having primary redo. He also feels that the real issue is that the "people" of Michigan should go after the senators who moved the party primaries up without their consent. The people are the real victims not the delegates or the candidates. He feels that the solution would be to split the delegates 50/50.

Criminal Justice Professor Fredrick Ford has a divergent but one similar view to both Dr. Coulson-Clark and Dr. Issa. "When did the democratic process become so complicated", he says. Ford believes that the issue of seating the delegates should not be the reason to have a primary redo, because ultimately the people should decided who is president and that the electoral-college should not even exist. "One man one vote," the popular vote should decide.

No one has disagreed that the people who voted in these states need to be heard. But what has become evident is that the underlying issue is not the people, but the appeasement of the Super delegates and the parties. So many more issues will arise in the wake of this political challenge, and the consequences that could be good or bad will be revealed.



Butterfield Endorses Obama

By: Archie A.J. Joshua

During a special service at ECSU held by the Mount Lebanon Elizabeth City Missionary Baptist Church, Congressman G.K. Butterfield, Democrat, endorsed Sen. Barack Obama for President. Butterfield who is up for re-election in the 1st district of North Carolina, told the audience of church goers and students that the current adminis-

trations time is up and the lack of jobs is affecting families everywhere. Butterfield said that Sen. Obama is the man to change this. The sixty year old congressman is an active member of the Congressional Black Caucus. He has been visiting different churches in the region with his message in advance of the May 6 North Carolina primary.

Smoking Ban

By: Arquiah Sharpless and Naya Jones

The Universities in North Carolina and most public places were in for a big shock when the law to ban smoking on public property was passed Jan. 1, 2008. This law prohibits smoking in all indoor workplaces in North Carolina including restaurants and bars. This law excludes nonprofit or tax-exempt status businesses.

The House Bill 259, Article 23 states that "It is the intent of the General Assembly to protect the health of individuals in public from the risks of secondhand smoke by prohibiting smoking in food and lodging establishments regulated under this Chapter, prohibiting smoking in State government buildings, and allowing local governments to protect the public's health by prohibiting smoking in public places and places of employment".

The non-smoking ban is an effort to protect non-smokers and others against secondhand smoke. The law aims making a safe environment protecting student's and worker's health.

"Erica Sharpe (non-smoker), a student at Elizabeth City State University says, "I have a very positive attitude towards the policy." Jamaal Gilcreast (smoker) also a student at Elizabeth City State University said "It is a reasonable policy that is based on the safety of all people, but you can not just abandon the smokers."

While on university property, a person has to be at least 100 feet from a building to smoke. The law is passed, but the real question is will the people obey the law. This

report suggests that the law is not being taken seriously by some of the ECSU family. Students, staff/faculty smokers are still smoking on the campus. People ask why and is the law being enforced. Campus Police can not enforce the law according to some of students.

Do you think that smoking should be allowed in all areas, some areas, or not allowed? Some of the smokers concluded, that there should be some areas just for those who enjoy it." Non-smokers, on the other hand, said "not allowed at all. Both smokers and non-smokers agreed that the no smoking policy was beneficial for the health of all people. The difference between the two is evident: some think that smoking should be allowed in all areas, others in some areas, or not allowed at all.

One group of non-smoker on ECSU campus is taking charge. The Vikings Against Nicotine Addiction (V.A.N.A) is an organization on the campus of ECSU fighting to make ECSU a smoke free campus. Their purpose is to ensure that all smoking policies are strictly enforced to ensure the health, safety and well being for everyone in and around campus. V.A.N.A will be working to educate and solicit support from the students, faculty/staff and others to get involved in changing the smoking policy.

