

Clinton criticizes Perot as lead declines

STERLING HEIGHTS, Mich. (AP) — Bill Clinton, wary of Ross Perot's resurrection in the final days of the campaign, gingerly began to criticize the independent challenger on Sunday as weekend polls showed Perot cutting into Clinton's support and his lead over President Bush.

"A lot of people can claim, well, they are outsiders," Clinton said Sunday, linking Bush and Perot together in his rhetoric. Of all those running for president, "only one of them has never been part of the inside Washington scene," he said, referring to himself.

Later, referring to an interview with Perot on CBS' *60 Minutes*, he lumped Perot and Bush together in another unfavorable light.

"Tonight, Mr. Perot is going to say that Mr. Bush is investigating his children. Mr. Bush has already said that Mr. Perot investigated his children," Clinton said.

"They're worried about investigating each other's children. I'll tell you what, I want to investigate your children — their future, their problems, their promise," he told a cheering crowd that had been warmed up with an introduction by New York Gov. Mario Cuomo.

More than 10,000 people braved a cold wind to hear and cheer him on the football field at Sterling Heights, in Macomb County — Reagan Democrat territory.

Borrowing some of Perot's populist rhetoric, Clinton said in a speech at Saginaw, Mich., that, if elected, voters would know the White House was "your house" and said he would be "nothing more than a temporary tenant, your chief hired hand."

"Our main opponent is George Bush," said George Stephanopoulos, Clinton's communications director. Clinton, he said, wanted to make sure people know that "any vote that doesn't go to Bill Clinton is a vote for George Bush."

Polls easily explain why Clinton chose Michigan to step up his attack.

A Detroit Free Press poll taken before the presidential debates showed Clinton with a cushy 50 percent to 31 percent lead over the president. A poll taken last week showed 41 percent for Clinton, 31 for Bush and 19 for Perot.

Clinton landed in Michigan on Saturday night, and also landed his first shot at Perot's choice of Adm. James Stockdale as his running mate.

"Of all your choices for president," he

said, "only one has ever balanced a government budget. Only one has never been part of the Washington political scene, lobbying for special interest breaks," an obvious reference to Perot's efforts over the years to win government contracts and other favors.

"Only one has ever passed a program through a legislature," he said, ignoring Bush's eight years as vice president and four as president.

"And," he added, "only one made a real good choice for vice president."

Though subtle in some ways, the new rhetoric was a change for Clinton, who, until recently at least, appears to have benefited from Perot's candidacy and his attacks on the Bush record.

With the race tightening, there is talk in the Clinton campaign of campaigning around the clock for the final three days leading up to the Nov. 3 election.

"I'd like to," Clinton told reporters, but he said his doctor has cautioned that he may lose his voice again — as he did just prior to the presidential debates.

"We've been at this for more than a year. Surely, we can go for another week," Clinton said Sunday.

Bush begins last drive in campaign

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — President Bush on Sunday plunged into a nine-day, nonstop drive to Election Day, saying Democrat Bill Clinton has misled Americans into thinking "everything was wrong with this country."

Amid signs that the race is tightening, Bush renewed his charges that Clinton lacks the character and trustworthiness to sit in the Oval Office.

Bush was joined by chief of staff James A. Baker III, who was brought to the White House to fix the president's troubled campaign. Baker has been plotting strategy from Washington.

Bush seized on a report in the *Sunday Telegraph* of London that Clinton's campaign had hatched a secret deal with the head of the European Commission to delay a world trade agreement until after the election.

"If this report is true, and if the Clinton campaign is going over to Europe, interfering with an agreement that would benefit all American agricultural, it is a sorry, pathetic thing to be doing a few days before an election," Bush told a campaign rally in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Asked about the report while campaigning in Michigan, Clinton said, "No. Nothing to that."

Several thousand people stood in a hot exposition hall at the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds to cheer Bush. Outside, a handful of Clinton supporters passed out copies of an editorial in the *Argus Leader* newspaper endorsing the Democrat.

Bush told the audience that if you listened to Clinton and his running mate, Al Gore, "you'd think everything was wrong with this country. The only way that Clinton and Gore can win is to make everybody convinced everything is horrible."

"We forget 93 percent of the people are working in this country. We forget that interest rates are at record lows. We forget that inflation is better. And we forget that ag income is up in the United States."

Bush will not return to the White House before the election.

"It's pretty much all scheduled through the end," said White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater.

Perot pushes character

FLEMINGTON, N.J. (AP) — Ross Perot changed the tone of his message in his first in-person appearance of the fall campaign, urging voters to consider character as well as the issues and asking, "Which one of the three candidates ... would you want your daughter to marry?"

Emerging from the relative seclusion of television studios where he has spent much of the last three weeks taping commercials, Perot made the first face-to-face appearance of his revived campaign before an enthusiastic crowd of tens of thousands at a stock car track. He spoke in Pittsburgh later.

The Texas billionaire, who had insisted during the presidential debates that issues were more important than personality, cast himself as more responsible than his opponents.

"If you are going into combat and you could take any of the three of us, who would you want on your side?" Perot asked the cheering crowd at Flemington Speedway.

"If you were taken hostage in a foreign country, which one of the candidates do you think would come in and get you?" said Perot, who organized the rescue of several of his employees imprisoned in Iran after that country's revolution.

"All three candidates go over to your house one night and want to borrow money from you. Which one would you lend money to?" he asked above uproarious laughter from the crowd.

"Which one of the three candidates as young men would you want your daughter to marry?" Perot asked.

"Which of the three candidates will be the best role model for your children?" Perot asked.

Perot's appeal to the character issue was a marked shift in his rhetoric.

During the first presidential debate, Perot pointedly refused to join Bush in challenging Clinton's participation in anti-war demonstrations in London while a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford.

Perot climbs in poll, draws Clinton voters

NEW YORK (AP) — The additional voter support Ross Perot picked up after the presidential debates came at Bill Clinton's expense more than President Bush's, by a 3-2 ratio, according to a national poll released Sunday.

The Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press said its poll found many voters have reconsidered Perot and that Republican attacks have hurt Clinton's image, but opinions of Bush have not changed much.

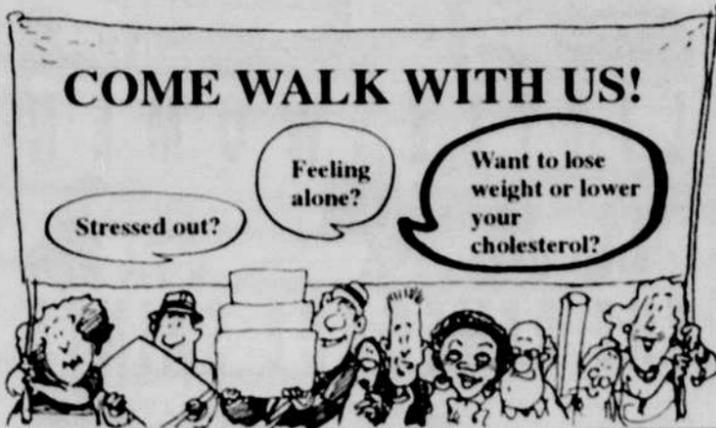
The findings were based on re-interviews Tuesday through Thursday with 1,153 registered voters who were previously polled on Oct. 8-12. About one in five voters changed allegiances. Clinton fell 4 points to 44 percent. Bush slipped 1 point to 34 percent. Perot shot up 11 points to 19 percent.

A breakdown shows that Perot's 19 percent is made up of 6 percent who stuck with the Texan from the previous poll, 6 percent who defected from the Democratic nominee, 4 percent who switched from Bush and 3 percent won over from "undecided."

The percentage who rated Perot the least reliable candidate fell from 30 to 17, while those rating Clinton least reliable rose from 21 percent to 32 percent. Clinton also lost ground and Perot gained on measures of honesty.

Clinton also remained out front in tracking polls, which average in fresh results from small samples each night to gain early warning of any trends.

ABC News reported that its poll of 1,130 likely voters interviewed Thursday through Saturday showed Clinton with 44 percent to Bush's 34 percent and Perot's 17 percent. The poll had a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points.



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