

Dole leading in Hutch News straw poll

By Alan Montgomery
The Hutchinson News

GARDEN CITY — Sen. Bob Dole made a predictably strong showing Thursday in The Hutchinson News Presidential Preference Poll conducted at the 3i Show in Garden City.

Of 148 ballots marked by visitors and exhibitors at the show, 76 picked Dole from the field of 11 names on the ballot, for a 53 percent share. The next-highest tally went to President Bill Clinton, who garnered 22 votes for a 15 percent share.

The other results were: Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, 13 votes, for 9 percent; Pat Buchanan, political commentator, and Pete Wilson, governor of California, each with 5 votes, or 3.5 percent; Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., 4 votes; and former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., Congressman Robert Dornan, R-Calif., and Alan Keyes, a former State Department official, each drew three votes.

In a write-in line on the ballot, two people wrote in political commentator Rush Limbaugh and two wrote in Colin Powell, former head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Four people wrote "none of the above" on their ballots.

The presidential poll will continue today, in the second day of the massive 3i Show, which features agricultural equipment and services from companies across the United States and Canada.

Poll ballots are available at The Hutchinson News booth in the main exhibit hall, as well as in the outdoor exhibit areas where they will be carried by pollsters.

Dole gains even more in straw poll

By Alan Montgomery
The Hutchinson News

GARDEN CITY — Sen. Bob Dole gained more ground Friday in The Hutchinson News Presidential Preference Poll at the 3i Show in Garden City, being chosen as the preferred candidate in 156 of 222 ballots cast on Friday, for a 70 percent share.

President Bill Clinton came in second among the 11 candidates in Friday's balloting, with 27 votes for a 12 percent share. Sen. Phil Gramm, of Texas, followed with 15 votes for 7 percent.

The poll ballots were marked by visitors and exhibitors at the 3i Show, which draws visitors from across the Midwest and exhibitors from across the U.S. and Canada.

Friday was the second day for the show and for the poll. The show will continue today, as will the poll. Visitors may cast ballots at The News' booth in the main exhibition hall.

The two-day vote totals were as follows: Dole had 232 of 365 ballots cast, for 64 percent; Clinton, 49 votes, for 13 percent; Gramm, 28 votes, 8 percent; Pat Buchanan, 9 votes, 2 percent.

Candidates with 2 percent or less of the tally were: California Gov. Pete Wilson, with 6 votes; former State Department official Alan Keyes, 6; Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar, 5; California Congressman Robert Dornan, 5; former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, 4; and Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter, 3.

All official candidates, with the exception of President Clinton, are Republicans.

Write-in candidate totals included political commentator Rush Limbaugh and Texas billionaire Ross Perot, each with 5 votes; Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, 3; former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, 2; and comedian Pat Paulsen, 1.

Dole recommends Senate hold hearings on Waco

By RITA BEAMISH
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole said Monday that the Senate should hold hearings on the federal raid two years ago on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas.

Dole said he hopes Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, will hold hearings, "not to go after anyone, but let the American people make their own judgment" about the 1993 case that ended with an inferno engulfing the cult's compound.

"My view is you ought to have hearings to let the American people know the facts," he said at a conference of GOPAC, the Republican political action committee headed by House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Dole was asked if there would be

oversight hearings on Waco and the case of white separatist Randy Weaver to look into ways Americans can protect themselves from "overzealous government." Federal agents seeking to arrest Weaver on weapons charges killed his wife and teen-age son in a 1992 siege at Weaver's Idaho cabin.

The two cases have galvanized the burgeoning militia movement across the country.

Timothy McVeigh, accused in the Oklahoma City bombing, reportedly was obsessed with the Waco incident.

Dole said people like McVeigh would pay no attention to hearings in any event. "They just hate people. You could have hearings all day long. That wouldn't change their minds."

But he said "there are a lot of Americans out there, good Americans ... who are concerned about what happened in Waco."

Dole amendment would cap awards for punitive damages

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After voting to limit medical malpractice awards, the Senate on Tuesday considered a sweeping proposal by Republican leader Bob Dole to put limits on punitive damage awards in all civil lawsuits.

Dole's amendment would significantly broaden a product liability measure written by Sens. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., and Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va. Their bill would impose a cap on punitive damage awards in faulty-products cases of \$250,000 or three times economic damages,

whichever is greater. Dole said his proposal "offers needed protections from lawsuit abuse to every American — small business or large, volunteer or charitable organizations. The spectre of lawsuit abuse hangs over us all."

But Rockefeller repeatedly urged his colleagues to stick to the product liability legislation, warning that widening its focus could jeopardize final Senate passage.

Consumer activist Ralph Nader called Dole's amendment "a criminals' protection measure."

The debate followed a Senate vote earlier in the day to limit punitive damage awards against doctors and other health care providers. Senators approved, 62-38, a provision by Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, that would cap punitive damages in medical malpractice cases at two times a claimant's compensatory damages.

Compensatory damages are the combined total of economic damages, such as lost salary and medical bills, and less tangible non-economic damages to compensate patients for loss of an eye or limb and for pain and suffering. Snowe said her approach was fairer to claimants who are less wealthy because it takes non-economic damages into account.

The cap on punitive damages in medical malpractice would apply to a relatively small number of cases, mostly involving alleged sexual abuse of patients or doctors operating while drunk, according to the American Medical Association.

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Bob Dole must break traditions to win presidency

By Robert E. Thompson
Herald Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Traditionally, in presidential politics a vigorous young candidate who wishes to succeed or replace a lethargic older one plays the generation card.

Traditionally, also, the Democrats and Republicans do not nominate congressional leaders for the presidency.

But traditions can be broken.

In Bob Dole's case, the 71-year-old majority leader of the Senate is citing his maturity, experience and his sacrifice in World War II as reasons for voters to hand him the GOP presidential nomination and then Bill Clinton's presidential portfolio.

Some observers who believe that Bill Clinton, the baby boomer, has been a failure as president, suggest the nation should turn back to the World War II generation for leadership.

If that were to happen, the Republican options would be limited to a single individual: Bob Dole.

Of the many Republican presidential hopefuls, only he is a product of that generation that gave us all eight of our presidents in the 40 years between Harry Truman and Bill Clinton.

It matters not that Newt Gingrich, also a baby boomer, has become the most visible and voluble Republican in the nation. Dole derived considerable satisfaction and possibly inspiration from the comment of a New Hampshire supporter: "It's time for adult leadership."

Only Dole among the current presidential contenders has vivid memories of the seminal events through which America struggled in the 1930s and 1940s.

Only he, child though he was, experienced the desperate years of the 1930s when many Americans lost their homes and farms, when one-third of the work force was unemployed and when the savior of dust-blown, impoverished Kansas was the federal government.

Only he was locked in battlefield combat with vicious foes in World War II and suffered agonizing wounds that left him with little use of his right arm.

Only he had reached adulthood in the early years of the Cold War and the age of McCarthyism.

His standards of reference and his relationships, therefore, are closely identified with those of Clinton's predecessors.

His personal political hero is Dwight Eisenhower, who also grew up in Kansas. He likewise remains loyal to Gerald Ford, who selected him as the GOP vice presidential nominee in 1976.

At the funeral of Richard Nixon and the retirement of George Bush, he wept. Dole is a man of an earlier age, who has about as many liabilities as he has assets. He will be 73 when Republicans gather in San Diego in August 1996 to name their presidential candidate.

When Eisenhower left the White House at the age of 70 in 1961 — after having suffered a heart attack, a small stroke and other serious illnesses while

in office — he contended that no one over the age of 70 should serve as president.

Ronald Reagan violated that rule, and had Bush been re-elected, he too would have turned 70 midway through his second term. But questions continue to arise as to whether someone of that age has the stamina and the mental agility to preside over the most powerful nation in the world.

Dole also must battle a reputation for petty meanness and the fact that he is a congressional powerhouse. Although six of Clinton's nine immediate predecessors served in Congress, only two presidents in this century — Warren G. Harding and John F. Kennedy — have been elected directly from Capitol Hill. Neither was a leader in Congress.

Dole, a pragmatist and sometime political moderate, now must demonstrate that he is a dogmatic conservative if he is to please a party that has shifted rightward. Of course, he is doing exactly

that. He also must try to herd through the Senate as many as possible of the items in Gingrich's "Contract with America."

He has let the world know that he opposes abortion and affirmative action, that he favors constitutional amendments to limit congressional terms and balance the budget, that he supports a tax cut and prayer in public schools.

To the young government-bashers who have stormed Capitol Hill the way the Marines attacked Mount Suribachi a half century ago, Dole is the Old Order.

He is the hated power broker who passes legislation in tandem with Democrats. He has no simple message comparable to Reagan's pledge to get the government off the backs of the people. But, for the moment, he is the leader of the pack, and if traditions tumble he might stay there.

Foster calls Dole threat to block nomination 'un-American'

Dole's accusation that Foster has a 'credibility problem' rings hollow in the context of the Kansan's recent kow-towing on issues ranging from taxes to affirmative action.

Surgeon General-designate Henry Foster charges it would be "un-American" for Senate majority leader Bob Dole to prevent a vote on his nomination from reaching the Senate floor.

In the only interview he's granted in the 10 days before this week's confirmation hearings, Foster broke his silence on Dole's threat to deny him the basic fairness of a straight up-or-down vote before the full Senate.

"I don't think Senator Dole would do that ... because that would be so un-American," Foster told our associate Ed Henry in an interview at the White House. "I just don't think the senator would do that. I think he has too much integrity to do that."

Washington merry-go-round

Under Dole's Alice in Wonderland-style justice, Foster is facing sentencing before a trial. Dole has threatened to keep the vote off the Senate's schedule — effectively killing it — even if the nomination is given a favorable recommendation by the Labor and Human Resources Committee.

Foster feels Dole will back down. "I don't think he's going to go through with it is what I'm telling you," said Foster. "I think he's a man who believes in the American way ... I'm not taking it lightly, but people say things in the heat of battle (like) 'Read my lips!'"

Dole appears less concerned about sinking Foster than shoring up his support with the far-right wing of the GOP. He's not so much battling Foster as he is bowing to the true-believers who decide Republican primaries.

Dole's accusation that Foster has a "credibility problem" rings hollow in the context of the Kansan's recent kow-towing on issues ranging from taxes to affirmative action. To be sure, the Clinton administration

has supplied enough ammunition to anti-choice conservatives. Early on, officials kept revising the number of abortions Foster performed, prompting Dole to claim that Foster "didn't tell the truth." But since when was lying a disqualifying factor for winning Dole's vote?

Just seven months ago, Dole was posing with a perjurer named Oliver North, endorsing his Senate candidacy and writing out a \$5,000 campaign check. North was convicted of lying to Congress and of two other criminal charges for his role in the Iran-Contra scandal. (The three convictions were later overturned on a technicality.)

"I'm very proud of Oliver North and very proud to be here," Dole said at a campaign stop for North in Virginia. "I don't make any bones about that." Dole not only rode to North's rescue from Democratic broadsides, but proclaimed that wounded veterans like he and North "have to swallow hard" to accept President Clinton as their commander-in-chief.

"It's a wild stretch to suggest that support for the North Senate campaign requires support for the Foster nomination," Dole told us in a written statement. "The bottom line is that Dr. Foster has a here-and-now credibility problem, and it has nothing to do with the Republican leader campaigning for a Republican nominee in a political race."

Like Foster, Dole is guilty of flip-flopping.

Back in 1988, Dole called North "a loose cannon" who "overstepped his bounds" in the Iran-Contra affair, and "is not a hero."

But last year, Dole was almost apologizing for North.

"My view is, he made a mistake," Dole said in November. "He's made mistakes. He said so. So, what do you do?" By that same standard, Dole should be able to judge Foster on his entire 38-year medical career. While Foster is the physician of record on 39 abortions since 1973, he has delivered more than 10,000 babies.

And his program to fight teen pregnancy was honored as one of President Bush's Thousand Points of Light.

Win or lose, Foster will not heal overnight from charges by Dole and others that he says depict him as a "sleazy sort of person."

"I know what my credibility is," Foster said. "People can find reasons to justify what they want to do. If you really want to know about my credibility, why don't you go to the Nashville Academy of Medicine?"

"Ask them why I am now serving my 10th consecutive year as a member of the ethics board there."

Dole unwittingly made the case for Foster last September, when he was campaigning for North. Besieged with questions by reporters about North's role in the Iran-Contra affair, Dole retorted: "Well, I know there are a lot of allegations. But there are probably no perfect senators."

There are probably no perfect surgeon generals either.



Foster's fate hinges on senators

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Surgeon General nominee Henry Foster's fate could hinge on three Republican senators in next week's confirmation hearing — Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, James Jeffords of Vermont and fellow doctor and Tennessee Sen. Bill Frist.

Even if they support him, pressures from presidential politics and anti-abortion interest groups promise a tough battle in the full Senate for the Nashville obstetrician-gynecologist and educator.

"Even if the nomination gets through committee, there will be holds placed on the floor," said Kassebaum, the chairwoman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, which will hold its hearing Tuesday.

"It can go on for months. It certainly has an uncertain future at this point," she said.

Two GOP presidential contenders, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Texas Sen. Phil Gramm, separately threaten to block Foster's way.

But approval from the committee's nine Republicans and seven Democrats would carry weight.

Jeffords, who often votes with Democrats, is probably the most likely Foster supporter.

"I like him. I think he's a dedicated servant," Jeffords said.

But, like many, the Vermont Republican has a reservation about Foster's credibility. That goes back to the White House saying first that Foster performed one, then fewer than 12, and finally 39 abortions.

The differing numbers make some supporters jumpy. More significantly, they give lawmakers a way to oppose Foster without focusing on the volatile abortion issue itself.

Take Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., a conservative committee member who did not support former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, and who opposes abortion.

"I am one who feels that the position of surgeon general is an important position, and needs to be occupied by one who enjoys the same level of trust and degree of candor that a family doctor does," Coats said. "Because in a sense, he's the nation's doctor."

Or Republican Sen. Mike DeWine of Ohio. He's a solid abortion opponent but says abortion is not the key issue.

Of the job of surgeon general, DeWine says, "The person who occupies that position has to have a great deal of credibility."

Kassebaum does not oppose abortion. But she has unique pressures, as only the second woman to head a committee in the Senate's history and as Dole's fellow Kansan.

"I think it's unfortunate he has been placed in a very difficult position and has somewhat become a pawn in the abortion debate, and is being used by both sides," she said of Foster. "That shouldn't be a litmus test, but it is, and it has become an important part of the hearing."

But she added, "I think the question will be his own ability to serve with the credibility and the commitment to address public health issues, and what he determines as public health issues."

Frist, too, is leaving his options open.

On the one hand, the cardiologist says, "I certainly come to the table wanting to support Dr. Foster as a Tennessean and a physician."

On the other hand, the freshman senator — who must feel the dangers of breaking party ranks — says, "Credibility will be an issue."