

# Endorsement raises doubts about Obama

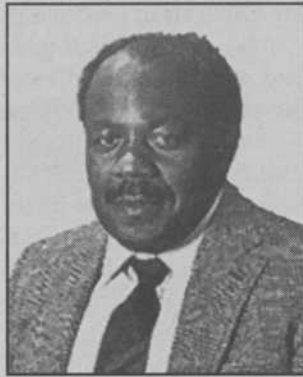
COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - Two key Black political leaders in South Carolina who backed John Edwards in 2004 said Tuesday they are supporting Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

State Sens. Robert Ford and Darrell Jackson told The Associated Press they believe Clinton is the only Democrat who can win the presidency. Both said they had been courted by Illinois Sen. Barack Obama; Ford said Obama winning the primary would drag down the rest of the party.

"It's a slim possibility for him to get the nomination, but then everybody else is doomed," Ford said. "Every Democrat running on that ticket next year would lose — because he's Black and he's top of the ticket. We'd lose the House and the Senate and the governors and

*"It's a slim possibility for him to get the nomination, but then everybody else is doomed."*

— Robert Ford  
S.C. State Senator



everything."

"I'm a gambling man. I love Obama," Ford said. "But I'm not going to kill myself."

Ford said he was swayed by calls from former President Clinton and Hillary Clinton. The Charleston lawmaker said she has solid support in his district, one of the key regions in the state with a major Black Democratic voting population.

Clinton's campaign said it welcomed the lawmakers'

support, but disagreed with Ford's contention that Obama could harm a Democratic ticket. "I think it's just flat-out wrong," said spokesman Mo Elleithee.

One Obama ally rejected Ford's assessment.

"I think that Senator Ford's comments were reprehensible," said Illinois Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. "I believe Democratic prospects would soar, not slump."

Later in the day, Ford said he had been besieged by criti-

cism and apologized for his characterization of Obama's chances. If Clinton doesn't win the nomination, any of the other candidates are well suited to take the White House, Ford said.

"If I caused anybody — including myself — any pain about the comments I made earlier, then I want to apologize to myself and to Senator Obama and any of his supporters," Ford said.

Darrell Jackson, who also is the minister of a large church in the state's capital city, said Edwards — a South Carolina native who won the

state's Democratic primary three years ago — had his chance.

"I feel as if he's had his opportunity," he said.

Darrell Jackson said Edwards was a wonderful individual and he considers Obama a friend, but Clinton "is our best shot."

John Moylan, campaign director for Edwards in South Carolina, shrugged off the defections and predicted Edwards would win the state.

The endorsements come just days before Obama and Clinton campaign in the state for the first time in the 2008

race.

Jackson and Ford took credit for turning out Black voters for Edwards in 2004 in a state where half the primary voters are Black. In his only primary victory, Edwards won 37 percent of the vote, slightly better than Sen. John Kerry.

Support from Black voters is key in South Carolina, where 49 percent of the Democratic presidential primary vote came from Blacks in 2004. The state will host the first Southern primaries for both the GOP and Democrats in 2008.

## Walgreen's

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gument.

Judge Janet Berry told the jury before they began deliberations that in order to award damages to the men they must prove they suffered "monetarily compensable physical or emotional injuries" as a result of Walgreens engaging in "extreme and outrageous conduct considered in a civilized society to be atrocious and utterly intolerable."

That conduct does not include such things as insults, threats, indignation or petty trivialities, she said.

Johnson, a gospel singer, said pursuit of justice in the case became his calling and he

launched an advocacy website, stopalldiscrimination.com, to help others facing a similar plight.

After the incident, the company refused the Texas men's demand to fire the clerk, Richard Scott McCord, and instead issued a reprimand.

"The fact the n-word was used makes it more clear that race is the reason Mr. McCord acted the way he did. But even without that slur, there's still a violation," Silverberg said.

"Even if he didn't use the n-word, can you believe keeping someone on in a customer service business after behaving the way he did?" he asked.

## Brown's partner given entry into star's home

AIKEN, S.C. (AP) - The woman who claims to be James Brown's fourth wife planned to return to the home she shared with the singer, after a judge ruled Friday that she could retrieve her belongings.

Tomi Rae Hynie says she has been locked out of the Beech Island home since Brown died Christmas Day at age 73. She was to go into the home Friday afternoon with the estate's trustees.

"I'm happy to be getting my things and my son's things," Hynie said after the hearing.

Judge Doyet Early said Hynie also could take pictures and videotape of the inside of the house if she wanted. If there is any dis-

pute between Hynie and trustees about whether something belongs to her, that item will be set aside until its ownership can be clarified later, Early said.

Hynie, who wore a wedding band to Friday's hearing, says she and Brown were married, which is disputed by Brown's attorneys. The judge offered to hear arguments on that issue Friday, but Hynie's attorney said he would present that case another day.

Hynie and the late singer's six adult children were in court in an attempt to remove three trustees who are handling the late singer's estate. They claim the estate has been mismanaged. Although their relationship has been strained in recent


weeks, the children and Hynie appeared united in efforts to have the trustees removed.

Hynie hugged Brown's oldest daughter, Venisha Brown, after the hearing.

Attorneys for the trustees said they plan a counter suit. An attorney handling Brown's will, Strom Thurmond Jr., asked the Aiken County judge for a restraining order against the children, saying they have interfered with the administration of the estate. The judge said he would decide next week on the children's request to either remove the trustees or appoint a special administrator for the estate.

"We think we need a spe-



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