

# LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 37

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

January 10, 2008

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Culinary Union supports Obama

### Special to Sentinel-Voice

Presidential candidate Barack Obama has won the support of the local 60,000-member Culinary Workers Union, a coup for the Democrat that could boost his candidacy against Hillary Rodham Clinton in the state's nominating contest.

Leaders of the Culinary Workers Union, Local 226 announced the endorsement at a news conference with members in Las Vegas the day after Obama narrowly lost the New Hampshire primary to Clinton.

Culinary Secretary-Treasurer D. Taylor praised the senator's work with a sister union in Chicago and said Obama would appeal across the union's diverse ranks. He took a jab at the mostly White electorate that had so far

shaped the race in New Hampshire and Iowa. "We're not just Wonder Bread here, we got pumpnickel, we got whole wheat, we got rye. We're excited about that. That's America. That's why Senator Obama excites us and excites the country," Taylor said, following cheers and the union chant "Si se puede."

Obama chanted the English translation, "Yes we can," in his concession speech Tuesday.

The endorsement was on behalf of the Culinary group and its parent union, UNITE HERE, which claims 450,000 active members; its endorsement is Obama's first from a major national union.

"Our organization and our members will do everything in our power to see that he



Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama received the coveted endorsement of the huge Culinary Local 226.

reaches the White House this fall, because we know he will bring working Americans with him," said President Bruce Raynor of the parent union. The move could affect the race in Nevada, where Clinton has long enjoyed solid support from the Demo-

cratic establishment and a hefty lead in the polls. Obama has sought support there outside the pool of experienced activists.

The union, representing hotel, restaurant and laundry workers in Nevada's casino industry, is the largest and

best organized labor group in the state. It has the potential of steering thousands of voters to the state's Jan. 19 caucus.

"The technology they use is shoe leather," said Ted Jelen, a political science professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "This is an experienced and politically savvy outfit."

The union's skeptics point to its large number of immigrants, roughly 45 percent, and suggest many are not registered to vote. They also note that the union has left itself little time to rally its ranks around Obama.

Hispanic turnout will be closely watched on caucus day. Hispanics make up nearly a quarter of Nevada's population, but far less of its electorate. The Culinary

union and the state party have been working to register Hispanic voters for months.

Clinton has secured some key endorsements from local Hispanic leaders and recently won the backing of an influential Spanish-language newspaper.

Obama also picked up the endorsement of the Nevada chapter of the Service Employees International Union, which voted to endorse him Tuesday.

It was not clear immediately whether the Clinton campaign, fresh off its surprise win in New Hampshire, would compete at full throttle in Nevada. As the Clinton camp seemed headed toward a New Hampshire loss early Tuesday, it contemplated pulling resources out of Ne-

(See Culinary, Page 3)

## Judge will exit District bench

### Special to Sentinel-Voice

Nevada's longest-serving African-American judge plans to step down this year. District Judge Lee Gates, the only Black elected judge on the Clark County District Court bench, had decided not to run for re-election in Department 8, his office announced in a statement recently. Prior to getting appointed to the bench in 1991, Gates worked in private practice and was both a deputy district attorney and deputy public defender.

Gates, 55, got his undergraduate degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Colorado School of Law.

It wasn't until recently that Gates' tenure was scrutinized. Recently, the Nevada Supreme Court decided against holding charges that were lodged against Gates late last year by the Nevada Judicial Commission over campaign contributions made in local and state elections. He is fending questions about the reporting procedures and permissibility of those contributions of his own funds that the Supreme Court considered a matter of free speech when they dropped the charges. Gates is expected to file formal responses later this month.

He is married to retired Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates.



District Judge Lee Gates

## Kenyan opposition fury grows

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) - Diplomatic efforts intensified to end the election dispute, which has resulted in violence that has killed more than 500 people in Kenya, wounded and displaced thousands.

Hundreds of Kenyans are attempting to flee the country's west amid escalating opposition anger after the president named half of a new cabinet, a line-up packed with his allies.

The opposition accuses President Mwai Kibaki of stealing the Dec. 27 presidential vote, and Kibaki's chief rival Raila Odinga has rejected his invitation to talk.

The chairman of the African Union, Ghanaian President John Kufuor, was in Kenya to mediate, an effort supported by the U.S. and Britain.

Kufuor shuttled between the president and opposition leader to try to break the political impasse and post-election turmoil.

Kufuor met Kibaki first at State House before holding talks with Odinga at a cen-

tral hotel on Wednesday. Kufuor then returned to Kibaki and is due to speak to Odinga again immediately.

Kibaki's office said Kibaki and Kufuor reiterated that dialogue was "the only way forward towards a sustainable solution to the current political situation."

Odinga says Kibaki supporters cheated him out of the election by rigging. Both Washington and London have said the vote counting was flawed.

Previously regarded as a gentlemanly leader with a passion for golf, Kibaki has revealed a steely side. He an-

nounced the core of a new cabinet recently that ignored Odinga's party and triggered a night of riots in the western opposition stronghold, Kisumu.

An opposition spokesman said Odinga discussed forming a transitional government. (See Kenya, Page 10)



Kenyan opposition leader, Raila Odinga, right, and the top U.S. envoy for Africa, Jendayi Frazer, left, are seen following their recent meeting, in Nairobi, Kenya.