Bush, Gore Scramble | Referenda Push Pro-Pot Agendas **For Last-Minute Votes**

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA – Rallying sup-fort in the final 48 hours of the presi-dential campaign, Al Gore charged that George W. Bush would "squander the surplus" on a mistaken tax cut for the events of the second state of the balance of the second state of the balance of the second state of the PHILADELPHIA - Rallying sup-

tioned his commitment to seniors. "You're way ahead of me," Gore said.

Bush, who was spending the day in Florida, where the contest is tight although his brother is governor, dis-missed the comments, Polls show Gore

"I'm sure you've heard of all the scare tactics," Bush said at an airport rally in West Palm Beach. "Somebody who tries to scare people into the voting booth must not be very confident about his own positions.

At another point, he said: "They can

try to scare ... but we have a chance on Nov. 7 to purge this country of the old-style politics, the old way of politics." Most national polls give a slight edge to Bush, but Gore is running strong in some big battleground states, and the two are often crossing paths as they con-test the same states. Penneylvania and Michigan are key

Pennsylvania and Michigan are key to Gore's strategy, while he hopes to steal an unexpected victory in Florida that would hurt Bush by grabbing that state's 25 electoral votes. Both candidates began the day at

church "This election comes down to a very few states," Gore said Sunday at one of

two appearances at black churches in Philadelphia. "I need your help on Tuesday.

Bush and his wife Laura attended services at St. Andrews Church in Jacksonville. "Great way to start off the stretch run," he told reporters. "No pol-itics, just prayer and reflection." Afterward, the Rev. Gretchen Van Aken, while shaking Bush's hand, told him. "Brearcher the Lord the total

him: "Remember, the Lord himself chooses the right man."

Bush also prayed and had breakfast with the Rev. Billy Graham, who all but endorsed him.

Alaska and California have already passed referenda allowing use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.

By JENNIFER HAGIN Staff Writer

Although North Carolina has yet to consider such an option, voters in at least eight other states will decide refer-enda involving marijuana legalization on Nov. 7.

Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon and Utah all have referenda, most dealing with legalization for medicinal purposes. Alaska's referendum, the most sweep-ing, would legalize marijuana and release all inmates currently imprisoned for marijuana offenses. Voters have passed all previous mar-

ijuana referenda, with the lowest major-ity being 57 percent and the highest top-ping out at 72 percent, said Joel Lindau, UNC senior and N.C. director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. Voters in California, Alaska and other

states already have passed referenda allowing for medicinal marijuana usage. "There's never been one that's been even close to losing," Lindau said. He said information on the Internet discussing the advector of the term

discussing the advantages of legalization has helped propel interest in the subject and combat the government opposition. But Sandra Bennett, director for the Northwest Center for Health and Safety, said the trend toward legalizing mari-juana for medicinal use is merely part of a push toward legalizing the drug for recreational use as well.

Bennett also said information about marijuana's health benefits put out by the legalization proponents is false.

"I think it is an example of market-ing," she said. "A lie repeated enough will be believed." Rusche said she also opposed the ref-erenda because the Food and Drug Administration has not yet approved the medicinal use of marijuana. But Lindau predicted marijuana also would be legalized for recreational use in the United States within 10 years, cit-ing 1997 statistics indicating that 70 mil-tion Americans admitted to using the drue.

drug. Lindau also said the appointment of a new U.S. drug czar after the retirement of Gen. Barry McCaffrey this year could influence Americans' attitude toward

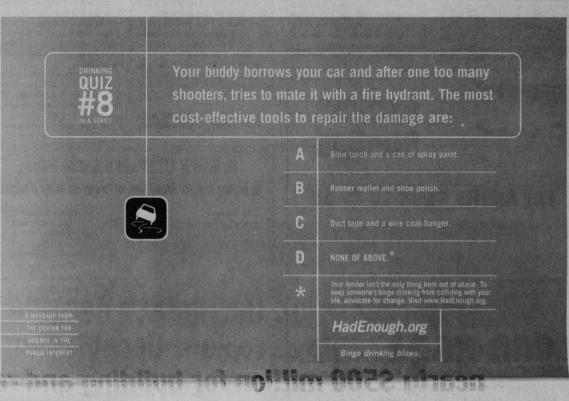
the drug. The drug czar is a position appoint-ed by the president for life. Whichever candidate wins on Tuesday will be responsible for naming

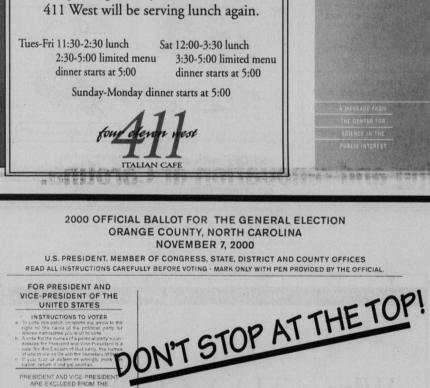
new drug czar. But Appalachian State University

riminal justice Professor Matt Robinson side the new drug czar will not work to the advantage of legalization, regardless of the presidential election's outcome. He said that the czar is not responsi-field for any policies, but publishes the for any policies, but publishes the for any policies, but publishes out and maintains a public stance against drugs. "The drug czar is abuitcal position that knows nothing abuit facts," he said. Dittact and idate will take a softer stance on marijuana usage because the stance of the stance

legalization. "Lessons have been learned from the past, and only one answer is acceptable: tough on crime," he said. "If you let your opponent character-ize you as soft on crime, you lose."

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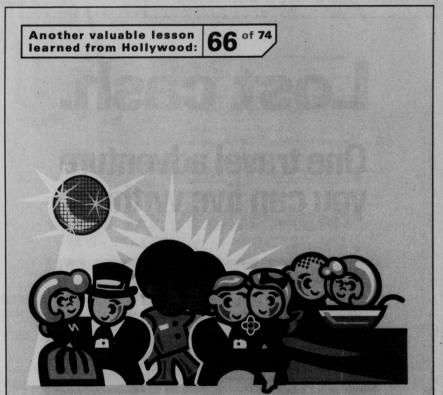


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