

# Marathon campaign for N.Y. nears finish line

## Outcome of close contest depends on voter turnout

By Martha T. Moore  
and Kathy Kiely  
USA TODAY

**BUFFALO** — In the homestretch of her history-making run for the Senate, Hillary Rodham Clinton has enlisted would-be Senate colleague Charles Schumer, heartthrob actor Ben Affleck, daughter Chelsea and even husband Bill. But here at St. John Baptist Church, backed by a gospel choir and encouraged by "uh-huhs" from an enthusiastic congregation, the name she invokes is Harriet Tubman, heroine of the Underground Railroad.

Clinton describes Tubman as "a former slave who made it to freedom right here in New York" and has adopted her rallying cry: "When you hear the gunshots behind you, keep going. Keep going. Keep going, keep going until you reach freedom!"

Sixteen months after she began her unlikely campaign, and less than a year after she moved out of the White House to pursue it, the first presidential wife to run for elective office looks as though she might just keep going right to the U.S. Senate.

Most polls show her in the lead as the nation's most expensive, most publicized Senate race ever heads into its final weekend. But the margin is razor-thin. Clinton's Republican opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio, is portraying himself as a home-state David up against a big-name Goliath. "No one from Little Rock, Ark., or Washington, D.C., or Hollywood, Calif., is going to tell us New Yorkers who we should send to the Senate," Lazio declares.

Clinton's campaign exudes a confidence that's missing from Lazio's. She talks about what she "will" do in the Senate "when" she arrives.

Some rough edges remain: The first time Clinton told the Tubman story, for example, she mistakenly made the heroine another emancipated-slave-turned-reformer, Sojourner Truth. Last week, the first lady had to return a \$50,000 contribution from a Muslim organization that has some members who advocate the use of violence against Israel.

Both campaigns say the race is so tight that the outcome will depend on who gets more supporters to the polls Tuesday. "Those people who are still undecided aren't going to make their decision until they walk into the polling booth," says Sylvia Tokasz, a Democratic National Committee member. "It's down to get out the vote."

### Street politics

Clinton is hitting churches, union halls and Democratic rallies. She's shaking hands at pumpkin stands. She has launched an ad with the endorsement of retiring Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who introduced her as his potential replacement at his upstate farm in July 1999.

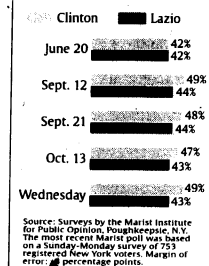
Her opponent, whose latest ad features New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, the man whose place he took as GOP Senate candidate, is eating platefuls of pasta at "Lasagna with Lazio" and "Rigatoni with Rick" events in reliably Republican precincts from Brooklyn to Buffalo. Between mouthfuls, Lazio tells audiences: "This race is the most important Senate race in the nation."

Even his staunchest supporters would not argue that it's because the Long Island lawmaker is in it. As it has been since Clinton began her first "listening tour" of the state, this race continues to be all about the first lady who now wants to be known simply as Hillary.

She's why journalists with Euro-

### Polls favor Clinton

Most recent polls show Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton with a narrow lead over Republican opponent Rick Lazio.



USA TODAY



"Keep going, keep going": Democratic Senate nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton reads to kids Thursday at a public library in Albany, N.Y.

Clinton's critics are convinced that the job she really wants is her husband's. "She's only using this as a steppingstone to higher office," GOP state Senate candidate Bob DiCarlo tells a crowd in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bay Ridge.

The same thought occurs to Sandra Gwitt, breakfasting at the Polish Village II restaurant with her family when the Clinton entourage sweeps in. "I'm thinking her future ideas are not in the New York Senate," says Gwitt, 51, a retired real estate agent.

Clinton has said that, if she were elected, she would serve her full six-year term.

For Lazio, the anti-Clinton sentiment has been an enormous boon. Despite being virtually unknown outside his Suffolk County congressional district, he had more than 40% support in the polls within days of his entrance into the race. In less than five months, he raised more than \$30 million. One fundraising letter told potential donors that everything they needed to know about him could be summed up in six words: "I'm running against Hillary Rodham Clinton."

Warning up a crowd of Conservative and Republican party activists for Lazio, Kings County Conservative Party chairman Jerry Kassir said: "Six months ago, you knew what you were voting against. In 10 minutes, you're going to know what you're voting for."

### Celebrity candidate

Last weekend, Lazio was unable to fill a high school gymnasium in his home district even with Gov. George Pataki accompanying him. Clinton, on the other hand, is the kind of celebrity who attracts huge crowds and sends people surging toward her seeking autographs and snapshots.

When Chelsea, 20, is along, the crowds are agog over her as well, even though she doesn't say much beyond, "Hello sir," and "Hello ma'am," and to children, "Hello, dear."

Haunting the race is the presence of President Clinton. Though she has eliminated his last name from her campaign posters, the first lady has relied heavily on her politically talented husband. She calls him daily to discuss the campaign and has leaned on him to help her raise money. He has appeared on the stump with his wife at key points of the campaign.

Earlier this week, he was the featured attraction at a get-out-the-



"Most important Senate race": GOP opponent Rick Lazio greets morning commuters Thursday at the Staten Island Ferry terminal.

won — a Senate seat, declares: "It is against everything we stand for as a state to say that you can't participate in public life in this state because you weren't born here."

In her final debate with Lazio last week, Clinton referred to the world champion Yankees. "People who weren't born here can deliver for New York," the candidate said.

### Upstate game plan

The first lady also has tried to bolster her New York bona fides by traveling relentlessly up, down and across the state.

She's been to all 62 New York counties and doesn't fail to remind her audiences of it. Her stump speeches often begin with recollections of previous visits to whatever town she is in. "I want to be here so much you'll get sick of me," she tells a union crowd in Buffalo.

Clinton has made inroads with New York voters. In the back of the West Babylon High School gymnasium, where Lazio was appearing, Steve Pirkel says he's backing Lazio, a Long Island neighbor. But while his wife, Jeanne, put Lazio baseball caps on 8-month-old triplets, Jack, Grace and Anna, to draw the congressman over for a picture, she confides that she's leaning toward Clinton: "I think she's maybe more for women's issues. She's tough. Her husband's a jerk, but she's got more values."

The first lady has worked hard upstate because that's the game plan Schumer used to beat Al D'Aмато in 1998: run strong in Democratic New York City, eke out a win in the surrounding suburbs, and

don't get killed in traditionally Republican upstate areas. Lazio, meanwhile, is trying hard to cut into her support from Jewish voters in and around New York City, to press his hometown advantage in the suburbs and to turn out Catholic voters who make up 45% of the state's electorate.

Both candidates are running flat-out as this New York marathon nears the finish line. They're doing so with no help from the top of the ticket: Because New York is considered a lock for Vice President Gore, he and Gov. George W. Bush have largely stayed away.

The race that will keep New York vote-counters up late is Hillary vs. Rick. Veteran political observer Maltese speaks for political experts on both sides when he says, "I think it's going to be very close."

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## The Candidates Their Courses The Consequences



On  
Nov. 7

We are voting for people whose governing directly and indirectly affects our daily lives. Consider our taxes, regulations, mandates, crime, court decisions, social and moral values. We must make a serious effort to swing back in the direction of our **historic American system**, its common sense, moral sense, business sense, legal sense, educational sense, social sense, etc. We are reaping the consequences of our CONDUCT which is but the expression of our CHARACTER. CHARACTER IS ESSENTIAL in rightly resolving our conditions. The consequences of indifference and tolerance will not be good. Where the candidates stand is revealed by what they vote for and what they promote. But not all we vote for needs to disappoint, to put us further away from a good governing. We either vote for the direction of rightness or for the direction of wrongness. Consider:

## A "NO" VOTE IN THE PAST

The elders of Israel said to Samuel: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk

without natural affection, trucebreakers... lovers of pleasures MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD, having an [outward] form of godliness, but denying the POWER thereof [that power and life that makes for inward reality]: from such turn away... But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13:4, 3-4).

## YOU MUST VOTE

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you LIFE and DEATH, BLESSING and CURSING: therefore CHOOSE LIFE, that both thou and thy seed may live. That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for HE is thy LIFE, and the length of thy days" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). The Lord Jesus said, "SEARCH the SCRIPTURES: for in them ye think ye have ETERNAL LIFE: and they are they which TESTIFY OF ME. And YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, that ye might have LIFE" (John 5:39-40). "And this is LIFE ETERNAL.

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