

# Huge spending spree gets underway for campaign 2000

By Ceci Connolly,  
The Washington Post

The 2000 presidential race is developing into a mammoth spending spree, with Vice President Gore aiming to raise a record \$55 million and two other candidates considering giving up federal money so they can spend unlimited sums.

Gore, who has been holding a series of private dinners with top fund-raisers, plans to exploit every available legal loophole to collect far more money than the basic spending limits allow. An intimidating war chest, his strategists assert, will scare off other Democrats and give him an early start on attacking the ultimate GOP nominee.

At the same time, advisers to two Republicans, Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes, say they are weighing whether to opt out of the system that gives primary candidates partial federal funding. That would let them spend as much as they want in pursuit of the nomination. "It's totally out of control," said Stan Huckaby, a Republican accountant who has advised numerous presidential campaigns.

The money chase is so overwhelming that former California governor Pete Wilson (R) and Sen. John F. Kerry, D-Mass., announced last week they would not run. On Thursday, the quest for cash quickens with three candidates, Gore, former vice president Dan Quayle and Democrat Bill Bradley, holding major fund-raising dinners.

"Everybody is pressing the envelope, spending a lot of time worrying about money," said Quayle campaign chairman Kyle McSlarrow.

Twenty-five years after Congress passed a law to restrain the flow of money into presidential campaigns, and two years after a campaign widely condemned for its financial abuses, the candidates are preparing to open the floodgates to an unprecedented amount of unregulated spending. After investigations by Congress, the Justice Department and the Federal Election Commission into 1996 fund-raising practices fizzled, and campaign reform legislation failed last year, the strategists for 2000 have concluded that there is little risk in pushing the fund-raising boundaries to new extremes.

When the 1974 act was written, lawmakers thought they had devised a foolproof way to shift the emphasis from dialing for dollars back to discussing the issues. They offered candidates a tantalizing deal: live within strict overall and state-by-state spending rules in exchange for millions in taxpayer-provided "matching funds." Each party's nominee would also receive full public financing for the general election campaign. But a combination of factors coalesced to frustrate those intentions. The cost of campaigning has skyrocketed while the maximum donation has remained at \$1,000 for individuals, meaning candidates have to spend more time than ever courting donors.

The entrance of wealthy, self-financed candidates such as Forbes

has other potential candidates worrying about how to compete against someone not constrained by spending limits. And a compressed primary calendar that will likely produce nominees by early March 2000 further increases the pressure on candidates to build up their bank accounts now. "To be competitive, you have to have the money up front," said Howard Opinsky, a spokesman for Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

The competition for dollars has become so intense that most candidates will spend half of 1999 troling for cash, their strategists said. McCain plans to attend 25 fund-raisers by the end of March, while former Reagan administration official Gary Bauer is busy mining a direct mail list of 90,000 supporters. House Budget Committee Chairman John R. Kasich, R-Ohio, made a pilgrimage to New York to woo mega fund-raiser Georgette Mosbacher, while Elizabeth Hanford Dole is contacting many friends in her husband's ready-made donor network.

Even as Bush prepares to announce the formation of his exploratory committee, a debate rages inside his inner circle about whether he should give up federal funding to attempt to match the wealthy Forbes dollar-for-dollar. His spokeswoman, Karen Hughes, said only: "A decision has not been made yet." Another top Bush adviser outlined "significant advantages" to forgoing matching funds, but said a final decision would likely come a number of months into the campaign.

In the 1996 primaries, Forbes spent

\$32 million of his own money, dropping about \$4 million in the Iowa caucuses alone, more than double the legal spending limit. His early advertising blitz set off a chain reaction that left the eventual GOP nominee, Bob Dole, with little money and plenty of scars.

"You need to be in a position to respond" to a Forbes attack, said the Bush adviser. Opting out of the federal system "puts you on more even ground with Forbes and his wallet." But the decision is not easy. By one Bush adviser's estimate, the governor would need to raise an additional \$17 million if he chooses not to take matching funds. And he would still be limited to raising a maximum of \$1,000 from individuals.

"You begin to ask yourself how many people you can find to give you \$1,000 each," said one Republican strategist. Indeed, while other candidates have considered not participating in the matching-fund system, none has taken that plunge without a large personal checkbook to finance his campaign.

"In the past, you heard Ronald Reagan's and Bill Clinton's folks make noise about not taking the matching funds," said Anthony Corrado, a campaign finance expert at Colby College. "But, when push came to shove, they all took the money." Whichever strategy Bush adopts, Ron Kaufman, a veteran GOP operative who served in the Bush White House, said much of the former president's financial network is poised to step into action for the

son. Already, Bush has played host to more than 75 prominent contributors at the governor's mansion, and his aides boast that between the governor and his brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R), the Bush team has a list of 122,000 possible donors.

Gore offers a case study in how to stay within the system of federal funding but stretch the legal limits to the extreme. Over the years, politicians, with the approval of regulators at the FEC, have invented ways to raise money above the strict federal caps, estimated to be \$33.5 million this year. They can collect more by designating some of it as intended for fund-raising costs or legal and accounting expenses. Thus, Gore's target is \$21.4 million above the basic spending ceiling.

While the extra cash is supposed to be used for those "exempt" expenses and not on direct campaigning, past campaigns have found creative ways to use the money. For example, the former director of Gore's political action committee, Nick Baldick, is on the payroll of Gore 2000 as a fund-raiser, meaning that his salary can be paid from those extra "exempt" dollars even though he has no experience raising money.

Gore's advisers believe that raising \$55 million serves a dual benefit, dissuading potential Democratic rivals from challenging him for the nomination and giving him a financial advantage heading into the general election. The strategy is "shut-out politics," said Fred Wertheimer, president of Democracy

21, which promotes the tightening of campaign finance laws. "The goal is to shut out opponents."

If Gore wins the nomination with minimal effort and can hoard most of his money, he will enjoy a huge strategic advantage over the GOP nominee, just as President Clinton did four years ago. In April 1996, the president's \$19 million dwarfed Dole's \$2.1 million bank account, allowing Clinton to dominate the airwaves for four months. If the Gore plan works, he, too, will have several million dollars squirreled away for the early summer campaign-before the two major-party candidates receive millions in general election financing.

Building on the successful fund-raising model of 1995, Gore has left nothing to chance. Five weeks after opening his campaign, Gore's first solicitation was mailed to 850,000 people, said campaign manager Craig Smith. The Gore team, like many others, relies on a network of "collectors" to round up donors. Anyone who collects \$50,000 from other supporters joins the vice president's national finance board, a ceremonial group that entitles members to attend a handful of private get-togethers with Gore.

"Fund-raising for a presidential campaign is as much a grass-roots organizing effort as it is a finance effort," said Smith. "You can have somebody worth a billion dollars, but at the end of the day you can only write a check for \$1,000."

## Teen suspended, may be expelled for note about teacher

By Brooke A. Masters,  
The Washington Post

When the teacher confiscated a note Anna Kopko was writing to her good friend during German class, the Springfield, Va., ninth-grader was a little worried and stayed after the bell to apologize.

She had, after all, just finished writing how unhappy she was about her latest grade from the teacher, Gary Sipe: "I have a D. I'm grounded. . . . I want to kill that (expletive). . . . I want to die." But Anna, 15, never envisioned how seriously Sipe and the Fairfax County public schools would take her letter. Sipe reported it as a death threat, and the principal of Lake Braddock Secondary School suspended Anna and has recommended that she be expelled.

"They're taking it as if I would actually do something horrible," the 15-year-old said last week. "It's grossly unfair," said her father, William Kopko, 40. "They automatically assumed the worst."

School officials said privacy laws prevent them from discussing Anna's case, but student threats in general have taken on new urgency after a rash of mass shootings by pupils in Oregon, Arkansas and elsewhere. "People are more concerned than they were five or 10 years ago, and with good reason," said Fairfax School Board Vice Chairman Mark H. Emery. "Teachers have been attacked. Teachers have been threatened."

Gary Marx, senior consultant at the American Association of School Administrators, said that schools are emphasizing prevention these days: "If something happened (later) and the school system had done nothing, what would everyone think of us?" Last year, Fairfax suspended 161 people for threats against school personnel, and expulsion was recommended in 25 cases involving threats to students or staff members, said school hearing officer Doug Holmes.

Under the Fairfax schools policy, threatening to assault a staff member automatically results in suspension and may lead to expulsion, but expulsion is not mandatory, officials said. The threat does not have to be made directly to the intended victim, Holmes said.

Anna has been suspended since Feb. 17, and her case is being considered by Holmes and a school system official, her family said. The School Board would have to approve an expulsion. County police investigated but determined that no crime was committed, Sgt. Sharon Smith said. Anna's parents and their attorney, Victor M. Glasberg, said they understand that threats must be investigated, but they argued that the school has overreacted.

Active in Girl Scouts and her church, Anna gets mostly As and Bs and has never been in any disciplinary trouble, except for a stint in detention for being tardy to German class, her parents said. A psychiatrist hired by the family wrote after examining her that "Anna Kopko poses no danger to herself or anyone else."

Not only is Anna not dangerous, the Kopkos argued, the letter itself does not qualify as a threat. It is an otherwise typical schoolgirl note about a boy who likes her and her fears of being grounded. "It was a note that vented her feelings," said Susan Kopko, 42. "It put me in mind of some of the things I used to write to my friends."

The other part of the note that involved Sipe referred to a dream. "I woke up scared because Mr. Sipe was in my dream. Me and you were planning a way to kill Mr. Sipe and he was right there in front of us and turned around and got really mad," Anna wrote.

Sipe declined to comment. He wrote in a letter to a supervisor later given to the Kopko family, "I am now somewhat uncomfortable working in my classroom, never knowing whether this student might appear at my door with a firearm and act out her desire to kill me."

Holmes said that the school system takes seriously any activity that the intended target finds threatening. "What constitutes a threat is something that produces fear in another person," he said. Anna said she is amazed to suddenly find herself out of school. Until officials raised the possibility of expulsion, she said, "the biggest thing I was worried about was how I was going to survive German for the rest of the year."

## Japan gets its first organ transplants

By Mary Jordan,  
The Washington Post

TOKYO \_ Doctors Sunday night performed the first legal organ transplants in Japan from a brain-dead patient, a milestone for Japanese medicine and an event that has transfixed the nation.

Japan stands apart from virtually every other developed country in its reluctance to legally recognize brain death. Until a recent law did just that, a stopped heart was the legal definition of death in Japan. That meant that no heart was available for transplantation.

To the increasing embarrassment and anger of many in the medical community here, critically ill patients have had to fly to the United States or other countries for transplant operations that Japanese doctors have long had the skills to perform. Doctors said thousands of patients who lacked

the money or strength to travel died needlessly in recent years because of the ban.

But many Japanese people still have a strong aversion to donating or receiving organs. Some believe a person's body should be intact for its journey in the afterlife, while others feel that if they accept a part of another person's body, they are also accepting part of that person's soul.

Referring to Sunday night's operation, Tomoko Abe, spokesman for a group that opposes transplants, said that in view of the pressure to use organs for transplant, "I have sincere doubt that doctors did everything they could to treat the donor." But, bowing to growing public acceptance of organ donation as well as pressure from patients' groups and physicians, the parliament 16 months ago passed a controversial law that allowed transplants from brain-dead donors.

Sunday night's operation, the first transplant since the law was passed, involved a 44-year-old stroke victim who had signed a donor card. Her heart was flown to one city for a gravely ill man and her liver to a second city for another man, while her kidneys were being prepared for others. The case has been so heavily reported in the media that the donor's family threatened at one point to halt the operations. TV crews filmed the helicopter carrying the donor's heart as it took off from the hospital in Kochi, the city on the island of Shikoku where the stroke victim died, and as it arrived in Osaka, where a 47-year-old patient and a medical team were waiting.

In Osaka, a special newspaper edition announced the operation. The donor's liver was put on a plane and flown to Nagano, where last year's Olympics were held, but details about the male recipient were not

immediately available. A major TV network, TBS, broadcast a previously recorded interview with the heart recipient, blurring the image of his face and withholding his name for privacy. In that interview, the man said the heart was a gift "he could not ask for" and the "ultimate act of volunteerism."

Japan's only other heart transplant was performed in 1968. That surgeon was investigated for murder because, even though the donor was brain-dead, the heart was still beating. The legal action effectively stopped all heart transplants until Sunday night. "Finally we have reached this point," said Hiroshi Amamiya, a physician and chairman of a group of doctors in favor of transplants from brain-dead donors. "I hope this is just the first step."

## Marine jets get too close to Dulles-bound plane

By Alan Sipress,  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON \_ The Federal Aviation Administration said Friday that it has opened an investigation into how a pair of U.S. Marine Corps F/A-18 jets strayed from their flight pattern Thursday morning, passing too close to a commuter airplane approaching Dulles International Airport.

The FAA said the incident occurred 35 miles south of Dulles when the F/A-18 Hornet fighters, out of Andrews Air Force Base, left their assigned holding pattern and came within nearly a mile of United Express Flight 7618, a turboprop bound from Raleigh-Durham International Airport with 16 passengers and three crew members on board.

FAA spokeswoman Arlene Salac said a preliminary review attributed

the incident to an error by the fighter pilots. They had been waiting for approval from air traffic controllers to begin maneuvers over Quantico Marine Corps Base in support of ground units conducting infantry training.

In announcing the month-long investigation, Salac said the FAA was very concerned that the jets had violated regulations by coming within 300 feet in altitude and a mile in horizontal distance from the commuter plane. At that altitude, aircraft must remain at least 1,000 feet apart in vertical distance and three miles horizontally.

The incident marked the fourth time in two years that aircraft had violated restrictions for airspace over Fredericksburg, Va., that is designated for military operations at some times and civilian flights at others. Previous FAA investigations

found that two of the violations were attributable to pilot error and two to errors by air traffic control. Paul Rinaldi, president of the Air Traffic Control Association at Dulles, said military aircraft are "always spilling out" of the airspace assigned for operations over Quantico.

A month ago, a military transport plane out of Andrews barely missed colliding over Leesburg, Va., with a Mesa Airlines commuter plane bound from Long Island, N.Y., to Dulles. An investigation into that incident is nearing completion, but the FAA has already blamed it on poor coordination among air traffic controllers. The FAA's examination of the Thursday incident will have to sort through differing accounts given by United Express, the Marine Corps and the air traffic controllers.

"It was just the quick thinking of the controllers in the Dulles tower

radar room that averted this from becoming something catastrophic," Rinaldi said. He said the jets, flying in formation, were on a direct course to strike the commuter plane and were 20 seconds away when a controller gave the urgent order for the fighters to change altitude. But both the Marine Corps and Atlantic Coast Airlines, which operates United Express, reported that the fighters had been on course to pass behind the commuter plane.

Sgt. Jeffery Foster, media chief for the Marine Forces Reserve, said the fighters never endangered the United Express plane. He said the jets passed behind it at low speed as they were turning to leave their holding pattern and return to Andrews because of inclement weather.

## Mystery deepens in Yosemite missing persons case

By Eric Bailey,  
Los Angeles Times

Authorities were nearly finished Friday with an exhaustive search in the Sierra Nevada mountains for a Eureka, Calif., woman and two teenagers missing for 11 days, as the FBI stepped up its investigation of the mysterious case.

Searchers discovered nine abandoned or stolen cars while combing major roads leading from Yosemite National Park, but failed to find the bright red Pontiac Grand Prix rented by Carole Sund, her daughter and a friend.

The trio were last believed seen on

Feb. 16, the day they were to return from a visit to Yosemite. Sund, 42, was accompanied by her 15-year-old daughter, Julie, and 16-year-old Silvina Pelloso, a family friend who was visiting from Argentina.

Nick Rossi, an FBI spokesman, said a foot search by scores of law enforcement officers had covered 90 percent of the terrain surrounding access routes leading from the park.

"The likelihood of an accident in the immediately vicinity of Yosemite is decreasing," Rossi said. But authorities cautioned that there remains some possibility the car may have plunged into a remote canyon hidden by thick brush or deep snow

and won't be discovered until spring thaw.

Meanwhile, FBI agents are expanding efforts to determine if Sund and the girls might have been victims of foul play. A wallet insert containing Sund's credit cards and driver's license was found a week ago in Modesto, a two-hour drive from Yosemite. The discovery prompted concern that they might have been victims of a carjacking or other crime.

Rossi said FBI experts on child abductions were being consulted. In addition, critical incident response teams at the bureau's Washington headquarters were contacted.

## Body slam

By Ceci Connolly,  
The Washington Post

Things had been going so well for The Body, until he agreed to appear on the "Late Show With David Letterman." The new governor of Minnesota, former pro wrestler Jesse Ventura, speculated on the program that the streets of St. Paul are so haphazardly laid out they must have been designed by a drunken Irishman.

"I think it was those Irish guys. You know what they like to do," he told Letterman as he mimed guzzling a drink. The St. Paul City Council fired back Wednesday with a resolution that said the streets were designed "to keep wrestlers and other undesirables out."

The Reform Party governor apologized Thursday, saying it was his feeble attempt at humor.