

The Hotline

May 7, 2012 Monday

Please, Just Listen Already!

Ex-FL Gov. **Jeb Bush** (R) "reiterated that he will not be" ex-MA Gov. **Mitt Romney's** (R) VP choice. Bush, just before keynoting the Ave Maria Univ. graduation: "I'm not going to be vice president. It's not time for me to be doing this. I'm going to focus on my family. ... I'll ask him to seriously consider Marco Rubio" (**Wozniak**, Fort Myers **News-Press**, 5/5).

Christie: Not Just Another Pretty Face

At the biannual dinner for Washington's **Cato Institute** on May 4, NJ Gov. **Chris Christie** (R) "told the crowd it was the duty of lawmakers to tell the truth about the nation's economic problems, or risk lengthening the fiscal fall out." He "said he was 'not looking to be loved' in his state" (**Larotonda**, ABC News, 5/5).

National Review's Costa writes that sources "Close to Christie acknowledge" that he "doesn't mind" the VP speculation. But they're "mixed on whether he would eventually sour on staying on-message, all the time" (5/7).

Martinez: Stop It, That Hurts!

The NM GOP on May 3 "filed a complaint" with the FEC "accusing Independent Source PAC of fraudulently reporting ads attacking" NM Gov. **Susana Martinez** (R) "as being ads" that support Pres. **Obama's** "re-election." ISPAC dir. **Mike Corwin**: "I'm not in any way worried about it. We have more than enough documentation to show that we're right."

Independent Source PAC "says its anti-Martinez ads benefited the Obama campaign by helping to diminish Martinez's chances" of becoming a GOP VP contender. GOPers "also accused Independent Source PAC of failing to file certain FEC documents required within 48 hours of an independent expenditure" (**Monteleone**, **Albuquerque Journal**, 5/5).

McDonnell: Anything For Love

VA Gov. **Bob McDonnell** (R) is embarking on a "six-day" statewide "Virginia: Growing Strong" tour beginning on May 7 as "official state travel, officially undertaken to call attention to all that's right" about VA. It "also calls attention to the term-limited McDonnell in a campaign-tour" kind of way (**Vozzella**, "Virginia Politics", **Washington Post**, 5/4).

His "cabinet officers" will join him (**Sluss**, "Blue Ridge Caucus", **Roanoke Times**, 5/4). VA Dems spokesperson **Brian Coy**: "[H]e shouldn't be asking taxpayers to pay for his 'Pick me!' vanity tour" (**Meola**, **Richmond Times-Dispatch**, 5/4).

Portman: How Delightful

"Romney may get yet another opportunity to give" Sen. **Rob Portman** (R-OH) an "in-person audition" on May 7. Romney will hold a town hall in Cleveland, at 1:50 p.m. "Normally, Portman would be heading back to Washington around that time for a week of legislative business," but Portman "is hoping to attend. His staff is trying to see if he can make that event and still get" to DC in time for Senate votes (**Shesgreen**, "Politics Extra," **Cincinnati Enquirer**, 5/4).

"Portman, who was in Cincinnati to introduce" **Steve Forbes** at a business luncheon, "met with local reporters for about 15 minutes and wasted no time laying in" to Pres. Obama. "He repeated standard Romney campaign lines about debt and big government, and he touted" Romney "as a man who knows how to fire up America's economic engine." Portman: "We're fortunate enough to have someone running for president like Mitt Romney ... I'm delighted Mitt Romney is our candidate."

Portman, on VP: "I'm happy where I am. ... There are a lot of good choices."

Portman, on whether he's enjoying the attention and speculation: "It's been mixed" (**Weiser**, "Politics Extra," **Cincinnati Enquirer**, 5/4).

Rubio: Rubio Cube

Miami Herald's Oppenheimer writes, Sen. **Marco Rubio** (R-FL) "is trying to rebrand himself from a right-wing Cuban-American politician to a center-right Hispanic one. ... Rubio is a smart, charming and smooth politician who has embraced horrendous positions on immigration and other issues in the past. Now, he is trying to become a Hispanic politician with national appeal who can help Romney solve his problem with Latino voters, and is shifting somewhat to the center. That's great. But before I conclude that I like the new Rubio much better, I would like to see whether - in addition to using a more compassionate rhetoric on immigration - he can sway a significant number of Republicans into voting for a meaningful Dream Act bill. If he can break the current congressional deadlock on immigration, Rubio will be much more than a charmer" (5/6).

Rubio responded to the idea "as a conservative Cuban-American, he might not appeal to a broader Hispanic population"

Rubio: "I've never said that me or anybody's last name ends in a vowel automatically guarantees anything. I've never claimed that and, more importantly, I would say that's borderline offensive."

More Rubio: "Dividing Cubans against the rest of the Hispanic community is not only absurd, it's offensive. I mean, my wife's not Cuban; her family's not Cuban. My point is, my neighbors, my family members - I have family members that are not from Cuba. I mean, Jeanette's family is now my family. I'm surrounded by neighbors, friends, co-workers. I mean, I don't live in a bubble, especially in Miami, where we've got people from all over Latin America that are our neighbors, our friends, go to school with our kids. I mean, I've lived that experience. And growing up in Las Vegas around Mexican-American kids, that's just - particularly Miami, that's just silly. This is as pan-American as any community in the world" (**Romano, Politico**, 5/6).

The Atlantic's Graham writes, on Rubio's possibility being a VP, "Overlooked in this is Rubio's big Achilles' heel: his record. Not his legislative record ... but his political

and lifestyle ones. Those areas will give opponents plenty to work with. There's no single smoking gun -- the lone revelation that would make him unviable. Instead, his record raises a series of smaller questions that would add up to many potential headaches for a campaign headed into a tough election against an incumbent president."

Graham, after listing issues, "None of these publicly known scandals has stopped his impressive and fast rise. But collectively, they would pose a threat to Romney's core argument: that he would be a steady, competent, fiscally responsible hand on the tiller of the economy. Choosing a running mate with a history of sloppy disclosures and financial slip-ups would have much the same effect as when **John McCain** undercut his argument about Barack Obama's lack of experience on foreign policy by choosing **Sarah Palin** as his running mate" (5/4).

Snyder: What Was That Again?

MLive's **Skubick** writes that MI Gov. **Rick Snyder's** (R) admin "likes all the speculation and figures it's good for the state's image nationwide. After all every time somebody writes about" Snyder on the ticket "they also toss in how well he has done turning around" MI's "lousy economy. You can't buy that kind of positive ink. So when the governor was given a chance to end the speculation, he did little to kill the Golden P.R. Goose."

Snyder, on if he's interested in being VP: "I'm happy being governor of Michigan." Snyder, asked again: "Well again, I just don't want to fuel speculation. I'm focused on being the governor." Snyder, asked again: "Well I'm going to just stick with saying I'm happy with being governor of Michigan." Snyder, when pointed out that the media would interpret those evasive answers as proof that the door is open: "I'm just very happy and comfortable being the governor of Michigan."

Snyder "wants to keep the speculation going as he milks it for all it is worth - not because he wants personal attention but because he thinks it is good for the state. And if per chance he were to get the V.P. call, he is not interested. He won't say that, but take it to the bank" (5/7).

And The TV Dais

Sen. **Kelly Ayotte** (R-NH) was on NBC's "Meet the Press," 5/6.

Ayotte, to NBC's **David Gregory**: "It's honor to be-- an honor to be mentioned in that vein. But my focus is on serving New Hampshire. And there's so many good candidates out there that Governor Romney has to choose from. You mentioned some of them: Senator Rubio, Senator Portman in Ohio. So he's got a lot of great choices."

Ayotte: "I think the message he has to send, first of all, is he comfortable with that individual? Is that person ready to serve as President of the United States? And what does that person bring to the ticket in terms of not only geography, but in terms of their qualifications and their knowledge of the issues."

Ayotte, on if she's ready to be president: "I'll tell you this. I have great experience as attorney general of the state. I'm very proud of that experience. And I would say I have, some would say, better experience than Barack Obama had when he was a

Senator and ran, having been the chief law enforcement officer of my state. I serve on the Senate Armed Services Committee. But again, what it comes down to for me, it's serving New Hampshire" (NBC, 5/6).

Rubio was on FNC's "Fox News Sunday," 5/6.

Rubio, on Obama: "This president asked us to hire him four years ago on the promise that he knew how to fix this economy and that he would be different, that he would unite this country. That's the standard we should judge him by, the standard that he set."

More Rubio: "The economy is worse off. The debt is \$5 trillion higher and he's become increasingly divisive. In fact, this president's rhetoric today quite frankly is just like anybody else in Washington. All of the things that made him different and special four years ago are gone, and now, all he does is run dividing Americans against each other, obviously, because he can't run on his record."

Rubio, on Romney wanting 500K a month jobs created and 4% unemployment even though it's only happened 2 times in 20 years: "first of all, we want a president with high expectations. We want a president that understands that the way things are now are not acceptable and that we have to make them better."

More Rubio: "Second, I think the steeper your fall has been, in essence, the steeper recession is, the faster and the sharper the recovery should be. And I think that's what Governor Mitt Romney is talking about, and rightfully so. ... I'm glad that we have a nominee who has high expectations for the American economy because the American people have high expectations for the American economy."

Rubio, on if Romney overreacted in the Chinese diplomatic crisis: "No, I don't think so. First of all, I think this crisis is a reminder of what we are dealing with in China. And we hope that there are reformers in that government that are pushing for a more open system. But what we know for a fact we are dealing with now are people that are paranoid and are control freaks and a totalitarian system. I mean, they control everything from the words you can search on the Internet, to who gets to visit when he was in jail -- I'm sorry, in the hospital. And so, these are the things that we are dealing with. This is a reminder of that."

More Rubio: "Secondly, there's this propensity that this administration seems to have of an unwillingness to forcefully assert America's values. We've seen that in a number of occasions."

Rubio: "**Joe Biden's** record on foreign policy is one of being wrong on everything that he's ever advised or everything he's ever asked for -- from dividing Iraq, to admittedly telling the president not to go in and do this operation."

Rubio, on ex-Romney spokesperson **Richard Grenell**: "Mr. Grenell, who I don't know him, nor the circumstances of his hiring -- but my understanding is that he had left the campaign on his own volition. That it was his decision to leave the campaign. ... I think the campaign has responded to that, and certainly, I'm sure they would respond to you if you ask them on it. I'm just not familiar with it."

Rubio: "I don't know anything about a contraception debate. I keep hearing about that."

Rubio: "I'm not going to discuss the vice presidency. I'm not going to -- Governor Romney has a process in place. And I'm going to respect that. I'm more than happy to tell you I am qualified to serve in the United States Senate, however, and that people can take from that what they want. Obviously, I have a experience first of all at local government where I served a year and a half. Then I served in state government for nine years. Eight of those nine years in leadership, I was majority whip, a majority leader, the speaker designate on the Florida House, and then I was the speaker of the Florida House for two year. I have now served a year and a half, close to a year and a half in the United States Senate.

More Rubio: "So, that's my record. I mean, I'm certainly not the most experienced person in Washington DC. But by the same token, I certainly have experience in serving in government and particularly in the legislative branch in one of the largest states and more complex states in the country in terms of public policy. And the good news is that every day that goes by, I gain more experience on those things."

Rubio, on if Romney can overcome the gap in Hispanic vote: "There is no such thing as the Hispanic vote. I mean, it's as diverse as the country is. I'll give you an example. My cousin is the Democratic leader of the state Senate in Nevada. And yet we come from the same family, same background, same shared experience. So, some of it depends on where you grew up and where you live and what the politics of the place you live in is" (FNC, 5/6).

DCCC chair **Steve Israel**, when asked if Romney should choose SC Gov. **Nikki Haley** (R) to be VP: "I'm not never convinced who you pick for Vice President is going to win or lose an election. People vote based on what you're going to do for them and who you're for. This is going to be a choice between a candidate who wants to embrace the same policies that put us into this recession and lost jobs or a president who inherited this mess who built our way out of this recovery. Notwithstanding whoever the vice presidential candidate is on a Republican side" ("Starting Point," CNN, 5/7).

Ex-House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** (R), on whether he'd consider being VP: "Oh, I can't imagine it. You've known me for years. Would you pick me to be number two?"

Gingrich: "I think Romney is going to look for somebody who is younger. I think he's got somebody like Kelly Ayotte in New Hampshire, Rob Portman, Marco Rubio. You look at a Susana Martinez, **Bobby Jindal**, or you look at somebody like (IN Gov.) **Mitch Daniels** (R). We have a really -- we have a big, deep bench now" ("State of the Union," CNN, 5/6).

Gingrich: "Would you pick me to be the vice presidential nominee? I mean I am so much my own agent there would be -- I mean, it's inconceivable" ("Face the Nation," CBS, 5/6).

Ex-OH Gov. **Ted Strickland** (D): "Rob Portman I described as a very conservative guy with wonderfully good manners, but I don't think he has the kind of standing throughout Ohio that would guarantee that he would carry the day for Mitt Romney" ("State of the Union," CNN, 5/6).

McCain, on what Romney should look for in a VP: "I think it's a person that he knows he could trust. ... The absolute, most important aspect is, if something happened to

him, would that person be well qualified to take that place? I happen to believe that was the primary factor in my decision in 2008. And I know it will be Mitt's. And I'm very happy to say, we've got a very deep bench" ("This Week," ABC, 5/6).