

# Oprah Endorses Obama for President

Brings star power to stage for Democrat

(AP) — Oprah Winfrey, one of the most prominent entertainers in the world, is using her star power to back the presidential campaign of Sen. Barack Obama.

"South Carolina — January 26th is your moment," Winfrey said, referring to the state Democratic primary date during a campaign stop Sunday alongside the Illinois senator. "It's your time to seize the opportunity to support a man who, as the Bible says, loves mercy and does justly."

Obama's campaign said more than 29,000 attended the event at the University of South Carolina's football stadium. It had the feel of a rock concert, with bands playing for early arrivals and campaign supporters yelling "fire it up" to the crowd.

Winfrey, who also campaigned for Obama on Saturday in Iowa, offered a touch of talk show-like advice during a 17-minute speech. "There are those who say it's not his time, that he should wait his turn. Think about where you'd be in your life if you'd waited



Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill. (left) and wife Michelle are joined by talk-show host Oprah Winfrey (right) during a campaign rally in Manchester, N.H., Sunday. (AP Photo)

when people told you to," she said.

"I'm sick of politics as usual," Winfrey said. "We need Barack Obama."

A recent AP-Pew Research poll has New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton leading in South Carolina with 45 percent of likely Democratic primary voters, followed by Obama's 31 percent. The two candidates break even on the black vote here, and that's where Winfrey's appeal could become a factor — along with her pull among women.

Obama, during his address, criticized the Bush administration and took several veiled swipes at Clinton, though never referenced his rival by name.

"I'm tired of Democrats thinking the only way to look tough on national security is to act like George Bush," he said. "We need a bold Democratic Party that's going to stand for something, not just posture and pose."

He said if he's the party nominee, an opponent won't be able to say he supported going to war in Iraq, which Clinton did.

"It's not good enough to tell the people what you think they want to hear, instead of what they need to hear. That just won't

do. Not this time," he said. "We can't spend all our time triangulating and poll-testing our positions because we're worried about what Mitt or Rudy or Fred or the other Republican nominees are going to say about us."

He said voters will need to cast ballots in favor of a candidate — not against an incumbent who is leaving office.

"The name George W. Bush will not be on the ballot," he said, a remark that brought the crowd to its feet for several minutes.

"The name of my cousin Dick Cheney won't be on the ballot," Obama added, a reference to their more than 300-year-old, distant family connection. "That was some embarrassing stuff when that came out."

Obama was accompanied by his wife, Michelle, and said it was his campaign's biggest crowd. "You know you've got a good program when I'm the third-best speaker on the stage," he said.

After two days of campaigning, Winfrey said she had overcome her initial nervousness.

"I'm beginning to like this," she said. "I'm beginning to like this because I can feel that you are ready for change."

## Crack Sentencing Guidelines Eased

### Retroactive decision impacts 19,500 inmates

(AP) — The U.S. Sentencing Commission voted unanimously Tuesday to allow some 19,500 federal prison inmates, most of them black, to seek reductions in their crack cocaine sentences.

The commission, which sets guidelines for federal prison sentences, decided to make retroactive its recent easing of recommended sentences for crack offenses.

Roughly 3,800 inmates could be eligible for release from prison within a year after the March 3 effective date of Tuesday's decision. Federal judges will have the final say whether to reduce sentences.

The commissioners said the delay would give judges and prison officials time to deal with public safety and other issues.

U.S. District Judge William Sessions of Vermont, a commission member, said the vote on retroactivity will have the "most dramatic impact on African-American families." A failure to act "may be taken by some as particularly unjust," Sessions said before the vote.

The seven-member commission took note of objections raised by the Bush administration, but said there is no basis to treat convicts sentenced before the guidelines were changed differently from those sentenced after the change.

Inmate family representatives



A man places a piece of crack cocaine into a pipe to be smoked.

and other advocates had said a Supreme Court decision on Monday could only improve chances the commission would address the long-criticized disparity in sentences for crack and powder cocaine offenses. Crack is predominantly used by blacks; powder cocaine, predominantly by whites.

The administration restated its opposition to the easing on Tuesday before the commission voted.

"Our position is clear," said Attorney General Michael Mukasey at a news conference. "We oppose it."

The attorney general said the convicted crack offenders were sentenced under an existing standard and to change that standard retro-

actively dismisses any mitigating factors the sentencing judge considered when deciding how long a prison term to set.

In addition, the release of inmates would cause problems for communities whose probation and supervisory systems are not ready to receive crack offenders, he said.

In two decisions Monday, the Supreme Court upheld judges who rejected federal sentencing guidelines as too harsh and imposed more lenient prison terms, including one for crack offenses.

In the crack case, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's majority opinion said Derrick Kimbrough's 15-year sentence was acceptable, although guidelines called for 19 to 22 years.



The late Self Enhancement, Inc. Librarian Genia Adair is pictured with one of her students. SEI will name its school library in honor of Adair during a ceremony on Monday, Dec. 17 at 5 p.m.

## SEI to Honor Librarian's Legacy

Self Enhancement, Inc. invites the community to celebrate the legacy of Ms. Eugenia "Genia" Adair at a library dedication event on Monday, Dec. 17 at 5 p.m. in the SEI gymnasium.

The Collins Multicultural Library will formally be renamed as the Eugenia Adair Memorial Library — Collins Foundation.

Adair, who passed away in April of this year, was the librarian at SEI for over 9 years.

She transformed an empty room at SEI into a vibrant space full of books and energy.

"Genia was not only our librarian, she was this community's librarian," said Tony Hopson, president and chief executive officer of SEI. "Her contributions to our students and staff will be felt for generations to come."

The SEI library is currently named after the Collins Foundation because of their longstanding

support of the library program. When approached by Hopson with the idea of renaming the library for Adair, the foundation graciously consented without a second thought.

The dedication program will highlight students, staff, and community representatives talking about the impact Ms. Adair had on their lives. After the program, the plaque bearing her name will officially be hung.

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## Kicker Tax Rebates Mailed Out

(AP) — Kicker checks were in the mailbox last weekend for most Oregonians.

The state sent out more than 1.6 million of the income tax "kicker" rebate checks in time for holiday shopping and bills.

But some decided to donate their share of the record \$1.07 billion in rebates by checking off on their 2006 tax returns that they

wanted their kicker rebate to go to the schools fund, officials said, a collective \$6.7 million contribution.

It was twice as many people — and nine times as much money — donated to the State School Fund in 2001, the last time there were personal tax rebates.

Some checks apparently didn't make it, or were smaller than ex-

pected. By Monday afternoon, nearly 3,700 folks had called the Oregon Revenue Department with kicker-related queries. Most of the calls were from people notifying the state of address changes in order to get their checks. Others wanted to know why the state deducted some of their rebates to offset past taxes or other outstanding debts.

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