

## John McCain 2008 and 2008 Republican National Convention Announce Changes to Convention Program and Hurricane Response Efforts

### Monday's Convention Program Will Only Include Required Proceedings, McCain Campaign Takes Steps to Aid Affected Delegations

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Contact: [Joanna Burgos](#)  
Contact Phone: (651) 467-2728

**SAINT PAUL, Minn.** - At the recommendation of Sen. John McCain, the 2008 Republican National Convention announced substantial changes to the convention's program and actions being taken to help with Hurricane Gustav relief efforts. On Monday, all program activities beyond the official business that must be conducted in accordance with party rules will be cancelled. Among the other actions announced today are the formation of the Affected States Working Group, the establishment of an Affected States Information Center, and the chartering of a DC-9 to transport affected delegates.

Rick Davis, campaign manager for John McCain 2008, announced that the upcoming Republican National Nominating Convention is making serious revisions to the convention program and surrounding activities. Davis said, "We are deeply concerned about the safety and welfare of the residents of the Gulf State region. Our top priority is to assist those who will be affected by Hurricane Gustav. This is not a time for politics or celebration; it is a time for us to come together as Americans and assist the residents of the Gulf States."

Davis also discussed what the changes in the program will mean for the nomination process. "In order for the Republican Party to officially exist and for Senator McCain to qualify for the ballot, we are - by law - required to conduct specific official business. At this point, our program on Monday has been scaled back and will only include what party rules governing the nomination of our candidates for president and vice president require. We will perform the official business as required. In addition, we have set aside time to make delegates and Americans watching our proceedings at home aware of what they can do to assist in relief efforts designed to help those who will be affected by Hurricane Gustav."

Davis concluded: "At some point between Monday and Thursday evening, we will convene once again to complete the activities needed to qualify Senator McCain and Governor Palin for the ballot in all 50 states. Beyond that, all we can say is that we will monitor what is happening and make decisions about other convention business as details become available."

Chairman of the Republican National Committee Robert M. "Mike" Duncan added, "The safety and well-being of the people of the Gulf States remains our top concern. We are doing everything we can on the ground in Minneapolis-Saint Paul to ensure that the delegations affected by this storm have the resources and information that they need. As Senator McCain said this morning, we must redirect our attention and efforts. We will act as Americans - not Republicans - to help our fellow citizens in need."

This morning, at the request of Governor Barbour (R-Miss.), Sen. McCain attended a briefing with the governor about the state's storm preparation efforts. The briefing was held at the Mississippi

Emergency Management Agency offices in Pearl, Miss. Following the briefing, Sen. McCain, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, and Mrs. Cindy McCain toured the emergency management center.

The convention is in continuous communication with all delegates, speakers, and program participants. All parties understand that the schedule for the convention will be dictated by the conditions on the ground in the Gulf States and are, therefore, subject to change. The campaign and the convention's first priority is the safety and security of those living in the areas where the hurricane will make landfall.

The McCain campaign has also taken several additional steps to assist delegates from the Gulf States, including the formation of an Affected States Working Group, the chartering of a DC-9 to transport affected delegates, and the establishment of an Affected States Information Center.

### **The Affected States Working Group**

The Affected States Working Group is comprised of a group of representatives from each of the states in Hurricane Gustav's path. The group will ensure that all affected delegates have information and assistance in real time.

The Affected States Working Group is led by all five state party chairs from the affected area along with other delegation officials. The purpose of the group will be to regularly brief their delegates and convention planners, provide access to timely information and assistance, and give input on appropriate steps that can be taken from Minnesota.

The state party chairs released the following joint statement:

"We appreciate the thoughts and prayers of everyone around the country as we prepare for this dangerous storm. We are here in Minnesota for the necessary job of nominating our choice for president and vice president, but obviously our focus is on our families and friends back at home. We are in constant communication with our governors and elected officials and feel confident that they are taking the appropriate and necessary steps to prepare. The purpose of this group is to discuss ways that we can come together to provide information and support for our delegates here in Minneapolis."

The group is made up of nine leaders from the region and is chaired by the following individuals:

- Roger Villare, Louisiana State Chair
- Tina Benkiser, Texas State Chair
- Brad White, Mississippi State Chair
- Mike Hubbard, Alabama State Chair
- Jim Greer, Florida State Chair

### **Air Transportation Provided to Delegates**

Also announced today were transportation arrangements for delegates from states affected by Hurricane Gustav. The McCain 2008 campaign has chartered a DC-9 that will transport delegates that wish to return to home to their states. The DC-9 will leave Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport today and will fly to Jackson, Mississippi. All transportation costs will be covered by the McCain 2008 campaign.

"As we all watch and prepare for Gustav to make landfall, it is important that the convention make it as easy as possible for delegates to be where they are needed most - with their families and local agencies in their home states. We are grateful to Senator McCain for making this resource

available to the delegates from the Gulf States," Maria Cino, President and CEO of the Republican National Convention 2008, said today.

### **Affected States Information Center**

The convention has established an Affected States Information Center, which will be fully staffed and located inside the Xcel Energy Center. The center will remain open during the Xcel Energy Center's operating hours and will serve as a central location where delegates can get news about the hurricane, weather reports, and information about rescue relief organizations; access to computers and phones; and the resources they need to address their situations back home. Delegates can go to the center and get information. There will also be contacts in the center that can contact Gulf State governors, if needed.

### **Republican Party Rules**

The convention program has been altered in response to the situation developing in the Gulf States region. However, the convention will still take place. According to party rules, it is necessary for the convention to proceed in order to ensure that the party is able to place its candidates' names on the ballot in November.

On November 9, 2007, pursuant to the rules adopted at the 2004 National Republican Convention, the party issued the call for its convention. The call requires that the convention meet on Sept. 1, 2008. The session must be convened no earlier than 9 a.m. and no later than 7 p.m. Under the current party rules, this is the only method by which the party may select a candidate for President and Vice President.