

# Nader enters presidential race

The Green Party crusader announced his intentions to run as an independent Sunday on "Meet the Press"

By Jeff Zeleny  
Chicago Tribune (KRT)

WASHINGTON — Ignoring appeals from many of his own admirers, Ralph Nader declared Sunday he would run for president as an independent but vehemently denied suggestions he could derail the Democratic Party's effort to defeat President Bush.

The longtime consumer advocate, whose third-party candidacy has been blamed for tipping the 2000 election to Bush, accused Democrats and Republicans of being consumed by corporate interests. By running again, he said, he hoped to break a "two-party duopoly that is converging more and more."

His decision to enter the 2004 presidential race, announced in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," infuriated Democrats who believe the general election match against Bush could be as narrow as the last race. Several party leaders, including national chairman Terry McAuliffe, had personally pleaded with Nader not to run.

"He's had a whole distinguished career fighting for working families, and I would hate to see part of his legacy being that he got us eight years of George Bush," McAuliffe said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Democratic leaders had few kind words about Nader on Sunday.

"It's about him, it's about his ego," said New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson. "It's about his vanity and not about a movement."

Nader, whose Green Party candidacy received about 2.7 percent of the vote four years ago, faces new challenges running as an independent. He will have to fight to be included on the ballot, state by state, and must raise money without an established political party.

Democrats believe that many of Nader's 2,878,157 ballots in the 2000 presidential race might have gone to Al Gore,

including 97,488 in Florida and 22,198 in New Hampshire. Gore lost both states by narrow margins in an election that was so close that it ultimately was decided by a split Supreme Court decision.

In the 2000 campaign, Nader repeatedly argued there were few differences between Democrats and Republicans. He conceded Sunday there were, indeed, distinctions between the parties, but said "it's a question between both parties flunking."

"They may be different in their mind, they may be different in their attention, they may be different in their rhetoric," Nader said. "But in the actual performance, these corporate interests and their political allies are taking America down."

When asked if he was getting into the race to be a spoiler, Nader bristled, saying: "A spoiler is a contemptuous term, as if anybody who dares to challenge the two-party system is a spoiler, and we've got to fight that."

The Bush campaign, which is preparing to step up its re-election effort Monday with a campaign-style speech by the president in Washington and television ads to follow next week, did not comment on Nader's announcement. The chairman of the Republican National Committee, though, said Bush would win regardless of who was in the race.

Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, the front-runner in the Democratic presidential race, said Sunday that he intended to reach out to voters who may be intrigued by Nader. He rejected the notion there were few differences between the political parties.

"I think it was pretty clear to most Americans that the difference was night and day," Kerry told reporters while campaigning in Atlanta. "I intend to speak to all Americans. If people want to beat George Bush badly and they understand what's at stake here, they'll see that I am speaking to concerns that Ralph Nader and other people have."

Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, who is chasing Kerry in the fight for the party's presidential nomination,

suggested that his candidacy would offer more appeal to Nader's followers.

"It's important for the Democrats," Edwards said, "to have somebody at the top of the ticket who will be appealing to some of the voters that Ralph Nader might attract."

With Howard Dean out of the Democratic race, Nader hopes to tap into the same kind of resentment against the establishment and lure disaffected followers of the former Vermont governor to his campaign. Dean, though, has vowed to support the party's nominee.

Susan MacManus, a professor of political science at the University of South Florida, said she believed Nader's candidacy could make the difference in a narrowly divided electorate where many voters may be dissatisfied with both parties by the fall election. And Dean supporters, she said, "could be attracted to a rebel and a nontraditional type of candidate."

The announcement that Nader would enter the race came in the wake of an unusually aggressive effort, led by former supporters and other Democrats, encouraging him to stay out of the campaign. A new Web site, <http://www.ralphpdonthun.net>, was created to highlight the differences between the political parties.

While many Democratic governors meeting Sunday in Washington expressed concern about the prospect of Nader's candidacy, Gov. Tom Vilsack of Iowa said the climate has changed considerably since the 2000 campaign, in which Nader declared both political parties equal.

"I don't think his message is going to fly," Vilsack said in an interview. "One thing we know for sure in this country, after three years of President Bush's administration, there is one hell of a difference at every level. There's a hell of a difference and people know it and people see it."

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# 'Gadfly' showcases successes, trials of former Oregon senator

"American Gadfly," a play shown at Lane Community College on Sunday, details the life of Wayne Morse

By Catherine Ryan  
Freelance Reporter

Hero, maverick, unstable politician, gentleman and squeaky wheel: All titles used to describe the late Wayne Morse, the subject of "American Gadfly," a one-man play performed Sunday at Lane Community College.

Lane Community College teacher Judith "Sparky" Roberts directed the Charles Deemer play starring Claude Offenbacher. The performance was especially relevant because Morse, an Oregon senator from 1945 to 1969, made his home in Eugene until he died in 1974. Performing the play at LCC was fitting because Morse said he believed liberty needs an educated citizenry to survive.

The play began with Offenbacher entering the stage hall from the rear of the performance hall. As he made his way to the stage, he paused to shake hands with audience members.

"Nice to see you here," he said. "I'd appreciate your vote."

Dressed in a suit, glasses and hat, Offenbacher brought the character to life. He paced back and forth across the stage and directly addressed the audience. He made campaign speeches, talked on the phone to personalities

such as Richard Nixon — "Dick," as Morse called him — and lamented the state of politics. In the play, nothing was safe from Morse's cutting criticism. The play portrayed Morse giving his filibuster speech from 11:30 a.m. to 9:56 a.m. the following day in an effort to stop a bill that would have given Texas tidelines to oil companies.

In 1952, Morse left the Republican party in protest of the presidential candidate, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and his running mate, Richard Nixon. In a symbolic gesture, Morse brought a folding chair to the senate and sat in the aisle separating the Republicans and Democrats.

"The Republicans disown me, the Democrats have nothing to offer me," he said. "Then I'll bring my own chair to the Senate and sit in the aisle."

He later joined the Democratic party in 1955.

Roberts said the play was meant to portray Morse's personality and work. She said it showed the good arguments he had and the reasons why many people disliked him.

"He didn't care about being unpopular," she said.

Indeed, Morse's actions onstage even ruffled some feathers in the audience. In a panel discussion after the play, Eugene resident George Boehnke said Morse had good ideas but was too focused on himself.

"That's why he got so few things done for the state of Oregon," Boehnke said.

Even Morse's character joked about his lack of victories. In his filibuster, he said, "My daughters rib me from time

to time. They will say, 'Dad, do you ever get anything through the Senate? Do you ever win any of your battles?'"

But according to Deemer, Morse exercised the important role of the gadfly although he claimed few political victories. Morse acted as a persistent critic of politics he opposed.

"I vote my conscience, not a party line," Offenbacher said in the play.

While his stands on controversial issues alienated many politicians and citizens alike, he became a hero for many. Panel member Marjorie Goss, who met Morse at a dinner party, came to admire him although her family thought he was a "nutcase."

"He was a real beacon for some of us who thought we needed someone who was outspoken, frank and honest," Goss said.

Panel member and former Oregon representative Jim Weaver said he watched the play wondering what Morse would say about the current political environment.

"He would be attacking the Bush administration on the floor of the Senate so hard, so well, that he would have just shriveled (Bush)," Weaver said. "We need Wayne Morse back again."

Roberts said she directed the play because of the "timeliness of (Morse's) words." She said she hopes to tour colleges and civic groups throughout the Northwest and wants to bring a political message through drama, especially to students.

"They have got to speak out," Roberts

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Today's crossword solution

P	U	R	L	A	N	V	I	L	S	O	D	A
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