

Hutchinson News
Monday, August 21, 1995

Poll helps Gramm, hurts Dole

Local response to poll, Page 3

By Peter A. Brown
Scripps Howard News Service
DES MOINES, Iowa — There was little doubt Sunday that Sen. Phil Gramm's presidential campaign got a solid boost from his tie with Sen. Bob Dole in a key Iowa straw poll.

The question was whether front-runner Dole's failure to win easily, as had been expected, said as much negatively about the state of his campaign. Dole claimed it was just "an aberration."

Dole and Gramm each got 24.4 percent of the vote Saturday night.

But in addition to Gramm, who saw the voting as a "stunning result," even GOP officials neutral in the nomination fight said the results changed the shape of the race in which Dole had been presumed by many to be the inevitable nominee.

"It means that even in Iowa See POLL, Page 6

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where Dole is affectionately known as the state's third senator, we have a competitive race for the nomination," said Iowa GOP chair Brian Kennedy, neutral in the contest. "If it is competitive in Iowa, then it will be competitive in the rest of the country."

Tom Cole, the former head of the National Republican Campaign Committee and now secretary of state in Oklahoma, where he is the state's GOP political godfather, also has been waiting to take sides.

"I think the straw poll results are a big deal," said Cole. "It stops what appeared to be the erosion of the Gramm campaign and restores a sense of momentum. It demonstrates he has a ground organization in Iowa, a northern state where there is some doubt a southern accent will play."

The straw poll Saturday in nearby Ames attracted 2 1/2 times as many voters as it did the fall before the 1988 Iowa caucuses. The results of that poll accurately predicted what happened at the caucuses in February 1988.

Although winning Iowa, which traditionally kicks off the presidential voting, is not a prerequisite for

winning the White House, candidates who don't do well in the February caucuses here are eliminated quickly.

The strong third-place showing by TV broadcaster Patrick Buchanan, who got 18.1 percent, is likely to help his candidacy, too. Former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander's fourth-place finish with 10.9 percent at best would only keep him as a first-tier candidate.

But the eighth-place showing by California Gov. Pete Wilson, who got but 1.2 percent of the vote, makes it difficult for him to argue that he belongs in the first-tier group, too.

Since the fight for the GOP nomination began, Dole has held a huge lead in the polls. As Senate leader and a two-time previous presidential candidate, he is the nation's best-known Republican.

Gramm and others have argued that once generally conservative GOP voters began comparing Dole to other candidates, his support would erode. Polling data, which show Dole with a wide lead nationally and in virtually all states among Republicans, do show that big chunks of his supporters say they could change their mind.

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Dole's foes exult over Iowa poll

By JOHN KING
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Facing the first significant slip in his presidential campaign, Bob Dole labeled Sunday and rejected assertions by rivals that it proved him out of step with conservative GOP activists.

"In my view, this is one pebble on the beach," a stoic Dole said the morning after he tied with Texas Sen. Phil Gramm in a presidential straw poll. "There will be a lot of beaches to cross."

Hundreds of non-Iowans were brought in by car, bus and plane to vote in the \$25-a-head straw poll. This gave credence to Dole's assertion that Saturday night's results, while stunning, probably weren't representative of Iowa's mood six months before its leadoff presidential caucuses.

The Senate majority leader also got a damage control assist from Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour, who said straw polls "don't really count" and aren't reliable gauges of candidate support.

Perhaps not, but the event raised several questions about Dole's strategy and the intensity of his support. And after months of watching in frustration as Dole surprised them with deft campaign moves, Dole's rivals got the opening they've dreamed of. They began making their case that Dole is the most fragile of front-runners, with support that is broad but not deep.

An exultant Gramm, who matched Dole with 24 percent support, led the charge.

Dole's foes exult over Iowa poll

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"This was the first major victory of the campaign for president in 1996 and we won it," Gramm told reporters. He called Dole "the greatest legislator of his era" but suggested Republicans still hungry from their 1994 congressional takeover were looking for something more in a president.

"Last night had nothing to do with momentum," Gramm said before flying off to New Hampshire, where he hoped the Iowa boost would help him whittle into Dole's lead there. "Last night had to do with message."

Dole disputed that, saying he had "a good, solid message" anchored on the themes of reining in the federal government, reconnecting government with Americans' moral values and reasserting U.S. leadership abroad.

Still, Dole acknowledged his campaign might have an early case of a disease that often strikes front-runners: "There may have been some complacency on the part of some of our people."

Dole knew Gramm was making a big push in Iowa, looking to quell speculation that his campaign was sputtering. So Dole advisers privately conceded they had no excuses, and said the episode would bring a thorough re-examination of the organization, which will face a similar challenge when it needs to turn out caucus voters in February.

"I would obviously prefer it to happen tonight than in February," Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager, said as the results were tallied Saturday night. Commentator Pat Buchanan ran third with 18 percent and former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander was fourth with 11 percent.

Dole garnered just 2,582 of the 10,598 votes cast despite the deepest organization here, and despite the support of GOP Gov. Terry Branstad, Sen. Charles Grassley and three of the state's five Republican House members.

Dole shrugged off the significance of that and said he would have a slew of new endorsements soon to show more support around the country. But Gramm said such establishment backing wouldn't win Dole votes among the Republican rank and file.

"Sen. Dole believes the campaign is about polls and about endorsements," Gramm said. "I believe it's about issues and message."

While predicting Dole would win Iowa in February, Branstad touched on one of the problem's the 72-year-old senator faces in his third try for the GOP nomination: Today's Republican Party, in Iowa and across most of the country, is more conservative and anti-establishment than when Dole ran in 1980 and 1988. "We've got more of a diverse Republican Party than we used to have," Branstad said.

Indeed, while Dole had an enthusiastic contingent in the hall for Saturday's event, the crowd showed more passion for the blunt, conservative speeches from Gramm, Buchanan and radio personality Alan Keyes, a staunch abortion foe who placed fifth in the field of 10 candidates.

Sixth place went to businessman Morry Taylor, who bought 1,000 tickets to the event but got only 803 votes, one less than Keyes. Well behind him was Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar with 466 votes, or 4 percent, followed by California Gov. Pete Wilson, California Rep. Bob Dornan and Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter.

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HEAD TO HEAD IN IOWA — Nine of the presidential candidate speakers at the Iowa Caucus program Saturday night in Ames, Iowa, are waiting for the arrival on stage of the 10th candidate, Bob Dorman of California. Dan Quayle, former vice president in the George Bush administration, is on the right with his back to the camera. From left, the other candidates are: Bob Dole

of Kansas, Pete Wilson of California, Phil Gramm of Texas, Alan Keyes, Pat Buchanan of Virginia, Richard Lugar of Indiana, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, Morry Taylor of Indiana and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee. More than 10,000 people paid \$25 to register and vote in the Straw Poll, which earned \$250,000 for the Iowa Republican Party. (Staff Photo)

Wednesday, August 23, 1995 THE WICHITA EAGLE 9A

Is Dole too moderate for GOP?

By Lally Weymouth
Special to The Washington Post

In a highly ideological era, as the Republican Party turns increasingly rightward, how does a veteran legislator such as Bob Dole — who has taken a wide variety of positions on many issues and struck lots of compromises during 3 1/2 decades in the Senate — win the hearts and minds of GOP voters?

Dole, dressed casually, looking relaxed as he sits in his Senate office, denies he's moved to the right. "I've always been a mainstream conservative," he contends. The differences between him and Sen. Phil Gramm and Newt Gingrich are more stylistic than substantive, Dole says: Gramm is more "in-your-face and ... Newt's (got) a different style. ... Maybe it's generational."

But, says Dole — placing the emphasis on experience, "I know where the bottom line is: You've got to get things done, and sometimes ... you've got to reach across the aisle."

What would be Dole's chief goal as president? Not surprisingly, he says it would be to rein in the federal government. "The government does a lot of good things, but it is too big, too intrusive. We need to downsize it. I've listed four departments we could live without — commerce, housing

and urban development, energy and education."

As for foreign policy, "I worry about our prestige and how we're viewed in the world; there is no clear policy." The majority leader is critical of the Clinton administration for abdicating its leadership role and "blowing" so much money on Haiti and Somalia — operations Dole clearly doesn't believe pertained to U.S. national interests. He's especially unhappy with the Clintonites' willingness to rely so heavily on the United Nations. Dole notes that he's fighting the president's proposed cuts in the defense budget — and that they're "double what candidate Clinton said he would do."

On the domestic front, Dole has taken the pledge not to raise taxes, although he refused to do so four years ago. Why the change? "I've been a little ahead of the curve in my view — consistently conservative but not right-wing." He continues, "I was chair of the Finance Committee when we had the biggest tax cut under President Reagan."

Regarding his seeming switch from friend to foe in the affirmative action realm, Dole says that affirmative action hasn't done anything for the average black person. He argues that it runs counter to the funda-

mental belief in this country — that you ought to be able to succeed on the basis of your ability, not because of your race or gender. As president, however, he would not repeal the executive order that mandates the implementation of affirmative action policies in all areas of federal government.

What about abortion? Some say that it's impossible to win the Republican nomination without embracing the pro-life stance and that doing so makes it impossible to win the general election. Dole says, "I've been right-to-life, but I've been endorsed by a lot of pro-choice women." The issue is important but, he seems to say, shouldn't dominate the Republican Party.

From Dole's standpoint, Clinton has been a missing president since the congressional elections. "He's been on vacation from Congress for the last six months. I don't know if he contacts Democrats. He rarely contacts the (GOP) leadership." Clinton spends his time following the advice of his "new guru," Dick Morris, according to Dole. But voters, Dole warns, want results: "They don't like the head-butting. ... How can we have bipartisanship if the president just talks it?"



DOLE SUPPORTERS — Forty-seven Russell area people journeyed to Ames, Iowa, Saturday to support Senator Bob Dole in his bid for the Republican nomination for president of the United States. The Jimco bus from Bennington left Russell at 5 a.m. and arrived in Ames at 2:30 p.m. Dole and Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter were among the speakers in the Saturday night

presentation of the candidates. Former vice president Dan Quayle of Indiana was the master of ceremonies. Dole and Phil Gramm from Texas tied for first place in the Straw Poll. The bus left Ames at 8 a.m. Sunday and returned to Russell at 5:30 p.m. Barney Roberts was in charge of the trip. (Staff Photo)