

# Huckabee Win Over Romney In Iowa Helps Rudy, But...

Rudy Giuliani's latest misstep last week in his bid to win the Republican nomination for president appears to have taken some steam out of his front-running campaign, according to national polls.

In the process, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee has made a sizable leap to place him closest to New York City's former mayor, as Mitt Romney has faded further from the lead in two national polls.

And in Iowa, where the first test for the 2008 election is only 30 days away on January 3, Huckabee has shown an even greater surge, whizzing by Romney to a 5-percentage-point lead in an Iowa poll with Giuliani a distant third.

In the previous *Des Moines Register* poll, Huckabee was 7 points behind Romney, the former Massachusetts governor.

Huckabee's surge to the top in the Hawkeye State is ironic, as far as Giuliani is concerned. When the story about Giuliani's trysts in the Hamptons with his then girlfriend Judith Nathan (now his wife) flared in the newspapers, it looked to us like the worst thing that could happen to Giuliani was for Huckabee to give Romney problems in the Iowa caucuses.

Romney was at that moment, Giuliani's major threat, trailing him in the polls, but with the financial resources to make him a major problem for Giuliani when the early primary phase would be over. Romney victories in Iowa and New Hampshire, and possibly South Carolina, would provide him the momentum that could make him competitive with Giuliani in the major Super Primary Day on February 5 and possibly beyond.

Now this scenario has changed, with Huckabee's emergence as the major force in Iowa. In considering Giuliani's frontrunner status, it was thought that a Huckabee victory over Romney, in a contest where Giuliani has never figured even as a threat, would tarnish Romney's status in New Hampshire and beyond. A Huckabee victory would be something Giuliani could live with. Huckabee was not considered a long-range threat, since he doesn't have the financial resources to press the fight further down the line and the qualities that made him attractive in Iowa wouldn't help so much in later primaries.

So, surveying the GOP field at this moment, a Huckabee victory over Romney in Iowa still helps Giuliani a lot. And Huckabee's advances in national polls should ring alarm bells for Giuliani and Romney because momentum is an amazing thing on an election red letter day for Rudy. But he still is not out of the woods because of some of the baggage from his past that keeps surfacing, such as last week's disclosures and the deadly serious Bernard Kerik matter that may do some serious damage if the worst-case scenario develops from his pending trial.

**WEPRIN'S SAVE OTB PLAN:** Mayor Michael Bloomberg doesn't care whether the Off Track Betting Corporation (OTC) continues or gets phased out, but City Councilmember David Weprin does. He filed a resolution yesterday asking the state legislature to keep the public's bookmaker operating, albeit with some changes.

Presently, the OTB is taking in enough money (\$125 million in 2006) but under the rules Albany set for it, \$98 million went to the racing industry, the state and city and the betting corporation was left \$6 million in debt, Weprin, council Finance Committee chairman, said.

Obviously, the state legislature has to make some changes to correct this situation, and Weprin's suggestion is to have OTB make payouts to the tracks, city and state based on net profits, rather than gross profits, to keep it in the black. We would also suggest sharing a little of the tracks' and state's share, and add a little more for the city. Weprin (D-Hollis) has the support of the 1,700 OTB employees.

## ARE LEGISLATORS IN LINE FOR RAISE?

Governor Eliot Spitzer and the Assembly Democratic majority held their annual year-end get-together last week in Brooklyn. From all accounts, any bruised egos resulting from the governor's stormy first year in office were soothed.

The highlight of the session had to have been the renewed talk about a pay raise for the state legislators. According to one account, the subject came up when one lawmaker asked Spitzer directly whether they would see a pay increase in their salaries soon, to which he reportedly answered that judges, commissioners...and legislators, too all deserve a raise, something he's said before.

Later, according to one report, Spitzer spokesman Errol Cockfield told a reporter that the governor has consistently said he favors a pay raise "in the context of meaningful reform".

Sounds like we're still at the starting line on this issue, with lawmakers' salaries stuck where

they were in 1999, at \$79,500. It could happen, we guess, but there apparently will have to be some give back somewhere—and there's the Senate Republican majority to deal with as well.

**'MOE' WEINSTEIN DEAD AT 95:** Moses (Moe) Weinstein, who had a three-decade-long career as a state Assemblymember and state Supreme Court Justice, during which he also served as acting Assembly Speaker and Queens Democratic Party chairman, died last Friday in Pembroke Pines, Florida at the age of 95, according to the *New York Times*, which said his death was confirmed by his son Jeremy, a state Supreme Court Justice and administrative judge of the civil term in Queens.

Weinstein, an accomplished speaker, served in the Assembly from 1958 to 1969, rising there to Majority Leader and Acting Speaker in 1968. From 1962 to 1969 he served as Queens Democratic chairman. In 1969, he gave up both political positions to run for a seat on the state Supreme Court and won. He later was appointed to an Appellate Division judgeship on that court, retiring in 1989. He was succeeded by Matthew Troy.

Prior to his career in public service, Weinstein served in the U.S. Army infantry and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a graduate of Brooklyn College and Brooklyn Law School and represented Kew Gardens Hills in the Assembly.

**CROWLEY SAYS EVERYONE SHOULD PAY TAXES:** Stating that as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee he will continue to work to end "this practice that effectively results in corporate tax evasion", Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-Queens/The Bronx) said Congress will be addressing the issue of U.S. Corporations moving their headquarters overseas to avoid taxes.

Crowley made the comments upon release of

a Treasury Department report which said this "unfair practice" does not seem to be widespread. The lawmaker said he would continue to work to reduce corporate tax burdens to make the U.S. more competitive and create more jobs and keep U.S. companies on U.S. soil.

**PRAISE FOR MTA:** Councilmember John Liu (D-Flushing), chairman of the council Transportation Committee, is generally critical of the MTA's operations and budget decisions. Last week, however, he praised the agency for instituting new express service on the Number 7 line after weeknight Mets home games last season.

In keeping with the season, Liu also urged the agency to reinstate free rides on New Year's Eve. He said he would like to see the free bus and subway rides usher in 2008, "not necessarily as an MTA holiday token of magnanimity or even as a traffic reduction measure, but as a critical effort to promote public safety and well being".

On another note, Liu and Assemblymember Ellen Young (D), his Flushing colleague, announced they have free tickets available for the premiere of the critically acclaimed documentary film "Nanking".

The free tickets are for the film's opening next Wednesday, December 12 at the Film Forum, 209 West Houston St., Manhattan at 6:15 p.m. That date is the day before the 70th anniversary of the Japanese invasion of the Chinese city of Nanking which set off a killing spree in which 300,000 people died and more than 20,000 rapes of Nanking women were committed. The documentary recounts this story. The viewing is sponsored by the "Alliance In Memory of Victims of the Nanjing massacre".

For tickets, call Young's office at 718-939-0195. Bus service is available from Flushing for those who need transportation assistance.



## Padavan, Community Blast Student Off-Campus Dorm In Jamaica Estates

BY JOHN TOSCANO

Declaring that St. John's University made a reckless decision to start building a student dormitory in the middle of a quiet residential area of Jamaica Estates, state Senator Frank Padavan, joined by others in that community, wants college officials to live up to their reputation of being good neighbors and scrap the project.

The Eastern Queens lawmaker said the six-story, 485-bed, off-campus dorm on quiet Henley Road threatens the quality of life of the entire community.

Padavan said, "From the very beginning I have urged St. John's President Rev. Donald J. Harrington and the [university] Board of Trustees to live up to their self-proclaimed declaration of being a good neighbor and immediately stop building this dorm in the middle of our neighborhood.

"The community is outraged and dismayed by St. John's constant lack of concern for their neighbors."

The veteran lawmaker and an organization known as Concerned Citizens of Jamaica Estates will hold a community meeting next Tuesday "to discuss this seri-

ous problem".

"This meeting is a vitally important opportunity for Jamaica Estates residents to stand up and make their voices heard against St. John's action," Padavan (R-C, Bellerose) stated. "Residents cannot be silent on this issue. We all must stand up and demonstrate our collective outrage at this threat to our community, quality of life and property values."

Specifically, Padavan and his supporters said their objections to the project include:

- Population density on Henley Road with the influx of transient students with no interest in the community.
- Increase in traffic congestion.
- Negatively impacted safety and security of the area.
- Utility overutilization and deteriorating infrastructure.
- Noise pollution and a diminished quality of life for permanent residents of Henley Road and Jamaica Estates.

Padavan said he had previously expressed his deep concern over St. John's placement of the campus dorm on Henley Road.



On numerous occasions, he said, he questioned the motives and secrecy surrounding the planning of the dormitory. In addition, he questioned the school's ability to maintain order at the off-campus building. He said the school's own disciplinary statistics show that on campus over the past three years there have been 735 law violations, 106 drug law violations, 84 burglaries, four forcible sex offenses and one case of arson.