

# Obama maintains delegate lead over Clinton

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Sen. Barack Obama survived defeats in three primaries Tuesday with his lead in the delegate race essentially intact.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton netted only a 12-delegate pickup, despite winning primaries in Texas, Ohio and Rhode Island, according to an analysis of returns by The Associated Press. There were still 12 more delegates to be awarded.

In the overall race for the nomination, Obama had 1,562 delegates, including separately chosen

party and elected officials, so-called super delegates. Clinton had 1,461. It takes 2,025 delegates to secure the Democratic nomination.

For the night, Clinton won at least 185 delegates and Obama won at least 173.

Clinton's victory in Ohio won her only nine more delegates than Obama, with two delegates still to be awarded. In Texas, Clinton won four more delegates than Obama in the primary.

But Obama trimmed Clinton's lead to a single Texas delegate in the party caucuses. There were still 10 delegates to be awarded in

the caucuses.

The candidates vied for 370 delegates in four states: Texas, Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont. But the Democrats' system of awarding delegates proportionally made it hard for either candidate to post big gains.

Also, Texas had a two-step system, with about two-thirds of its delegates awarded in a primary, and the rest in party caucuses.

The results enabled Clinton to reclaim momentum after losing 12 straight nominating contests to Obama.

However, Obama main-

tained his delegate lead with fewer chances remaining for Clinton to catch up.

On the Republican side, Sen. John McCain surpassed the 1,191 delegates needed to secure the nomination by winning most of the delegates in the four states.

He also picked up new endorsements from about 30 party officials who will automatically attend the convention and can support whomever they choose.

McCain had 1,232 delegates, according to the AP count.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who had

261 delegates, dropped out of the race Tuesday night.

There were 66 GOP delegates still to be awarded in the Texas primary.

The AP tracks the delegate races by calculating the number of national convention delegates won by candidates in each presidential primary or caucus, based on state and national party rules, and by interviewing unpledged delegates to obtain their preferences.

Most primaries and some caucuses are binding, meaning delegates won by the candidates are pledged to support that candidate at the na-

tional conventions this summer.

Political parties in some states, however, use multistep procedures to award national delegates. Typically, such states use local caucuses to elect delegates to state or congressional district conventions, where national delegates are selected.

In these states, the AP uses the results from local caucuses to calculate the number of national delegates each candidate will win, if the candidate's level of support at the caucus doesn't change.

## CDC

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iceberg, and we need to be much more aggressive about alerting clinicians about how improper this practice is," she said, "but also continuing to invest in our ability to detect these needles in a haystack at the state level so we recognize when there has been a bad practice and patients can be alerted and tested."

Reid said he would work with Gerberding to try to get the CDC more resources in an emergency spending bill Congress is to take up in April.

State health officials said they weren't sure how many of the 40,000 patients they'd been able to contact since making the risk public last week.

At least initially they didn't have correct

addresses for 1,400, officials said.

The head of the clinic, Dr. Dipak Desai, purchased space for an open letter in the Las Vegas Review-Journal on Sunday in which he expressed "my deepest sympathy to all our patients and their families for the fear and uncertainty that naturally arises from this situation."

Desai offered no apology but said a foundation was being set up to cover testing costs. He also defended practices at his clinic, which performs colonoscopies.

"The evidence does not support that syringes or needles were ever reused from patient to patient at the center," Desai wrote.

A spokeswoman, Nancy Katz, declined Monday to comment further.

The Clark County district attorney is in-

vestigating, as are various health agencies, including the Nevada State Board of Nursing. Several lawsuits already have been filed and a hearing was scheduled for this week before a Nevada legislative committee.

It may never be known how many people contracted hepatitis C because of unsafe practices at the endoscopy center, state health officials said.

Brian Labus, head epidemiologist of the Southern Nevada Health District, said that because 4 percent of the population has hepatitis C, he expects to get numerous positive results after the at-risk clinic patients are tested, and it may be impossible to determine which of those were infected at the clinic.

Of the six cases that health officials did trace to the clinic, five of them happened on

the same day and genetic testing was used to make the connection, Labus said.

Hepatitis C can cause fatal liver disease, as well jaundice and fatigue, but 80 percent of people infected show no symptoms. Hepatitis B is a more rare and serious disease that attacks the liver.

Meanwhile, state health officials are still looking at a second clinic with connections to the first, called Desert Shadow Endoscopy Center. At Desert Shadow, officials had been found to reuse anesthetic vials but not syringes. And, so far, no patients have been notified of potential risk.

That determination could still be made, said Lisa Jones, head of the Nevada State Health Division's bureau of licensure and certification.

## Prison

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crime. They want to be a law-and-order state. But they also want to save money, and they want to be effective."

The report cited Kansas and Texas as states that have acted decisively to slow the growth of their inmate population. They are making greater use of community supervision for low-risk offenders and employing sanctions other than reimprisonment for offenders who commit technical violations of parole and probation rules.

"The new approach, born of bipartisan leadership, is allowing the two states to ensure they have enough prison beds for violent offenders while helping less dangerous lawbreakers become productive, taxpaying citizens," the report said.

While many state governments have shown bipartisan interest in curbing prison growth, there also are persistent calls to proceed cautiously.

"We need to be smarter," said David Muhlhausen, a

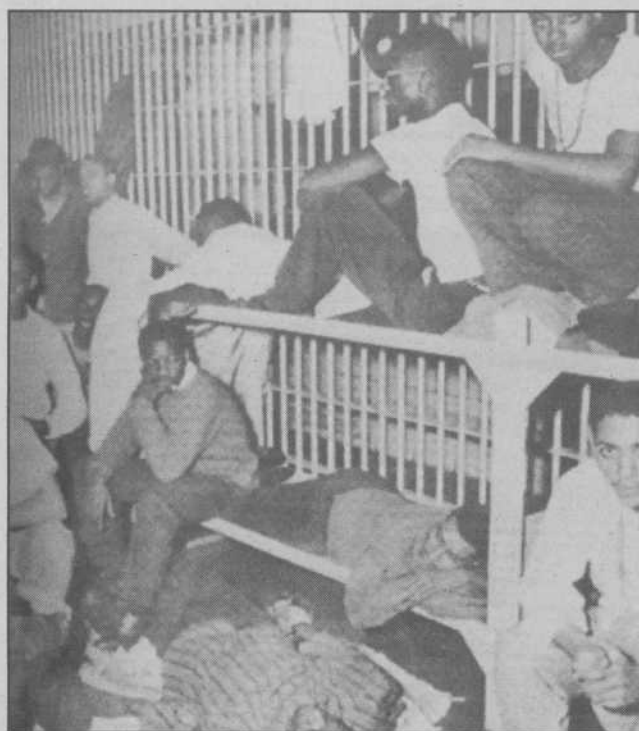
criminal justice expert with the conservative Heritage Foundation. "We're not incarcerating all the people who commit serious crimes. But we're also probably incarcerating people who don't need to be."

According to the report, the inmate population increased last year in 36 states and the federal prison system.

The largest percentage increase — 12 percent — was in Kentucky, where Gov. Steve Beshear highlighted the cost of corrections in his budget speech last month. He noted that the state's crime rate had increased only about 3 percent in the past 30 years, while the state's inmate population has increased by 600 percent.

The report was compiled by the Pew Center's Public Safety Performance Project, which is working with 13 states on developing programs to divert offenders from prison without jeopardizing public safety.

"Getting tough on criminals has gotten tough on tax-



**Many of America's jails and prisons are badly overcrowded.**

payers," said the project's director, Adam Gelb.

According to the report, the average annual cost per prisoner was \$23,876, with Rhode Island spending the most (\$44,860) and Louisiana the least (\$13,009). It said California — which faces a \$16 billion budget shortfall — spent \$8.8 billion

on corrections last year, while Texas, which has slightly more inmates, was a distant second with spending of \$3.3 billion. On average, states spend 6.8 percent of their general fund dollars on corrections, the report said. Oregon had the highest spending rate, at 10.9 percent; Alabama the

lowest at 2.6 percent.

Four states — Vermont, Michigan, Oregon and Connecticut — now spend more on corrections than they do on higher education, the report said.

"These sad facts reflect a very distorted set of national priorities," said Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent from Vermont, referring to the full report. "Perhaps, if we adequately invested in our children and in education, kids who now grow up to be criminals could become productive workers and taxpayers."

The report said prison growth and higher incarceration rates do not reflect an increase in the nation's overall population. Instead, it said, more people are behind bars mainly because of tough sentencing measures, such as "three-strikes" laws, that result in longer prison stays.

"For some groups, the incarceration numbers are especially startling," the report said. "While one in 30 men between the ages of 20 and 34 is behind bars, for Black

males in that age group the figure is one in nine."

The racial disparity for women also is stark. One of every 355 White women aged 35 to 39 is behind bars, compared with one of every 100 Black women in that age group.

The nationwide figures, as of Jan. 1, include 1,596,127 people in state and federal prisons and 723,131 in local jails. That's out of almost 230 million American adults.

The report said the United States incarcerates more people than any other nation, far ahead of more populous China with 1.5 million people behind bars. It said the U.S. also is the leader in inmates per capita (750 per 100,000 people), ahead of Russia (628 per 100,000) and other former Soviet bloc nations which round out the Top 10.

The U.S. also is among the world leaders in capital punishment. According to Amnesty International, its 53 executions in 2006 were exceeded only by China, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq and Sudan.