

commentary

from other pens...

Election offers crop of Clinton candidates

By Will Lester
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — About a dozen veterans of the Clinton administration — many of them former White House staffers — are running for prominent political offices this year.

The offices range from the U.S. Senate to governor to the California state assembly. They include Cabinet members and former officials in federal agencies, centrists and liberals.

But in the current political climate, they're all almost certain to highlight the economic successes of the administration they served.

"Those candidates can say 'I came out of an administration that delivered eight years of peace and prosperity,'" said Craig Smith, a former White House political director. "In a time of war and recession, that doesn't sound so bad."

The list grew when Robert Reich, the former Clinton administration labor secretary, announced he was running for governor of Massachusetts.

One race has its full share of Clinton veterans, the Chicago district where former White House aides Rahm Emanuel and Pete Dagher are in a crowded field for the seat of Democratic Rep. Rod Blagojevich, who is running for Illinois governor.

The list of Clinton alumni running in 2002 includes five candidates for governor:

—Janet Reno in Florida, where the former attorney general is competing for the right to face Republican incumbent Jeb Bush.

—Bill Richardson in New Mexico. The former energy secretary is vying for an open governor's seat.

—Andrew Cuomo in New York. The one-time housing secretary wants to challenge Republican incumbent George Pataki.

—Reich in Massachusetts, who is trying to win the right to challenge Republican incumbent Jane Swift.

—Bill Curry in Connecticut, a former White House aide who is competing for the right to challenge incumbent Republican John Rowland.

There are two candidates for Senate:

—Erskine Bowles in North Carolina, a former White House chief of staff competing for the Democratic nomination. Former Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole is the best-known Republican.

—Gloria Tristani in New Mexico. A Clinton appointee to the Federal Communications Commission, she is running for the seat held by Republican incumbent Pete Domenici.

Three former Clinton aides are running for Congress: Emanuel and Dagher in Illinois; and former White House staffer Fred Duval, who is one of several candidates running for a new House seat in Arizona.

One aide is running for state legislature: former Clinton speechwriter Andrei Cherny, is a candidate for California's state assembly.

Former Clinton aide Lanny Davis said running for office is a natural transition for some former staffers.

"The rarefied oxygen of working in the White House leads to a virus that never goes away," Davis said, though it may remain dormant.

Former Clinton aide Paul Begala said he found few surprises on the list of candidates, with the exception of Bowles.

"He had looked at running many times," Begala said of Bowles. "I know how much he saw the downside of politics. But he was so moved by September 11th, I don't believe he could comfortably sit in North Carolina and not run."

Political analyst Thomas Mann suggests it might have been inevitable the Clinton administration would produce a bumper crop.

"In many ways, Clinton was extraordinarily successful, but there were the downsides and he ultimately failed to pass off the baton," Mann said. "There has to be a sense of incompleteness to many associated with the Clinton presidency."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Will Lester covers politics and polling for The Associated Press.



Education, general government hit hard in budget

TOPEKA — Gov. Bill Graves has submitted a budget proposal that suggests education and many state agencies face several tight years unless taxes are increased.

As required by state law, Graves sent the Legislature a budget that assumes no new revenue sources for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

But he and top aides continued to emphasize that Graves himself doesn't like the plan and wants to raise taxes to prevent some of the funding cuts. He is expected to reveal his tax proposals in his State of the State address, to be delivered today at the Legislature convenes.

"This is not what the governor wants to do," State Budget Director Duane Goossen told reporters during a briefing Thursday. "My guess is this would be a pretty hard budget for the Legislature to pass."

Overall, Graves proposes to spend \$4.3 billion from the state's general fund — which holds most tax revenue — in fiscal year 2003. That would be a reduction of \$233 million or 5.2 percent from the current fiscal year.

For the Department of Education, general fund spending would decline \$128 million, or 5.5 percent, to \$2.2 billion under the Graves plan. Most of the department's budget flows to school districts.

Graves' budget proposes \$680 million for the higher education system in the upcoming fiscal year — a drop of 3.8 percent from this year and \$73 million less than it was supposed to get under a 1999 law that reorganized the system.

The Department of Transportation would receive no general fund money at all in fiscal 2003. It would be able to fund projects with bonds, federal funds, motor fuels taxes and vehicle registra-



john hanna
• ap news analysis

tion fees, but its comprehensive transportation program would lose \$147 million.

Many administrative agencies would see their general fund spending cut as well. One exception would be the state's court system, but Supreme Court Chief Justice Kay McFarland has warned that without more money, it may have to close district court offices extra days.

The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services would receive an extra \$4 million during the current budget year and another \$54 million during fiscal 2003, taking it to \$673 million, an increase of 8.7 percent.

But that wouldn't be enough to cover \$120 million in anticipated costs associated with some programs Graves believes the state is legally obligated to cover, requiring cuts in some programs.

Graves said in a letter to Kansans inside the three-volume budget his plan would "diminish state services in education, transportation and social services."

But Graves didn't stop with painting a bad picture for fiscal 2003. His budget document included projections through fiscal 2006.

The numbers indicated, absent additional revenue sources, the state could not restore the cuts to school districts or the promised level of spending for the higher education system in three years without cutting other programs.

Many agencies would be locked into their 2002 budgets through fiscal 2006, Goossen said.

However, the projections assume state revenues will grow less than 4 percent for each of the three years.

"I don't think we have enough accurate numbers to get into the out years," said Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

	APPROV	GOV	DIFF	PCT CH
Dept of Education	\$2,339.2	\$2,333.8	(\$5.4)	(0.2)
Higher Education System	\$706.5	\$706.9	\$0.4	0.1
SRS, Hospitals	\$614.8	\$618.8	\$4.0	0.7
Prison System	\$208.7	\$209.6	\$0.9	0.4
Dept on Aging	\$142.0	\$142.3	\$0.3	0.2
Court System	\$78.9	\$78.9	\$0.0	0.0
Dept of Transportation	\$62.1	\$94.6	\$32.5	52.3
Juvenile Justice	\$62.1	\$62.9	\$0.8	1.3
Other	\$294.6	\$279.9	(\$14.7)	(5.0)
TOTAL	\$4,508.9	\$4,527.7	\$18.8	0.4

The general fund is the largest source of money for Kansas government programs and where the state deposits most of its tax revenues. The approved budget for fiscal 2002 is the one passed by legislators during their 2001 session. The governor's plan would revise it.

	FY2002	FY2003	DIFF	PCT CH
Dept of Education	\$2,333.8	\$2,206.2	(\$127.6)	(5.5)
Higher Education System	\$706.9	\$680.0	(\$26.9)	(3.8)
SRS, Hospitals	\$618.8	\$672.7	\$53.9	8.7
Prison System	\$209.6	\$212.2	\$2.6	1.2
Dept on Aging	\$142.3	\$144.4	\$2.1	1.5
Court System	\$78.9	\$81.2	\$2.3	2.9
Dept of Transportation	\$94.6	\$0.0	(\$94.6)	(100.0)
Juvenile Justice	\$62.9	\$62.3	(\$0.6)	(1.0)
Other	\$279.9	\$235.5	(\$44.4)	(15.9)
TOTAL	\$4,527.7	\$4,294.5	(\$233.2)	(5.2)

The Department of Transportation would still receive money from motor fuels taxes, vehicle registration fees, federal funds and bonds. Source: State Budget Division.

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CAPE TOWN — In this time of global trouble, I send you this postcard of hope.

It's the holiday picture I carry in my heart of a thousand South Africans of every race enjoying a jazz concert together and, with it, this beautiful land's resurgence of national vitality.

The scene is Cape Town's zesty Waterfront area. The group making the music is Johnny Cooper's Big Band. The selections are hits made famous in the 1940s by Tommy Dorsey, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Louis Armstrong. The crowd enjoying the music is a bright emblem of the country's diversity: three-quarters black, the rest white or of mixed race.

What struck me, as a tourist coming upon this Sunday evening scene, is its unexpected comfort. Just seven years ago the first all-races election ever was held in this country, and here is democracy come fully alive. Even more than voting together, the people of South Africa are showing they now enjoy life together.

Jazz. That's the unifier of this marvelous tableau. It's gotten people, regardless of color, clapping and tapping to the beat of "Mack the Knife," sharing the dreaminess of "My Funny Valentine," the agreement that, if only for this moment, it truly is a "Wonderful World."

Unfortunately, this scene is not the New Year's greeting card we received in the year-ending newsmagazines. Their editors spent their holiday issues extolling the widening rift between East and West, between Christian and Muslim. But here in South Africa, I find evidence of social forces pulling people together.

What if peoples learn to coexist, even share a national life together? What if the old oppressor learns to deal with the formerly oppressed as a true compatriot? What if the victim of past subservience accepts this change of heart and manner? What if the forces that unite and bind societies outwit those pulling them apart?

Here on a two-week visit with my family I saw that "what if" in action. Amid all the news accounts of street crime and car hijackings here, this is the South African story that has gone unreported. People here are dealing with others as people. They are sharing this subcontinent with unexpected ease. You see that new fact of life in the daily encounters between whites and blacks. I'm not talking about the news photos you scan in tabloids or broad sheets, but what I saw in broad daylight.



chris matthews
• commentary

It was a scene of harmony and hope I didn't expect to find, not in South Africa, not yet. As a Peace Corps volunteer in this region, I spent two years witnessing the regular victory of racial rivalry over racial peace. The same country that pioneered the heart transplant was obsessed with preventing intimacy between men and women of different backgrounds. I'm talking about those absurd "immorality" laws aimed at keeping white men from having sex with black women.

More demeaning still was the brutal enforcement of white supremacy by individual whites. The "boss" barked the orders, ridiculing as he did the black man charged with carrying out those orders. Given the bad blood I could feel in the streets, I had no reason to believe that replacing white rule with black rule would change the terms on which people dealt with each other. One brutality, I feared, would be traded for another.

Yet, I don't think it's happened that way. These past weeks, I've seen black men and women dealing with white men and women, and what surprises me is the strong element of personal respect and comfort in these face-to-face dealings.

So, I return home to America with more optimism than when I left for the journey. Just as there is unexpected trouble in the world, there are also unexpected possibilities. There are forces, and not just the South African's insatiable appetite for jazz, bonding people together, just as there are those — I am forced to think of religion — capable of driving them apart.

No one ever thought that change would come peacefully to South Africa. Holding those first democratic elections in 1994, a truly historic event I was fortunate to cover as a reporter, showed that blacks and whites could vote together. The question was whether they could live together.

I now know that they can. So I share with you a reason for hope. It is not the rioters in the street who matter in the end. It is the people who build and advance societies. Call me an optimist. I know from reading history that

Cape of Good Hope

the long course of human experience leads toward civilization. I know as an eyewitness that a country with all the historic conflicts of South Africa is heading in that same direction.

I possess no grander souvenir of this spectacular Cape of Good Hope than the vivid, palpable memory of men and women, black and white, sitting together on a warm summer evening and smiling to the seductive optimism of Louis Armstrong.

Chris Matthews, chief of the San Francisco Examiner's Washington Bureau, is host of "Hardball" on CNBC and MSNBC cable channels. The 1999 edition of "Hardball" was published by Touchstone Books.

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