

Iowa Caucuses: It wasn't really a Democratic vote

by Kathy Burdman

President Carter's much touted 59 percent landslide in Jan. 21 Iowa presidential primary caucuses is a fraud, charged stunned independent Iowa Democrats. "Twenty-five percent of those voting weren't even registered Democrats—most of them were Republicans!" said one irate uncommitted Democratic leader. Carter used "threats and money," he charged, to "pack in thousands who had never been to a caucus before. This is not a Democratic vote."

As a direct result of Carter's "packing," over 100,000 turned out for the vote, almost triple the 1976 Iowa Democratic turnout of 38,000, the number of real active Democrats in the state. As a result, the "uncommitted" vote, which Democrats state-wide had projected would reach some 30 percent sending a message to Carter, Edward Kennedy and Jerry Brown that their policies are all equally incompetent policies, was reduced to 10 percent. Senator Edward Kennedy got the rest of the vote, 31 percent, for a 2 to 1 win for Carter.

Further, the results themselves were in effect decided beforehand by the Aspen Institute's 1980s Presidential Task Force. Member Walter Cronkite of CBS News, as well as NBC and ABC national television news, declared Carter and Republican upset winner George Bush the victors two months before the caucuses. For weeks, Iowa voters and the nation at large were barraged daily with Cronkite and the other network coverage of "Campaign '80: Iowa Showdown," as CBS headlined its nightly news. This free "paid political advertising" for Carter and Bush also blacked out the more significant New

The Iowa results (percent of total vote)

Democratic delegate selection

Jimmy Carter	59
Edward Kennedy	31
Uncommitted	10

Republican straw poll

George Bush	33
Ronald Reagan	27
Howard Baker	14
John Connally	10
Phil Crane	7
John Anderson	4
Robert Dole	2
Other/uncommitted	3

Hampshire primary election campaign.

"If Carter's packing action in Iowa is repeated in New Hampshire and he is nominated, it will have one effect—to throw the election to the Republicans," the Iowa source said.

Is Carter really a Republican?

Cheryl Binger, Democratic chairman of Humboldt County in Iowa's 6th congressional district, has already had filed with her a formal complaint, which she in turn filed with Democratic State Committee Executive Director John Law in Des Moines. The complaint charges that after packing the caucuses, the Carter campaign then threw away the Iowa party's rules. "The Iowa Democratic Delegate Selection Plan clearly states, for example, that caucus delegate candidates 'must receive a majority to be elected'," said a source close to Ms. Binger. "But in many of the Carter caucuses—within Carter caucuses—Carter delegates were elected with less than 30 percent of the Carter vote. These people weren't Democrats. They had no notion of the rules of an Iowa Democratic caucus."

Sources also reported Carter had "a tremendous amount of money to throw around." Indeed, the press has widely noted that Carter spent some \$400,000 for the 1980 Iowa caucuses—more than 10 times what he spent there in 1976.

Vastly aiding the Carter "landslide" and the Bush upset was a concerted national television network media

The Democratic vote by number of delegates equivalent

(Six Congressional Districts and their key counties)

CD/county	Precincts	Carter	Kennedy	Uncommitted	Percent Uncommitted	Carter: Kennedy
1st CD*	324	294	141	35	7.5	2.1:1
2nd CD	338	295	118.5	49	9.2	1.6:1
3rd CD	445	298	158	51	10.1	1.9:1
Black Hawk		80	54	12	8.2	1.5:1
Wright		12	4	1.8	10	3:1
Hamilton		15	4	1	5	3.8:1
4th CD**	334	321	207	47	8.2	1.5:1
5th CD	535	325	150	55	10.4	2.2:1
Boone		21	8	3	10	2.6:1
Greene		9	4	2	13	2.3:1
6th CD	369	296	121	58	12.2	2.5:1
Humboldt		6	1.5	7.2	48	4:1
Calhoun		11	2	2	13.3	5.5:1
Kesmuth		16	5	4	16	3.2:1
Webster		41	15	3	5	2.7:1
CD TOTAL	2,345	1,829	965	295	10	1.9:1

The above chart is based on one-third of the returns in. Delegate equivalent is the number of delegates elected in the precincts toward the county and then the state caucuses.

* Quad Cities
** Des Moines

campaign on behalf of both. "We were just swamped with the media out here—Iowa had never had any publicity before. Then Walter Cronkite set up shop here and told us Iowa was the center of the universe. So people said, 'hey—let's go to those caucuses and find out what they are,'" said another uncommitted Democrat from Des Moines.

Democratic regulars explained that one of the reasons the caucus rules are so vague as to who can vote is that no one but party activists have ever bothered showing up for a caucus before this year's media blitz.

And Cronkite and his peers concentrated on heavy coverage of Carter and Bush—so heavy that while rivals like John Connally spent up to \$200,000 on television and radio time in Iowa. Carter and Bush barely bothered to spend \$70,000 each, out of their total state budgets of some \$400,000. They didn't have to spend money—

Cronkite did the job for them. The money saved, the *New York Times* reported, was spent on "grass roots support"—buying votes.

In fact, Carter's puffed-up 100,000 "Democratic" caucus turnout was planned on in advance by the networks. While most national and local press were predicting a highest turnout of 60,000 for the Democratic caucuses (compared to 38,000 in 1976), the *Des Moines Register*—Iowa's largest daily—had the 100,000 figure predicted a month in advance. The *Register* is well known as a collaborator of Cronkite's and the other network newsmen, for whom the *Register* tried to rig a controlled presidential TV debate last month. The *Register's* influential political columnist, James Flansburg, participated actively in packing the caucuses, by switching "suddenly" from Kennedy to Carter during the last week of the primary and advising his readers to do the same.

An unsurprising victory

What the media has dubbed George Bush's surprising victory in the Iowa Republican Caucus this week should not have surprised anyone.

Knowledgeable political observers have informed us that three factors played a crucial role in Bush's performance. Bush and his campaign workers spent more than six months putting together an impressive on the ground organization in Iowa. It was the type of organization that could deliver votes, pouring over phone lists, bringing people to the more than 2500 caucuses the night of Jan. 21. As impressive as this operation was, it is not the key factor. It was merely the delivery arm of a larger operation.

Bush's people say that they didn't spend that much money on media in Iowa, that their budget was a modest sum well under \$100,000. But our sources say that the single most significant factor in the Bush "victory" was the media. Over the course of the last eight weeks, Bush has been rocketed into national prominence by a combination of coverage in major national media outlets, wire-services, television, etc. This media blitz, which succeeded in making the candidate's name a household word in Iowa as well as other parts of the country, culminated in a nationally televised interview on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation" the day before the caucus. With this "free advertising," Bush people could afford to spend money for what are called "walk around" expenses to turn out the vote. While an exact accounting has yet to be done of such expenditures, sources say that Bush spent more than \$200,000 in that fashion.

Bush's people talk about their campaign "peaking at the right time," and are quick to belittle any talk about their being some kind of conspiracy in the press to push the candidacy of former Council on Foreign Relations member Bush. But the facts speak louder than their denials. The media coverage of Bush gave him the ideal image—the underdog who can make it. "I admit that I generally couldn't have written better copy myself," said a Bush aide in Iowa about his candidate's coverage. And no one at Bush headquarters could explain why their battle plan for Iowa never called for spending major money for *paid* media time to give Bush, an unknown when the plan was written, name recognition.

Another key factor in the Bush success story was the ineptitude of the campaigns of his opponents. Ronald Reagan, the former California governor and erstwhile Republican front-runner, is clearly being directed to lose. Reagan was all but kept out of active campaigning by his manager, John Sears. It was Sears who told Reagan to stay away from the *Des Moines Register's* candidates debate two weeks ago and it was Sears who looked like the fool the night of the caucuses. As the returns poured in

showing that Bush was beating Reagan in every corner of the state, Sears was heard saying that "when the late results come in, we'll be on top."

The irony is that George Bush, the pride of the liberal Eastern CFR establishment, couldn't win a real election in Iowa. Polls show that 48 hours before the caucuses, Bush had the support of about 6 percent of the total Iowa electorate.

'Jimmy Carter packed those caucuses...'

The following is an assessment of the Carter "landslide" in the Jan. 21 Iowa Democratic primary caucuses, given by a 20-year leader of the Iowa Democratic Party who is a leading spokesman for the uncommitted voters there.

Q: How do you explain the completely unpredicted Carter vote, in light of the fact that most of the press toward the end of the caucus campaign was being forced to report what everyone in Iowa knew: that some 30 percent of the voters were likely to go uncommitted, rejecting the policies of Carter, Brown, and Kennedy? Some said the "uncommitted" might win the primary...

A: Carter packed those caucuses with threats and money. He had a tremendous amount of money to throw around.

The biggest group Carter packed in were retired people over 65—in one caucus in our county where 20 people voted in 1976, 70 showed up yesterday—and 50 of them were elderly. Many of them were Republicans, the rest not registered. Carter's people threatened them that if they didn't come out and vote for the President, they'd lose their Social Security checks. Then Carter workers sent the cars to round them up. When they got into the caucuses, they didn't even know where they were. They didn't even know who the county chairman was; they'd never been to a caucus before.

This means that party regulars were even defeated as delegates by people who had never even been to a caucus. Carter ran these outside people as delegates—he now has delegates who aren't even Democrats!

We have to make a national issue out of this: Is Carter really a Republican? This is not a real Democratic vote. The Republicans elected him.

West Iowa county chairmen are now polling their precincts to determine exactly the percentage of non-Democrats who voted Carter delegates last night. Although the Iowa caucus law is vague with regard to who may vote, they intend to appeal this obvious gross misuse of the caucuses to the Democratic State Committee.