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NATIONAL BRIEFS

Clinton enters 1992 race

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Gov. Bill Clinton today adds his moderate voice to the 1992 presidential race, stepping onto the national stage he has appeared destined for since first elected governor in 1978 at the age of 32.

Clinton was declaring his candidacy for the Democratic nomination at a noon rally outside Arkansas' old Statehouse in Little Rock, where state lawmakers once voted to join the Confederacy.

In advance of his speech, Clinton declined to call himself a candidate, but sources close to the governor said he would enter the race.

Clinton is the second governor and fifth major Democratic candidate to enter the race. All are newcomers to national politics, positioning themselves as outsiders ready to seize a government they portray as shortsighted and gridlocked.

It is a message Clinton has carried for more than a decade, and particularly in the last year as leader of the Democratic Leadership Council. The centrist group was formed by Southern and other Democrats who view the national party as too liberal and too tied to minorities and special interests.

At 45, Clinton is still boyish looking, but his salt-and-pepper hair is proof the party's boy wonder of the late 1970s has reached middle age. Once the nation's youngest sitting governor, he is now its longest-serving governor.

In running for president, Clinton is breaking a 1990 campaign promise to skip the 1992 presidential race if re-elected. He says he decided he could do more for his state as president than as governor.

Activist seeks political asylum

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A Chinese pro-democracy activist sought political asylum Wednesday after fleeing to the United States as a stowaway on a ship from Hong Kong.

Ma Xin, 22, said he fled to Hong Kong fearing he would be arrested for his work in the democracy movement. The fledgling movement was crushed

near Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989. Hundreds were killed by People's Army troops. Threatening telephone calls he received in Hong Kong prompted his flight to the United States on Sept. 13.

The freighter he hid in arrived across the bay in Oakland on Wednesday morning. Immigration officials escorted him off the ship.

Ma went free after relatives and friends posted \$1,000 bond Wednesday afternoon. He told his attorney, Jimmy Hom, that he was looking forward to spending time in San Francisco and the rest of the United States. His first stop was Chinatown, for lunch.

In a letter to The Associated Press in Hong Kong, Ma said he was a pro-democracy leader in Landzhou, a city in northwest China, where he attended the Gan Shu Chinese Medical College.

Ma and his sister, Ma Yuan, 27, fled to Hong Kong in September 1989, but they believed agents from Beijing were tracking them.

He received phone calls in Hong Kong from men who told him, "China was watching me."

"That makes me afraid," he said. "I'm not a famous dissident. I'm just a medical student. These guys could kill me or make me disappear and no one would know the difference."

House members realize: 'There's no free lunch'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some 300 current and former House members have stiffed the House restaurant system for more than \$300,000 in unpaid bills, a congressman who oversees the operation said Wednesday. He wants to publicly name the deadbeats if they don't pay up soon.

"There's no free lunch," said Rep. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., ranking Republican on the House Administration subcommittee on personnel and police. "Members of Congress should pay their bills or face the consequences."

The restaurant revelations come on top of the recent disclosure that scores of House members routinely abused their check-writing privileges at the taxpayer-financed House bank, giving themselves a

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