

Bill Richardson Endorses Senator Obama; Security Breach in the State Department; Obama's Pastor Problems Felt in Polls; Fewer Jobs in the U.S. for Illegal Aliens; Unreliable E-Voting Machines Still in Use

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Byline: Lou Dobbs, Jessica Yellin, Zain Verjee, Bill Schneider, Casey Wian, Kitty Pilgrim, Christine Romans, Phillipa Holland, Louise Schiavone

Guests: Michael Goodwin, Keith Richburg, Robert Zimmerman

Highlight: Senator Obama wins the endorsement of the nation's only Hispanic governor, Bill Richardson. Presidential delegates are demanding a thorough investigation after a security breach in the State Department. The pastor controversy has damaged Senator Obama in the polls. The number of illegal aliens crossing into this country from Mexico appears to be declining. A number of states are ignoring critical problems that remains with electronic voting machines.

Body

LOU DOBBS, HOST, LOU DOBBS TONIGHT: Thank you, John.

Tonight Senator Obama wins the endorsement of the nation's only Hispanic governor, Bill Richardson. His Obama pandering to ethnocentric special interests again, we'll have complete coverage.

And presidential candidates are furious after State Department workers read their passport records without authorization. We'll have the report.

And corporate elites rushing to hire more workers, they're not Americans of course, but rather overseas workers, business as usual for corporate America in the war on the middle class, all of that, all the day's news and much more straight ahead here tonight.

ANNOUNCER: This is LOU DOBBS TONIGHT: news, debate, and opinion for Friday, March 21. Live from New York, Lou Dobbs.

DOBBS: Good evening, everybody. Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico today deserted Senator Clinton and instead endorsed Senator Obama. Former presidential candidate, Governor Bill Richardson declaring Obama is what he called him a once in a lifetime leader. Governor Richardson backed Obama even though Democrats voted for Clinton in New Mexico's primary election.

Meanwhile, new evidence today that the outrage over Senator Obama's controversial former pastor has had a negative impact on Obama's polling numbers. We have extensive coverage tonight from the presidential campaign trail.

We begin with Jessica Yellin in Indianapolis -- Jessica.

Bill Richardson Endorses Senator Obama; Security Breach in the State Department; Obama's Pastor Problems Felt in Polls; Fewer Jobs in the U.S. for Illegal Alien....

JESSICA YELLIN, CNN CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Lou. It was such a tough decision for Governor Bill Richardson to make this endorsement, but one Clinton staffer recently described him as Hamlet. He just couldn't make up his mind until now.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

YELLIN (voice-over): He's a former Clinton confidante, the nation's only Hispanic governor and his is one of the most sought after endorsements of all. Now this super delegate is on Obama's team. GOV. BILL RICHARDSON (D), NEW MEXICO: Your candidacy and this is an expression of your candidacy is a once in a lifetime opportunity for our nation and you are a once in a lifetime leader.

(APPLAUSE)

YELLIN: Richardson made the decision last week. But he says Obama's speech on race reaffirmed his faith in the senator.

RICHARDSON: As a Hispanic American I was particularly touched by his words.

(APPLAUSE)

RICHARDSON: (SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

YELLIN: Some say the Clintons helped make Bill Richardson's career and they've wooed him aggressively, the former president flying to New Mexico this year for the Super Bowl.

SEN. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON (D-NY), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Do not get between Bill Clinton and Bill Richardson and the TV set when the Super Bowl is on...

YELLIN: But the governor says he developed a soft spot for Barack Obama during all those debates and clearly a rapport.

RICHARDSON: He didn't mention me.

(LAUGHTER)

RICHARDSON: But that's OK.

SEN. BARACK OBAMA (D-IL), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Did that hurt your feelings?

RICHARDSON: Well, a little bit.

(LAUGHTER)

YELLIN: The endorsement comes after a run of bad news for Barack Obama, including damaging stories about his pastor, an indicted former donor, missteps on NAFTA and losses in Texas and Ohio. This could turn the tide.

Now the Obama campaign can only hope it clears the way for other uncommitted superdelegates to follow Richardson's lead and that his stamp of approval will bolster the candidate's standing among Hispanic voters and buttress his foreign policy credentials.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

YELLIN: Lou, I spoke to aides to four of those top uncommitted super delegates, Reid, Pelosi, Gore and Biden. They all say they don't expect those folks to follow suit and endorse Barack Obama at least not now. Senator Clinton says this should all be left up to the voters, endorsements should not decide a nomination -- Lou. DOBBS: Thank you very much. Jessica Yellin reporting.

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Presidential delegates tonight demanding a thorough investigation after a security breach in the State Department, a breach that enabled State Department contract workers and a trainee to read the confidential files of all three presidential candidates, obviously without authorization. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spent much of the day apologizing to the candidates.

Zain Verjee has our report from the State Department.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ZAIN VERJEE, CNN STATE DEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The "I'm sorry"s just keep coming. First to Senator Barack Obama after the revelation that State Department contractors that sneaked a look into his passport file three times this year.

CONDOLLEEZZA RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE: I told him that I was sorry. And I told him that I myself would be very disturbed if I learned that somebody had looked into my passport file.

OBAMA: She called me and offered her apologies, which I appreciated, but I also indicated that this is something that has to be investigated diligently and openly.

VERJEE: Then word that the trainee, a State Department employee, got into Senator Hillary Clinton's file last summer. Rice called the senator.

Next victim on the Republican side Senator John McCain. He reacted to the Obama breach.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-AZ), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: If anyone's privacy is breached, then they deserve an apology and a full investigation...

VERJEE: That's even before he knew one of the same people who clicked into Obama's file surfed his as well. Rice telephoned him in Paris.

A top State Department official was dispatched to the Hill to brief all three senators' staff. Obama and others are demanding congressional investigations. Big questions remain, what's in a candidate's passport file? Is it just an application form with a picture and bio info? Was all this politically motivated?

SEAN MCCORMACK, STATE DEPT. SPOKESMAN: It is still our initial take this was -- I refer to it as imprudent curiosity, but we are not dismissive of any other possibility.

VERJEE: We've been down this road before, an unauthorized leak of the passport files of then presidential candidate Bill Clinton in 1992. The probe cost \$2.2 million and no laws broken. The count so far two contractors fired, one disciplined for the two violations and a State Department trainee still on the job.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

VERJEE: The State Department, Lou, is saying that the computers were able to immediately flag the breaches, but the real problem is acknowledge this is that at the lower levels, they completely failed to report up to senior management and let them know what's going on. One other thing, Lou, we just got this in a few moments ago.

The State Department has just revealed the names of the two contractors that are involved in all of this. They are Stanley Inc. and the Analysis Corporation -- Lou.

DOBBS: All right, thank you very much, Zain. Three contractors fired, one trainee apparently suspended. I'm wondering just how long it will be before we see those files added to the list of files that should be revealed to the public? We thank you very much, Zain Verjee from the State Department.

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The two contractors fired for snooping into Senator Obama's files were working as Zain just said, for Stanley Inc. That's a company based in Arlington, Virginia. The company says it has a long history of working for the federal government including the Defense Department.

It also prides itself of being voted one of the best companies in the country to work for. Just this week Stanley said it won a new contract worth more than a half million dollars to support the State Department's passport service. Obviously, more jobs being outsourced from the State Department, part of the Republican administration's plan to keep the government small, but apparently the contractor payroll is exceedingly large.

The latest opinion polls suggest the controversy over Senator Obama's former pastor has damaged Obama in the polls. Those polls suggesting Obama support in fact declined as the controversy broke.

Bill Schneider has our report from Philadelphia.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It came to me...

WILLIAM SCHNEIDER, CNN SENIOR POLITICAL ANALYST (voice-over): When tapes of the inflammatory statements made by Barack Obama's pastor came out last weekend, there appears to have been some negative impact on Obama. A poll of Pennsylvania Democratic voters showed Obama's favorable ratings dropping from February to last weekend.

TERRY MADONNA, POLLSTER: I don't think there's any doubt that the Jeremiah Wright controversy played a role in the ten-point drop in his favorable ratings.

SCHNEIDER: Nationally Obama's lead over Hillary Clinton narrowed in the CBS News and "USA Today" Gallup polls. Among Pennsylvania Democratic primary voters, Clinton's lead over Obama more than doubled from seven points in February to 16 points as of last weekend. Obama's association with Reverend Wright appeared to be hurting him as of last weekend.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I think it probably hurt him by association, but I don't think it reflects his views necessarily.

SCHNEIDER: Then on Tuesday Obama gave a speech on race relations. Did his speech reverse the damage? The Gallup tracking poll with interviews done every day shows that the speech may have helped Obama some.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I personally was like more Hillary, but after hearing that speech, I was like, wow, you know this guy really is on to something.

SCHNEIDER: Look at the trend lines showing support for Obama and Clinton among Democrats nationally over the last week. Clinton started moving ahead of Obama last weekend when the Wright story broke. By Tuesday, she had a statistically significant seven-point lead. Then Obama spoke about his relationship with Wright and his view of race relations.

Clinton's lead began to narrow to five points, and as of Friday, two points. Friday's results, statistically a tie, represent the first poll in which all interviews were done after Obama's speech.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SCHNEIDER: Now the Gallup tracking poll suggests that Obama's speech may have helped him somewhat with Democrats. Obama always argues that he can appeal much more than Clinton to Independents and Republicans. His standing among Independents and Republicans we just don't know yet -- Lou.

DOBBS: Bill, the idea that Senator Clinton has been relatively quiet, would that be influencing those polls as well?

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SCHNEIDER: She has been relatively quiet because I think she realizes for Democrats (INAUDIBLE) racism an extremely touchy subject. A lot of Democrats as we see in the Gallup poll, a lot of Democrats admire Obama's speech. And I think she just wants to stay out of it for the moment.

DOBBS: OK, Bill Schneider, thank you very much.

Rising anger among Democrats tonight over the national party's decision to strip both Florida and Michigan of their delegates and to not hold new primaries. One Florida Democrat filing a lawsuit against the Democratic National Committee.

Today the Eleventh U.S Circuit Court of Appeals rejected that lawsuit, but the appellate court said the lawsuit raised what it called, "interesting and potentially significant questions", end quote. The plaintiff immediately said he will re-file the lawsuit.

That brings us to our poll tonight on the divisions within the Democratic Party.

The question is: Do you believe the Democratic Party is now severely damaging its ultimate nominee's chances of winning the presidency?

Yes or no. We'd love to hear from you.

Cast your vote at loudobbs.com. We'll have the results here later in the broadcast.

And new evidence tonight that Senator Obama is easily defeating Senators Clinton and McCain in the fight to raise campaign money. The Federal Election Commission says Obama raised \$55 million last month. That was a record for any candidate. And it means Obama has raised nearly \$200 million since the beginning of his campaign.

The Federal Election Commission said Senator Clinton raised \$35 million in February, McCain only 11 million. Overall Clinton has raised \$156 million, McCain \$60 million. The McCain campaign insists it can succeed even if Democrats spend more on their campaigns.

Up next here, illegal alien crossing from Mexico have fallen. Casey Wian will have the surprising news for us -- Casey.

CASEY WIAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Lou, there is strong evidence that fewer illegal aliens are crossing our nation's southern border. Improved border security has helped. That's only part of the story. We'll have details coming up.

DOBBS: Casey, thank you very much. Looking forward to that.

And the American dream for an entire generation of Americans may be slipping away. We'll have the story.

And new concerns about e-voting, the integrity of our voting system, we'll have a special report in democracy at risk.

We'll be right back. Stay with us.

DOBBS: The number of illegal aliens crossing into this country from Mexico appears to be declining. However, the federal government is quick to take credit for the drop. Many say the troubled state of our economy now is the real reason. There are simply fewer opportunities for those who enter this country illegally now to find work.

Casey Wian has our report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

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WIAN (voice-over): The Department of Homeland Security says apprehensions of illegal aliens near the nation's borders fell 18 percent the last three months of 2007 from the same period a year earlier. DHS says the drop is the result of 3,000 new border patrol agents, the deployment of the National Guard on the southern border, more fencing, and better technology. But a sociologist at the University of California in San Diego says that's only part of the story.

THOMAS JIMENEZ, UNIV. OF CALIF. SAN DIEGO: We have seen a downturn in the American economy. A drying up of jobs where migrants, undocumented migrants concentrate, like construction, like service sector jobs. When those jobs dry up, people are going to be less likely to cross because the economic incentive to come declines.

WIAN: Mexico's government says the number of its citizens planning to leave the country to seek work mostly in the United States plunged nearly 60 percent from early 2005 to the end of last year. Mexican officials and others say a growing number of illegal aliens are choosing to self-deport, voluntarily leave the United States because of scarcer job opportunities and stricter enforcement of immigration law in places like Arizona.

ROY BECK, NUMBERSUSA: Sort of the bad news that keeps coming across illegal aliens in this country about the tightening enforcement plus the worsening economy, all of that is working together to drive a lot of illegal aliens out of this country.

WIAN: Legal and illegal immigrants also appear to be sending less money home. Remittances to Mexico dropped six percent in January, the sharpest decline in 13 years.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

WIAN: A Customs and Border Protection spokesman agrees that the economy is playing a part in the decline of illegal border crossings. He also points out however that apprehensions have fallen for nearly two and a half years. He says that clearly shows border security efforts are one of the most important factors -- Lou.

DOBBS: Casey, thank you very much. Casey Wian.

Construction one of the industries popular among illegal aliens seeking work in this country. A nationwide building company tonight stands accused of hiring illegal alien workers and passing them off as independent contractors.

The New Jersey Counsel of Carpenters filing the lawsuit charging that Texas-based D.R. Horton has been fully aware that a subcontractor hired illegal aliens on a New Jersey building project and paid them less than prevailing wages. D.R. Horton declined comment, citing company policy not to comment on pending litigation.

Up next here, the American dream may be slipping away for a generation of Americans. We'll have that report.

And some states still plan to use vulnerable and unreliable e- voting machines in our upcoming presidential election. We'll have that story and a great deal more. We'll be right back.

DOBBS: New evidence tonight that a number of states are ignoring the critical problems that remain with electronic voting machines without verifiable paper trails. We've been reporting here now for years literally on the threat that unsecured, unreliable e-voting machines pose to our democracy. And despite the mountain of evidence that we have presented and reported to you on, many states are going ahead and planning to use those very vulnerable machines in our upcoming presidential election.

Kitty Pilgrim has our report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

KITTY PILGRIM, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Computer scientist Ed Felten at Princeton is one of the top experts on security for electronic voting machines. Voting machine manufacturer Sequoia (ph) doesn't want him testing the machines that malfunctioned in the New Jersey primary.

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PROF. EDWARD FELTEN PRINCETON UNIVERSITY: Sequoia threatened to sue the county, as I understand it, and they also sent an e-mail to me and one of my colleagues saying that if we accepted voting machines for study that we might be in legal trouble as well.

PILGRIM: In a response to CNN, Sequoia says it has already appointed a company to review the voting machines used in six counties that recorded inaccurate voter turnout. County officials and activists are demanding that the state attorney general, Ann Milgrim (ph), call for independent testing of the machines.

PROF. PENNY VENETIS RUTGERS LAW SCHOOL: The state attorney general is by statute the chief election officer in New Jersey and unfortunately in this case, she has failed the citizens of the state by refusing to conduct an investigation of the machines.

PILGRIM: The attorney general's office in New Jersey has not returned our calls. Officials in some states have acted on their own to test and decertify faulty voting machines in opposition to fierce political pressure to keep the machines.

For their efforts to decertify machines, California Secretaries of State Debra Bowen (ph) and Jennifer Brunner (ph) of Ohio have just been named recipients of the JFK Profile and Courage award, given to elected officials who risk their careers by acting on their conscience for the common good.

But no such courage exists in Colorado, the governor and legislators decertified electronic voting with much fanfare earlier this year. But this month in a sudden move, the secretary of state recertified electronic voting machines, claiming there were no longer any problems with them.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

PILGRIM: So many parts of the country are still at risk, for example the same model voting machine that malfunctioned in New Jersey will be used in some counties in Pennsylvania in their upcoming primary -- Lou.

DOBBS: Now the names of those secretaries of state in Ohio and...

PILGRIM: California.

DOBBS: ... California, Debra Bowen ...

PILGRIM: Bowen.

DOBBS: ... in California...

PILGRIM: Yes.

DOBBS: ... and...

PILGRIM: Jennifer Brunner.

DOBBS: ... Jennifer Brunner. Well our compliments to them. Congratulations to people of both Ohio and California obviously owe them a debt of gratitude of -- I owe you a debt, by the way, you were right last night on some numbers and I was pitifully, pitifully, horribly and of course rarely wrong.

PILGRIM: You're never wrong, Lou and...

(CROSSTALK)

DOBBS: I was as wrong as you can get wrong last night. And I apologize to you for my wrongness.

PILGRIM: Thank you, Lou.

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DOBBS: God, I hate saying that. I really hate it.

PILGRIM: It's also worth checking the numbers twice though.

DOBBS: Where did we learn that? Somewhere along the way in journalism, didn't we?

PILGRIM: I think we did.

DOBBS: All right. Thank you very much. And it's a lesson often re-taught, at least in my case. Thanks, Kitty.

Time now for some of your thoughts.

Gary in Georgia said: "Lou, in the clip you showed of Senator Obama he was talking about his grandmother and mentioned the typical views of whites and attitudes that are quote 'bred' into whites. What is this if not an unfair stereotype on his part?"

Nick in California said: "If a white person had said of a black person that something about them was 'typical of a black person' then that white person would be pilloried." And Eric in Ohio: "As a white American I take exception to being called a 'typical' white person. Furthermore, thanks but no thanks Senator Obama. We typical white people are capable of recognizing divisive incendiary hate speech for ourselves and don't need Senator Obama to tell us we misunderstood Reverend Wright."

Sherrill in Kansas said: "Mr. Obama, here's the deal. One cannot choose their race or even their grandmother, but everyone in America does choose his or her church and pastor. Your choice tells who the 'real' B. Obama is."

We'll have more of your thoughts here later in the broadcast. Each of who whose e-mail is read here receives a copy of my book "Independents Day: Awakening the American Spirit".

And please, a reminder to join me on the radio each afternoon Monday through Friday for "The Lou Dobbs Show", a three-hour radio show. You can go to loudobbs.com to find local listings for the broadcast.

My guests today included John Strausbaugh, he wrote a book that I think is fascinating, a great new book called "Sissy Nation". I love that title. Don't you? "Sissy Nation: How America Became a Culture of Wimps and Stoopits".

If you would like to hear that interview or pick up that book, go to loudobbs.com for help in so doing or your nearest bookstore or Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com.

Up next, this country's only Hispanic governor, Bill Richardson, endorsing Senator Obama, throwing the Clintons under the bus. We'll examine the influence a group on identity politics in this campaign.

Also corporate elites in this country, they're on a hiring spree, but they're hiring foreign workers.

And many Americans are loosing the chance to live the American dream forever. That special report and more straight ahead. Stay with us. We're coming right back.

DOBBS: Our struggling middle class in many cases faced with foreclosure and credit card crises and loss of jobs, rising prices. Certainly our middle class facing now another threat, shrinking opportunities for upward mobility and this is a new development. The American dream of moving up our economic ladder may be fading for an entire generation.

Christine Romans has the report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MCCAIN: Where all of America...

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CHRISTINE ROMANS, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The challenge for the presidential candidates, restore the American dream. That ability through hard work, talent and smarts to do better than the generation before you.

ISABEL SAWHILL, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION: The American dream is alive but somewhat frayed at this point.

ROMANS: Here's how it is frayed. According to exhaust of analysis by the bipartisan Economic Mobility Project, this country faces the most staggering income inequality in a century. Men in their 30s today are earning less than the men of their father's generation. Families are better off only because women have gone to work and households are earning two incomes.

Much of that extra income eaten up by child care and higher cost of living. A child born poor in this country has only a 6 percent chance of rising to the top income bracket in a lifetime.

LEO HINDREY, FORMER FORTUNE 500 EXECUTIVE: This failure of economic mobility may be in fact the greatest, the most acute failure of the economy over the last seven to 10 years.

ROMANS: A failure felt more deeply depending on race. The group finds, "some subgroups, such as immigrants, are doing especially well. Others, such as African-Americans, are losing ground."

Almost half of African-American children born to middle class families will eventually fall down the income ladder.

HUGH PRICE, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION: It's often said that blacks are canaries in the coal mines. Is what has happened to the children of the black middle class merely an early warning sign of broader dysfunction in the system that will begin to spread?

ROMANS: The big questions, why? And what are we doing about it still unanswered. It's a direct challenge to the presidential candidates and their advisers.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ROMANS: One of the biggest challenges, education. It is increasingly important in determining upward mobility in this country. Researchers urged reform at all levels of education to make sure that quality schooling is available and works to move all children up the ladder, Lou.

But this is meant to be a baseline agreement from the left and the right about what is going wrong and a challenge to our elites to figure out way to fix it. Not take one piece at a time, but look at the big picture and try to fix it.

DOBBS: The challenge to these elites, unfortunately, they're members of partisan parties. And they are the reason that we're in the mess we're in. And that is one of the questions, the large question that's going to have to be answered. Hopefully we'll begin to answer it in this election year. We can hope.

Christine, thank you very much -- Christine Romans.

Most Americans are confident that our economy will recover next year, according to a new CNN/Opinion Research Poll. Sixty percent of Americans surveyed showed that economics, they believe, economic conditions will be good next year.

But Americans also believe they have a lot to worry about right now. Only 23 percent of parents say they are very confident they can save enough money to send their kids to college. That is a lousy, lousy number in the country that is home to the American dream. Just 29 percent are very confident in their ability to save enough money for retirement.

Well American workers won't benefit from corporate America's rush to hire high-technology workers. Companies instead are looking overseas for filling those job openings. And the deadline for H1B visa applications just a week

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away. Companies are competing for some 65,000 visas. The program has been ripe with abuse. This year, the government says it's doing something about that.

Louise Schiavone has our report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

LOUISE SCHIAVONE, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Bad news for companies trying to beat the government's worker visa lottery system. The old tricks won't fly. Duplicate applications from one company for the same person, for the same job, no matter how much money that company has paid in application fees, will be denied.

It's a step in the right direction, says a U.S. technology workers group that charges that many businesses use the H1B visa mostly to import cheaper foreign workers.

KIM BERRY, PROGRAMMERS GUILD: The economy is slowing down. Anything having to do with the mortgage or lending sectors is laying off workers. Citibank has laid off a lot of workers, including computer programmers. This is the wrong time to be bringing in more workers.

SCHIAVONE: In 2007, U.S. immigration fielded 120,000 applications for 65,000 slots. The winners determined by a computerized random draw. Last year alone, 500 duplicate applications were filed to increase the change of winning. Now duplicates will be rejected and a \$320 filing fee won't be returned. At the same time, reform efforts are underway in Congress.

SEN. CHARLES GRASSLEY (R), IOWA: We ought to make sure that we have reform of H1B so any company that wants to look at H1Bs first has to show that they made a good faith effort to hire American workers.

SCHIAVONE: In addition to the 65,000 H1B visas currently offered, 20,000 additional visas are available for foreign-born students with U.S. graduate degrees.

But a spokesman for Microsoft tells LOU DOBBS TONIGHT that's not enough. "Microsoft has about 4,000 core technical positions that it cannot fill, either with American or with foreign talent. Other high- tech companies like Oracle, Intel, Google for example face the same kinds of talent shortages."

Microsoft says it does not submit duplicate visa applications.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SCHIAVONE: Lou, the application process for the coming year opens April 1 and lasts five business days. With all of the fees combined for a company of 26 employees or more, the total cost per candidate application is more than \$2,000 -- Lou?

DOBBS: More than \$2,000. How many duplicates did they say there were in the H1B application process last year?

SCHIAVONE: Five hundred. So we're talking about companies who have a lot of money to throw at this process, \$2,320. Plus if you want your application expedited, if you do win the lottery, you can pay another \$1,000. So these companies have a lot of money to sink into this H1B visa. They could sink that into hiring American workers.

DOBBS: They could do that, and also I think we should put into context two other factors. One is that most of the companies amongst the top 20 seeking those H1B visas are what?

They're Indian companies in the United States trying to bring in relatively low skilled, overseas workers under the H1B program and pay them low wages for the purpose of outsourcing work from U.S. domestic corporations. I mean, that's outrageous.

SCHIAVONE: Right, Lou. And as we've reported in the past, the Indians call this the outsourcing visa.

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DOBBS: The outsourcing visa, indeed. And the majority of those H1B visas last year were for not the highly skilled work that one might associate with the words of say someone supposedly as intelligent as Microsoft's Bill Gates, but rather the low-skilled workers that are being brought in under that very program.

Thank you very much, Louise Schiavone. It's about time this government wakes up to reality and does something about it for a change.

Up next here, Senator Obama picking up a coveted endorsement from a former rival in the race for the White House. And why the Bush administration is apologizing to all those presidential candidates tonight of both parties. Much more on that and a great deal more.

We'll be right back. Stay with us.

DOBBS: Joining me now are Keith Richburg, New York bureau chief of the "Washington Post," Michael Goodwin, Pulitzer Prize winning columnist, "New York Daily News," LOU DOBBS TONIGHT contributor, Democratic National Committeeman Robert Zimmerman, superdelegate, supporting Senator Hillary Clinton and a LOU DOBBS TONIGHT contributor.

Gentlemen all, welcome, good to see you.

And let's start with the, I love this thing with the passports. And the calls, the indignation, the rolling apologies from Condoleezza Rice. But all the cable news networks, talk about a pack mentality, rolling out on this. Kind of inspiring, isn't it?

KEITH RICHBURG, NEW YORK BUREAU CHIEF, "WASHINGTON POST": It is. It started out as this great scandal. It was Obama who was smeared had been smeared by the Bush administration.

DOBBS: Somebody was hinting to me that Senator Clinton was behind it all.

RICHBURG: That was all because how did she know he had never visited a NATO country, you know?

ROBERT ZIMMERMAN, CLINTON SUPPORTER: Also, she has got such direct ties to the Bush administration.

RICHBURG: Absolutely. Then it came out that it was McCain's also.

ZIMMERMAN: Lou, just check your passport carefully.

DOBBS: You know what, I'm going to be honest with you because I listened to all of this silliness sweep across cable news land. I'm thinking, who cares really? Who cares? What is in a State Department passport file? Where you've been.

How about this? They have to turn in their income tax records, all of this other nonsense that really is of little interest ever. But it would be interesting to see where they've been in their careers. I'm trying to invade privacy to a greater extent.

MICHAEL GOODWIN, COLUMNIST, "NEW YORK DAILY NEWS": I think Britney Spears' hospital records are much more interesting. That was a subject worth covering.

DOBBS: That's a different broadcast.

GOODWIN: But look, this is a one day story. Come Monday, I think we'll all be wondering did that really happen, or did we make it up?

DOBBS: Can you imagine Condoleezza Rice? She's in her office, she has to say, Senator Obama, I'm sorry. And she gets "I want a full investigation, I want everything stopped." Then she's sitting in her office, an hour later, you know, Senator Clinton was also her file. She has to pick up the phone again. And then Senator McCain at the end

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of the day. ZIMMERMAN: The point about the media following this because all too often the media has been side tracked to these side stories that have no real bearing and of course takes away from covering the real issues, for example.

DOBBS: I can't imagine what story you would rather be covering.

ZIMMERMAN: Like the Airbus contract going to a company that our government is suing, something like that, sacrificing thousands of jobs.

DOBBS: I thought you might want to talk about perhaps Senator Obama's missteps on the issue of race in this country?

ZIMMERMAN: Well that certainly is worth examining. But you know something? Even though I'm supporting Hillary Clinton, I have said to you, obviously I respected his speech and I thought it was an important beginning of the dialogue.

However, I think what's critical to notice, this discussion is just beginning and it should be held out open in public and in a presidential campaign. And he has to answer some very tough questions to be viable in terms of addressing how he's going to explain his relationship with Reverend Wright.

DOBBS: I think Robert got that into the conversation.

GOODWIN: He worked very nicely. But I believe we're just beginning to see the impact of the speech. I mean the Pennsylvania polls, you said it earlier, she's now up 16 I think in Pennsylvania, very important state for her.

And in many ways, coming down the stretch, each of these states takes on a different momentum question for her and for him. And the national poll is falling. I think the thing is doing him a lot of damage and it could change the rest of the race and make it a real competitive outcome.

DOBBS: Do you agree?

RICHBURG: I agree, it could. I think the speech has actually done him some good. I think the problem is, he didn't answer some questions about the controversy. But you know, Bill Richardson in his endorsement today mentioned that speech as one reason he gave him the endorsement.

DOBBS: Do you believe him for a moment? Do you believe Richardson for even a moment that that's the reason he gave Senator Obama his endorsement?

RICHBURG: The question is why did he give it to him today? And I think that he needed to come out and do something that changed the story line.

ZIMMERMAN: But you know something, I've got to defend Barack Obama in terms of the context of his speech.
DOBBS: Stop the presses.

ZIMMERMAN: I think it's worth recognizing that was a very important address that really did elevate the debate. But now back to Governor Richardson.

DOBBS: OK. Well speaking of Governor Richardson, let's hear what he did say and how he said it in part today.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RICHARDSON: As a Hispanic American, I was particularly touched by his words.

(SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

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DOBBS: Are each endorsement, are we going hear, as white Americans, as black Americans, as Hispanic Americans. I mean, is this going to be part of what is the group and identity party in this country?

Is that not -- is it -- just -- tell me, is there some sense that the Democratic Party is being overwhelmed by its own sense of group and identity politics here?

ZIMMERMAN: There's no question when you have to first African- American running and the first woman running, obviously you're going to have people galvanizing around these issues.

But it does trouble me enormously because I as a white American, a white Jewish American, was also moved by Senator Obama's speech. And I think when we start allowing our politicians to define the race for president and these issues, it undercuts us as a national party and certainly is a disservice to the American people.

DOBBS: I've got to say, I couldn't agree more with what you've just articulated. Why is that so difficult for Senator Obama, Governor Richardson and others in this party right now to comprehend that the more they go to this identity, they become more divisive?

RICHBURG: I think Obama is trying to get away from that identity.

DOBBS: He is getting a lot of help here.

RICHBURG: I think the point of that speech was to say, let's all come together. He can't win if he's an identity politician. He's running as an African-American, he can't win.

DOBBS: If everyone continues this nonsense. Whether you're Jewish or Catholic or you're black or you're white or you're Hispanic, I mean, this is becoming an explosion from the center, which is where I think most of us want to reside. GOODWIN: Well and I think despite what I think Obama was trying to do and it was a very good speech in many ways, it really kind of opened the door in ways that I don't think he wanted it open. For example, the question of how many times did he hear Wright say controversial things after previously denying that he heard any of these things?

The question of moral equivalency, that his grandmother and Wright are basically two sides of the same coin, or that Geraldine Ferraro is equally in the same page with Wright. I think he made some big logical mistakes there. I think there are still a lot of questions.

DOBBS: Well we're going to answer some of those questions in just one moment. We'll be back with those answers to those questions in just a moment.

But first, a reminder to vote please in our **poll**.

The question is: Do you believe the Democratic Party is now severely damaging its ultimate nominee's chances of winning the presidency with this kind of -- I'm going to call it nonsense on group and identity politics which several members of this party seem to be just enthusiastically jumping to?

We'll be right back with more. Stay with us.

DOBBS: We're back with Michael Goodwin, Keith Richburg and Robert Zimmerman. Keith, how big a problem is what's transpiring right now in the Democratic Party for the ultimate nominee?

RICHBURG: It's a huge problem and it's a problem as long as the process goes on. You can't short circuit the process and close it down. People have to vote.

But on the other hand, bringing these two factions together, these two camps together, is going to be really tough and it's going to go all the way to the convention. Michigan and Florida still aren't resolved.

DOBBS: You think it will go all the way to the convention?

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RICHBURG: I think it's going to have to go all the way. I mean we've got a super delegate here who can tell us when they plan on actually making their decision.

DOBBS: We'll make Zimmerman wait here just for a minute.

RICHBURG: You've got to do Florida and Michigan.

DOBBS: Let's turn to you, Michael. How big a problem?

GOODWIN: Well, I think it's a very big problem for Senator Clinton, too, should she become the nominee. Jeremiah Wright is a problem for the Democratic Party right now. It's mostly on Obama.

But should Obama not get the nomination, Senator Clinton is going to have to deal with it, because as we've said before, what Wright said, the most infamous quote there is an anti-American quote. And the Democratic Party already has some problems on issues of security and patriotism among a lot of conservatives in this country. Wright inflames that for a lot of Americans.

ZIMMERMAN: Michael, let me put your mind to ease for a moment because the Bush administration's record on security and fiscal responsibility and integrity in government has so destroyed the Republican brand name on those issues, I don't think it's going to be a problem.

GOODWIN: Do you think Hillary Clinton is going to distance herself from Jeremiah Wright? Is she going to say what he said was anti-American?

ZIMMERMAN: Everyone recognizes what Jeremiah said was anti- American. Will she give a speech on it? I'm sure she'll have to answer questions about it. But the point is, both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton do not represent what Jeremiah Wright advocates.

GOODWIN: What is she waiting for? She hasn't said anything.

DOBBS: Well I guess Keith it comes down to this is what I hear you saying, you basically have two mill stones, one named Jeremiah Wright hanging around the Democratic Party and one named George W. Bush hanging around the Republican Party. Which his the most cumbersome, burdensome and ultimately fatiguing?

RICHBURG: I think ultimately this is the Democrat's year to win this election. They have to screw up badly to lose this.

DOBBS: How are they doing so far?

RICHBURG: And they're doing pretty well so far. But let's see, you've got an unpopular war, an unpopular president, an economy going in the tank.

ZIMMERMAN: And John McCain is running even with Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in the polls today.

DOBBS: Actually, McCain is leading.

ZIMMERMAN: He's leading Barack Obama.

DOBBS: He's leading both of them.

ZIMMERMAN: He's leading both of them? I think the fact that he's running even with them should be a warning sign and a wake up call for Democrats.

DOBBS: Jay Leno had a great line last night, if I can remember this. He said, to show you how well Senator McCain is doing, Senator Clinton has offered him the vice presidency. ZIMMERMAN: But you know something? The real damage the Democratic Party faces is if they don't allow Michigan and Florida to participate in this process and the

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notion this process should be closed down when there is still so many significant states that have yet to be heard from, I think is really a typical of Democratic Party insiders who are trying to cut a deal. Granted, a smoke-free room because we're Democrats, but nonetheless a bad deal.

DOBBS: Republican rooms too now are because it's the law of the land. Do you agree? Are the Democrats ultimately going to pay a price for disenfranchising voters both in Michigan and Florida?

GOODWIN: You would think so because their candidates are not there, they're not debating the issues. A lot of people didn't come out to vote. There's a study recently that said although in Florida roughly 1.7 million voted, maybe 2 million more didn't because they knew it wasn't going to count. So clearly if you're a voter in Florida or Michigan, you do feel left out of this.

DOBBS: Keith, you get the last word.

RICHBURG: I think their own political leaders in Florida and Michigan really screwed this up. They're the ones who tried to leap frog the calendar. They ignored the DNC that said you're going to be punished. They went ahead and did it anyway and now they've created this mess.

ZIMMERMAN: This is a scandal affecting the Democratic Party from the state to the national levels and it should never be tolerated by registered Democrats around the country.

DOBBS: You got the last word.

RICHBURG: I won't follow that one.

DOBBS: Keith Richburg, thank you very much. Michael Goodwin, thank you very much, Robert Zimmerman.

Still ahead, "Heroes." Tonight, the story of a young couple who began their married life on the front lines.

We'll be right back.

DOBBS: Now our weekly tribute to the men and women who serve this nation in uniform around the world. Tonight, we introduce you to Sergeant Nicholas Horn and Specialist Bethany Horn, army reservists who spent their first year of marriage living and fighting together in Iraq.

Phillippa Holland has their story.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

PHILLIPPA HOLLAND, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Many newlyweds encounter stress during their first year of marriage. But most don't have to deal with the daily threat of insurgent attacks.

Nicholas and Bethany Horn chose to start their life together under those very conditions, as reservists deployed together in Iraq. Nicholas proposed in January 2007, one month before they shipped out. And the only way he saw fit, which in formation in their unit.

SGT. NICHOLAS HORN, U.S. ARMY: We're no longer just guys that go to drill together. We're now a family, we're going to Iraq. We have to act like a family. So with that in mind, I wanted to have my new family involved.

HOLLAND: In Tikrit and later in Mosul, the Horns both worked in civil affairs where their commanders allowed them to live together in the same housing unit.

SPECIALIST BETHANY HORN, U.S. ARMY: It was nice being together. I mean, it was stressful at times because we're together 24/7.

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N. HORN: You can hide a lot of what happened if you're sending letters home to your spouse. If your spouse is right there with you, she knows.

HOLLAND: One day that summer, their base came under mortar attack. From the safety of his bunker, Nicholas heard a desperate call for help.

N. HORN: I'm not a medic, but I jumped out to go help and I was told to get back in the bunker, you're not a medic. What are you doing? And it took me about two seconds to put it together that there wasn't a medic anywhere near.

HOLLAND: He put his army training to work to save the life of a critically wounded Iraqi civilian. For his bravery, Nicholas was awarded the Bronze Star. Bethany saw action as well, serving as driver and second vehicle gunner on treacherous supply convoys.

N. HORN: I had to get up with her and watch her jump in her uniform and jump up in the driver's seat of the Humvee and wave her good-bye as she left and I knew she was going out to fight.

B. HORN: He always saw me off every time.

N. HORN: It was always - the first four or five times it was rough, I hated it.

HOLLAND: Back home in Arkansas, they're building a business, planning to buy a house and adjusting to the finer points of married life, as civilians.

B. HORN: In the army side, he's higher rank than me, so he bosses me around. And in here, it makes me uncomfortable. I'm like, you're not the boss anymore.

HOLLAND: Phillippa Holland, CNN.

(END VIDEOTAPE) DOBBS: The results of our ***poll*** tonight -- 73 percent of you say the Democratic Party is now severely damaging its ultimate nominee's chances of winning the presidency.

Some thought for Senators Clinton and Obama.

Thanks for being with us tonight. Join us here tomorrow.

For all of us, thanks for watching. Good night from New York.

"THIS WEEK IN POLITICS" begins right now.

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