



# Special Reports

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## JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE SAFE FROM POLITICIANS

by Gary J. Gillespie, M.A.

**W**hat do campaigns and Christmas shopping have in common? They start *way* too early. Nevertheless, people inside the beltway are already looking ahead to campaign 2000.



Gore

Vice President Albert A. Gore, Jr., is seen as a shoo-in for his party's presidential nominee, but getting elected will take much more than loyalty to William J. Clinton. Charismatically challenged to say the least, Gore will have to overcome, well, himself. Gore's book shows

him to be an environmental extremist in that he supports trees over people. As stewards of God's creation, we want to care for the land, but we do not want to destroy people in order to do so. A skilled and qualified candidate could easily defeat Gore in November.

Most observers say Gore would have to break another law (a really big law this time—one even taken seriously by radical liberals) for Democrats to turn against him. Nevertheless, Gore may face a few challengers. For instance, former U.S. Senator William W. Bradley, D-N.J., has long been interested in the White House, having openly considered a challenge to Clinton in 1996. The former professional basketball player is generally a popular figure, particularly within his party. Still, Bradley will have to offer some compelling reason for Democrats to rebuff Gore.



Bradley

As leader of congressional Democrats, Rep. Richard A. Gephardt, D-Mo., knows where to go and to whom he should speak. Yet even the formerly pro-life Gephardt cannot expect to depose Gore with ease.



Jackson

Senator J. Robert Kerrey, D-Neb., Jesse L. Jackson and Senator John F. Kerry, D-Mass., may also run. While both Kerrey and Kerry have long records in support of legal abortion, Jackson was once an eloquent and passionate speaker against it, but that was before he was a politician. Jackson just 21 years ago:

There are those who argue that the right to privacy is of higher order than the right to life...that was the premise of slavery. You could not protest the existence or treatment of slaves on the plantation because that was private and therefore outside your right to be concerned...the Constitution called us three-fifths human and the whites further dehumanized us by calling us "niggers." It was part of the dehumanizing process...these advocates of taking life prior to birth do not call it killing or murder they call it abortion. They further never talk about aborting a baby because that would imply something human...fetus sounds less human and therefore can be justified.

The Republican field is wide open. Many names of likely Republican contenders have surfaced, including that of former Vice President J. Danforth "Dan" Quayle. He will surely run, but Quayle will not pledge to select a pro-life running mate. Quayle is seen as a fan of the Republican "big tent," or any other kind of tent that he *thinks* will lead to his election. Many pro-lifers are not impressed.

Jack F. Kemp, Jr., R-N.Y., a former member of Congress and Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under President George H. W. Bush, had considered running, but recent reports say he has decided against it. After his pathetically weak defense of issues important to pro-family voters in 1996, this may be a blessing. Once the hero and darling of the pro-life movement, few pro-life leaders are expected to line up behind Kemp.



Kemp



Forbes

Much to his credit and benefit, M. Stevenson "Steve" Forbes, Jr., has spent a lot of time with social conservatives. His only problems are the remnants of his inability to articulate a position in 1996 and what some see as an endorsement of rape and incest abortions. Yet Forbes has agreed to nominate a pro-life running mate, end federal funding of Planned Parenthood and international population control, and sign every piece of pro-life legislation placed on his desk. Pro-life leaders who have per-

sonally met with Forbes report that he is warm, humorous, knowledgeable, and committed to keeping his promises to pro-family voters.



**Ashcroft**

Senator John D. Ashcroft, R-Mo., will run for president, but he has already raised red flags in the minds of pro-life voters in a flap over his position on rape and incest abortions. Ashcroft had issued a form letter stating that he “recognized the right of a woman to choose to have an abortion in cases of rape or incest.” He now claims to be 100 percent pro-life and the form letter “is wrong.” No explanation for the “wrong” statement was provided. How does one “accidentally” release a statement on such an important issue?

Senator John S. McCain III, R-Ariz., who spent time as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, is expected to run. McCain has increasingly offended pro-lifers with such proposals as his campaign finance reform bill that would cripple our right to even discuss elections with any depth. McCain’s rhetoric has begun to sound like that of Quayle. He sees pro-family activists as too powerful an influence in Republican politics. While his voting record remains good, few pro-life leaders think McCain would be a friend. The problem is that McCain could be a strong contender.



**McCain**

Congressman John R. Kasich, R-Ohio, has a flawless voting record according to Christian Coalition’s scorecard. How he will handle the abortion issue remains to be seen.



**Kasich**

House Speaker Newton L. Gingrich, R-Georgia, will have difficulty convincing any pro-lifer to support his presidential candidacy given his dismal interest in life issues since taking “leadership.” While Gingrich will surely tell pro-lifers what they want to hear during the campaign, they will just as certainly not be fooled.

Elizabeth Hanford “Liddy” Dole may seek the nomination. While much more articulate than her husband, the two Doles reportedly share the same opinion, which is virtually identical to that of Quayle and Kemp. With the election of any of these people, pro-lifers can expect business and usual (telling pro-family activists to go hide in the closet).



**Dole**

Polls show the front-runner to be Texas governor George W. Bush. While he has pleased some pro-lifers, Bush has angered others. He is seen as no more committed to the cause than his father.

Former ambassador Alan Keyes will act with 100 percent pro-life conviction. The same is also true of Family Research Council president Gary L. Bauer and commentator Patrick J. Buchanan. The only drawback for these men is that many pro-life leaders are seeking to support candidates who stand a reasonable chance of winning. The pro-life movement needs candidates who can win the nomination *and* the November election *and* stay loyal after doing so. We do not need more men discussing the issue if no one is in a position to implement policy when the discussion is over.



**Keyes**

While Life Decisions International is prohibited from endorsing candidates, several presidential hopefuls have sought the *personal* endorsement of LDI’s president, Douglas R. Scott, Jr. Candidates apparently believe that the sooner they garner endorsements from pro-family leaders, the easier it will be to lock out other contenders. But getting the endorsements of some pro-family leaders will be easier than others.



**Scott**

“No one gets my endorsement without assuring me that he is going to do more than just pay ‘lip service’ to the movement,” Scott said. “I want a serious candidate who takes the lives of the unborn just as seriously. This is not a political game to us. My endorsement will be hard to get and even harder to keep.”

Scott will not settle for a candidate who is merely seen as “acceptable” by pro-life leaders. “I want someone who will act—someone about whom we can be enthusiastic, not just somewhat satisfied,” Scott said. Scott, whom sources say does his Christmas shopping early, is also expected to make a personal endorsement long before the presidential primaries begin—probably within the next several months.

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