

OPINION

PASADENA STAR-NEWS

sgvn.com
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2008

Obama wearing thin

Re the news article, "Making their picks":
So Congressman Schiff thinks that Senator Obama's talent will dazzle Californians. I wonder which of these talents he was referring to — Obama's talent of voting present on controversial, hot-button topics while in the Illinois state House; or maybe it is his ability to get elected to Congress and then spend most of that time campaigning for the office of president.

Or perhaps it's his skill to turn a phrase but leave most of the heavy lifting to others, while he takes credit for their work.

As for this Californian, I find very little in Sen. Obama to be dazzled by, except by the nearly blind devotion the media pundits and some, (such as Rep. Schiff) seem to display, leaving all the hard questions unanswered or ignored.

Am I a fan of Sen. Hillary Clinton? Hardly. However, I respect the fact that she will make a decision, instead of the more cowardly present vote.

My skepticism is likely a by-product of my French upbringing where we are taught to question, and not accept, the pabulum offered by politicians or the media.

The one bright spot appears to be that at least the contest for both the Democratic and Republican nominations seems to be a spirited one this election year — that is, if the media can refrain from crowning their pick.

Geneviève M. Clavreul, RN
PASADENA

Pasadena Star-News

Schiff backs Obama; others name endorsements

By Dan Abendschein, Staff Writer

Article Launched: 01/09/2008 10:26:15 PM PST

Lawmakers are starting to pick sides in the presidential primary races.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Pasadena, gave Sen. Barack Obama's campaign a lift on Wednesday by endorsing his candidacy just a day after the Democratic presidential candidate finished second in the New Hampshire primary.

"I'm increasingly concerned about how divided we are here in the U.S., and I think Obama is the candidate that can bring us together," said Schiff.

With Sen. Hillary Clinton and Obama splitting the Iowa Caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, Schiff said that California suddenly took on huge importance for both candidates.

"Whoever wins here in California is going to win the nomination," said Schiff.

He added that the state's decision to move its primary up to Feb. 5 from June also would play a major factor in making California important to picking the next president.

Lonnee Hamilton, a Pasadena Obama campaign volunteer, said Schiff's endorsement would be huge for her efforts to turn out voters for her candidate.

"California's going to be a battleground, and with (Schiff's) endorsement, I think we can deliver a key district to Sen. Obama," said Hamilton.

Of 13 county, state, and national San Gabriel Valley representatives who endorsed Democrats, two others joined Schiff in endorsing Obama, while six endorsed Clinton.

Two politicians endorsed New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson. Richardson announced he dropped out of the race Wednesday.

Assembly Anthony Portantino, D-Pasadena, is endorsing John Edwards.

Senator Jack Scott, D-Pasadena, has not endorsed anyone yet but said might do so in the next few weeks.

On the Republican side, two local politicians are endorsing Rudy Giuliani, one is endorsing Romney, and Rep. Gary Miller, R-Brea, is endorsing long-shot candidate Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-San Diego.

While Schiff gave a boost to Obama with his endorsement, local politicians supporting Clinton were busy celebrating her New Hampshire victory.

"The pundits said (Clinton) would lose by double digits, but I stayed watching CNN for hours and it paid off," said Congresswoman Hilda Solis, D-El Monte.

Solis, who is a co-chairman of Clinton's California campaign, said she would be working hard to prepare for upcoming primaries on the West Coast.

"I will be hosting many fundraisers and campaign events in the coming weeks, and I'm heading to Las Vegas this weekend to campaign for her in Nevada," said Solis.

With the Nevada caucus as the next contest for Democratic voters, Solis is not the only one ready to head for the silver state.

Hamilton said Obama volunteers in her group would be canvassing in Nevada.

State Sen. Gloria Romero, D-Los Angeles, who is a co-chair of Obama's campaign, said she would be in the state in the next week trying to turn out support for her candidate.

Obama picked up some major help for Nevada's Jan. 19 caucus on Wednesday, with the endorsement of two major state labor unions.

Debbie Mesloh, the head of communications for Obama's California campaign said the senator planned to campaign in California one day next week, and would be increasing his appearances in the state in the following weeks.

California's preference for a candidate still appears to be up in the air.

In a December poll from the Field Poll organization, Clinton led Obama by 36 percent to 22 percent.

However, that poll was significantly closer than an October poll that showed Clinton with a 25-point lead.

That fact, combined with the 20 percent of voters in the primary who describe themselves as undecided, make Schiff believe Obama has a strong chance of victory in California.

"Californians love to be trend-setters," said Schiff. "I think the state will be dazzled by (Obama's) talent."

dan.abendschein@sgvn.com

(626) 962-8811, Ext. 2105