

**DREARY**

Cloudy today with highs in the mid-40s; steady showers tonight.  
Forecast, B6

# The Providence Journal

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**TUESDAY**  
FEBRUARY 5, 2008

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## Panel faults staffing deal

A committee says Governor Carcieri's awarding of a contract to a staffing firm undermines the open bidding process; the governor's office says such deals have saved the state millions.

BY KATHERINE GREGG  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — After a months-long inquiry last winter, the Senate Government Operations Committee yesterday issued a report slamming the Carcieri administration for giving a state staffing contract worth up to \$11 million annually to a fledgling company under terms — offered no other potential bidders — that amounted to an “interest-free loan” from the state.

In its final report, the committee chaired by Sen. J. Michael Lenihan, D-East Greenwich, posed this question: “At what point do pervasive errors and omissions of state officials constitute incompetence and a blatant disregard for statutory process?”

The answer: “At this time, the committee cannot make a determination as to whether the incompetence was due to ignorance, or arrogant and willful violation of the law. However, the committee is certain that the public deserves better.”

Among the key findings: The executive branch “inhibited” the Senate inquiry, “violated the spirit of the Access to Public Records Act” by withholding requested documents; and under-

SEE STAFFING, A5

## Students showing progress on tests

Most districts across the state display gains on standardized tests given to elementary and middle school students.

BY JENNIFER D. JORDAN  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Rhode Island elementary and middle school students have improved on state tests — a clear sign of sustained progress, according to state officials who announced the scores yesterday.

Sixty-five percent of students scored proficient in reading, a 3-percentage point gain, and 54 percent were proficient in math, a gain of 1 point on the tests, which were taken in October.

Most school districts showed gains, most notably in four urban areas — Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket — and at five of the state's charter schools. In addition, different groups of students — white, Hispanic, black, Asian, Native Amer-

SEE TESTS, A6

### CAMPAIGN 2008 SUPER TUESDAY

# A big day for delegates



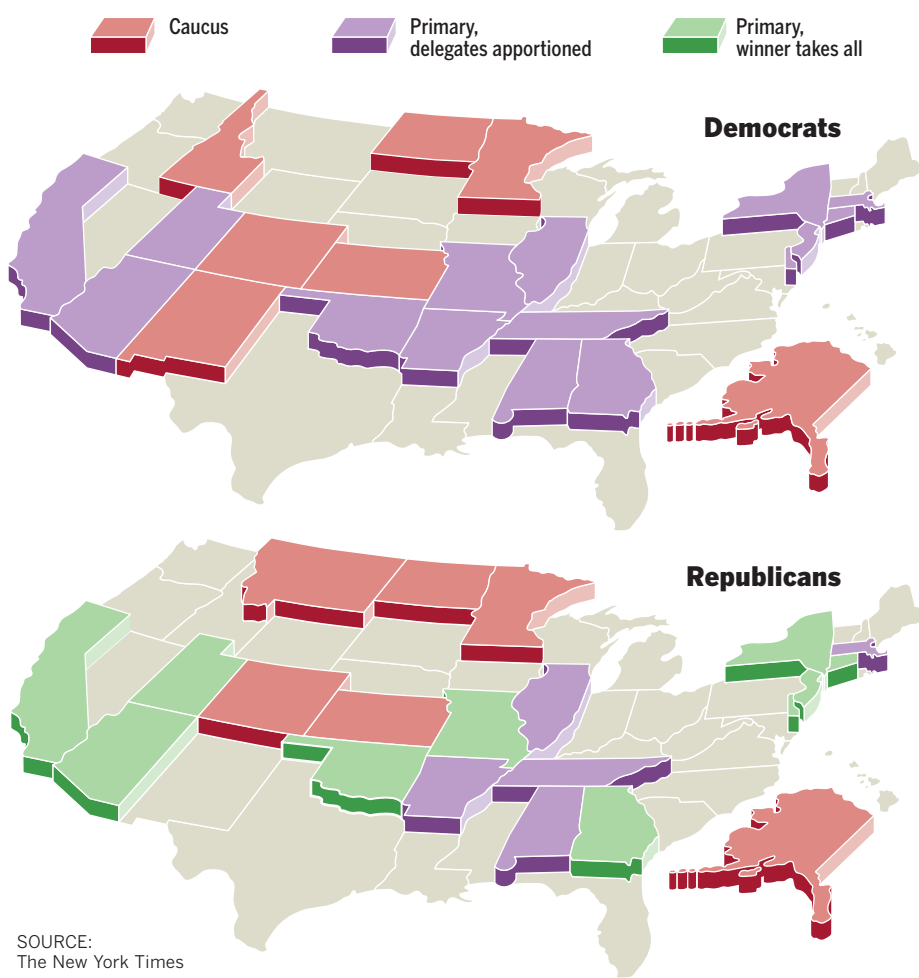
**DEMOCRATS SO FAR**  
Obama 34, Clinton 21 \*  
2,025 delegates needed to win nomination  
1,678 pledged delegates at stake today

**REPUBLICANS SO FAR**  
McCain 89, Romney 27, Huckabee 7 \*  
1,191 delegates needed to win nomination  
1,002 pledged delegates at stake today

Today, voters in 23 states will choose delegates to nominate a presidential candidate at their respective political party's national convention. Democratic delegates are awarded proportionally by congressional district based on the number of votes each candidate receives. Republican delegates are often awarded on a winner-take-all basis based on the statewide vote.

The table below shows how many delegates are at stake in each state, how many are apportioned statewide or by district and how many are not committed to any candidate on the first ballot of the convention.

\* Delegates formally pledged to their respective candidate.



SOURCE:  
The New York Times

State	Democrats				Republicans			
	Total delegates	Statewide	By district	Uncommitted	Total delegates	Statewide	By district	Uncommitted
California	441	129	241	71	173	11	159	3
New York	281	81	151	49	101	101	0	0
Illinois	185	53	100	32	70	0	57	13
New Jersey	127	37	70	20	52	52	0	0
Massachusetts	121	32	61	28	43	10	30	3
Georgia	103	30	57	16	72	33	39	0
Minnesota	88	25	47	16	41	14	24	3
Missouri	88	25	47	16	58	58	0	0
Tennessee	85	24	44	17	55	25	27	3
Colorado	71	19	36	16	46	22	21	3
Arizona	67	19	37	11	53	50	0	3
Alabama	60	18	34	8	48	24	21	3
Connecticut	60	17	31	12	30	27	0	3
Arkansas	47	13	22	12	34	19	12	3
Oklahoma	47	13	25	9	41	23	15	3
Kansas	41	11	21	9	-	-	-	-
New Mexico	38	9	17	12	-	-	-	-
Utah	29	8	15	6	36	36	0	0
Delaware	23	5	10	8	18	18	0	0
Idaho	23	6	12	5	-	-	-	-
North Dakota	21	5	8	8	26	23	0	3
Alaska	18	5	8	5	29	0	26	3
Montana	-	-	-	-	25	25	0	0

## Here's what to watch for in today's primary votes

BY ADAM NAGOURNEY  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brace yourself.

Forty-four presidential nominating contests in 23 states. Channel upon channel of commentators talking about exit polls. The biggest prize of the night — California — being decided well after most viewers have headed for bed. Thousands of party delegates allocated under arcane rules on what could be the most significant night of the 2008 campaign to date.

This is a guide of things to look for tonight — key states, trends, interesting demographic developments, campaign-ending or -extending developments — starting from when the first polls close (Georgia at 7 p.m.) to when the voting is completed in California at 11 p.m. Eastern time.

■ **The big picture:** There are two ways to approach the results. The first is old-fashioned; which candidates rack up the most states. But this is about more than popular vote totals; the point of these contests is to allocate delegates to the national conventions.

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Extra: For live updates and video throughout today's primaries, go to projo.com

Thus, the big question is how much attention to pay to the results map on television — lighted up with, say, states that have swung to Sen. John McCain's column — and how much attention to pay to the delegate counter. The answer is pay attention to both, though put somewhat more focus on states for the Republicans and put somewhat more on delegates for the Democrats. The delegate

count might matter more officially, but the state results could count more politically, and that will be the central tension of the night.

Democrats allocate most of their delegates proportionately; candidates are awarded a cut of the delegate pie based on their percentage of the vote. It is likely that the losing candidate will still get a substantial share of the delegates.

Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton will no doubt start claiming state victories as soon as they can — with the goal of trying to get on television and grab the front-runner spotlight — but those results will probably remain largely symbolic. Assuming the race remains close, what matters going for-

SEE PRIMARIES, A9

## Court system to hand over \$800,000 to help state budget woes

The money comes from the Superior Court arbitration program — an alternative to proceeding with a lawsuit.

BY EDWARD FITZPATRICK  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — With state government facing a big budget deficit, the Rhode Island judiciary is turning over about \$800,000 in arbitration fees that have been accumulating for more than a

dozen years.

The court system says its new finance director, Darlene Leyden Walsh, recently reviewed all judiciary accounts, including one that contains about \$950,000 from the Superior Court arbitration program, and court administrators now plan to hand about \$800,000 of that total to the state treasury.

“The judiciary has done and will continue to do its part to help the state out of its financial predicament,” State Court Administrator J. Joseph Baxter Jr. said in

a news release issued Friday.

But there's more to the story. When contacted Saturday, the judiciary's former finance director said he brought the arbitration fees and other escrow accounts to Baxter's attention several years ago, and he said he got nowhere in his push for a computerized financial management system that would better account for these types of funds.

“I commend them for helping the state out,” said Robert A. Sieczkiewicz, who was finance director from 2001 until he

retired in December 2006. “However, I would offer one caveat: They may find once the current CFO [chief financial officer] reconciles all accounts, including the bail account and the central registry account, she may have to go back to the state and ask for that money back.”

Sieczkiewicz said those arbitration funds were never reconciled, meaning there was never a full accounting of receipts and disbursements — a common

SEE COURTS, B3



### INSIDE TODAY

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### GOING UP

The record \$3.1-trillion budget proposed by President Bush would also increase the size of the federal deficit to more than \$400 billion this year. **A8**

### MAKE MINE MEDIEVAL

For members of the Rhode Island chapter of the Society for Creative Anachronism, the good old days were the 14th and 15th centuries. **F1**

### TERROR RETURNS TO ISRAEL

A Palestinian suicide bomber blows himself up at a shopping center in a southern desert town, killing an Israeli woman and wounding 11 others in the first such attack in a year. **A2**

### PARADE ON HOLD



It wasn't the homecoming the Patriots were hoping for, but their fans still turn out at Gillette Stadium to welcome them back from Super Bowl XLII. **C1**