

# Bush begins tapping transition team while Gore goes to court

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*Chicago Tribune*

Texas Gov. George W. Bush, one day after claiming victory in the modern era's most tumultuous presidential contest, moved Monday to form his transition team while a tenacious Vice President Al Gore, citing his obligation to history, sought an unprecedented court decision to reverse Florida's official election result and give him the White House.

In a nationally televised address, Gore explained why his campaign filed suit in Florida asking that he be declared the state's election winner, arguing that a true count of ballots in key counties might add as many as 1,775 votes to his total, erasing Bush's official 537-vote margin.

"As provided under Florida law, I have decided to contest this inaccurate incomplete count in or-

der to ensure the greatest possible credibility for the outcome," Gore said in his five-minute, prime-time address. "This is America. When votes are cast we count them. We don't arbitrarily set them aside because it is too difficult to count them."

Speaking from the White House with a dozen American flags behind him, Gore said he viewed his court challenge, likely to further extend the uncertainty about the presidency, as his responsibility to democracy and history, even if it comes nearly three weeks after the election.

"Two hundred years from now, when future Americans study this presidential election, let them learn that democracy was ultimately put ahead of partisan politics in resolving a contested election," the vice president said.

Gore's address, the new legal challenge, and an earlier televised phone call in which Gore and run-

ning mate Joseph Lieberman talked with Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle \_ and House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt \_ about the political conflict in Florida, set the stage for what could be the final, difficult battle in this historic struggle for the 43rd presidency.

The Gore lawsuit asks the Leon County Circuit Court to overturn Secretary of State Katherine Harris' certification of the vote, shift some 13,000 uncounted and questionable ballots from Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties to Tallahassee for recounting by hand and order Nassau County to submit new election results that would cut Bush's edge by 50 votes.

The suit asks the court to require the state to accept all these new counts as part of the official certification, a process that likely would give the Florida election, and the presidency, to Gore.

As Gore went to court and to the public, the Bush team was in full

president-elect mode, buoyed by Harris' announcement Sunday that Florida's 25 electoral votes belonged to Bush and running mate Dick Cheney, who was immediately tapped to direct the transition team. The Florida certification gave Bush a total of 271 electoral votes; 270 are needed to win the presidency.

The Bush transition effort immediately hit a bump. The General Services Administration has not yet released the \$5.3 million in federal funds available for the transition to the next presidency. Undeterred, the Republicans said they would seek private funding for their transition effort. It is not unusual for a political party to seek outside funding for the transition.

"This is regrettable because we believe the government has an obligation to honor the certified results of an election," Cheney said at a Washington news conference.

"Never before in American

history has a presidential candidate gone to court to try to change the outcome of an already certified presidential election.

But whatever the vice president's decision, it does not change our obligation to prepare to govern the nation," he said.

The prospect of more lawsuits in a case that is headed for the U.S. Supreme Court only complicated an election picture that has involved charge, counter-charge, contention, disagreement and legal squabbling since hours after the polls closed Nov. 7.

In his suit Monday, Gore asked for an order that the state "certify that the true and accurate results of the 2000 presidential election in Florida" amount to a Gore-Lieberman victory.

Judge N. Sanders Sauls immediately accepted the case and called the first hearing just four hours after legal papers were filed at 12:14 p.m.

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