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Mattox predicts probe into petition scandal

AUSTIN (AP) — Attorney General Jim Mattox predicted Thursday that a Harris County grand jury likely would begin looking at the Republican Party's presidential petition scandal soon.

Mattox, a Democrat, also contended that the GOP's decision to allow all six major presidential candidates to be eligible for national convention delegates raises questions about the validity of the party's primary process.

"It kind of goes back to what we had in Watergate, if you recall — 'all's fair in politics' — when it's not all fair in politics. . . . They've got themselves in a real quagmire, and it's difficult to try to resolve that problem," Mattox said.

"In all likelihood, some of these matters will be presented relatively shortly to a Harris County grand jury by the district attorney's office," Mattox added.

Casey O'Brien, the assistant prosecutor handling the case, in a phone interview from Houston, declined to

predict whether a grand jury would be used.

"There may be a misconception that a grand jury comes to play only when we are presenting it for indictment," O'Brien said. "For prosecutors, oftentimes it can be a useful tool for investigation. That's not to lead you to believe that a grand jury will be involved in any fashion."

The district attorney and FBI have been investigating the GOP petitions since news reports uncovered alleged forgeries on petitions filed by four candidates — Alexander Haig, Kansas Sen. Robert Dole, New York Rep. Jack Kemp and former Delaware Gov. Pete du Pont.

The party certified two other candidates for the March 8 primary ballot — Vice President George Bush and former television evangelist Pat Robertson.

But GOP Chairman George Strake said it had become "impossible" to verify signatures on the other four petitions, and the party declared that all six were eligible for a

share of Texas' 111 GOP convention delegates.

Mattox criticized that decision. "The Republican chairman's action has brought into question the validity of the entire balloting process in Texas for the Republican Party," Mattox told a news conference.

"When you do not abide by the law or the rules of the party, well, then of course you have those kinds of things happen," he said. "I think that the Republican Party's created a mess for themselves because of what has taken place."

Responding, the Republican chairman disagreed, saying the decision was designed to let voters have the final say on all candidates.

"I find it strange that the self-styled 'people's lawyer' disagrees with our decision to let the people make their own judgment," Strake said. "We appreciate the interest of the Democratic attorney general, but the Republican Party continues to believe our decision was the only just

and fair decision for the voters of Texas."

Mattox also said GOP officials had not been cooperating with his office.

"They have not been willing to let us look at those (petitions), although they have allowed a great number of you (news reporters) to look at them," he said.

Mattox said it now appears the FBI "is moving out of the case because they have not found serious federal violations." However, he said there appear to have been a number of violations of state law.

In another development, the *Houston Chronicle* on Thursday reported that Kevin Burnette, president of Southern Political Consulting, said the firm had no plans to reimburse the three candidates for whom it gathered signatures.

Burnette also said the biggest mistake his company made was accepting the job in the first place.

"If only life had a rewind button," Burnette told the newspaper. "This whole thing was flawed from the start. Looking back, I wish we wouldn't have touched any of them."

Hart disclaims improper funds from supporters

Gary Hart said "no, no, it's not true" on Thursday to fresh allegations of financial irregularities in his presidential bids, as Republican contenders Jack Kemp and Pete du Pont clashed over Social Security.

In a campaign fast approaching the boiling point, Democrat Richard Gephardt also accused Paul Simon of being "an ideologue," and Simon retorted that "too many in our party have bought into the Republican mindset."

The intensity reflected the approaching Iowa caucuses on Feb. 8 and the New Hampshire primary eight days later, events that will force some contenders out of the race while strengthening others for the primaries and caucuses to follow.

Hart sought to turn attention from the allegations as he toured New Hampshire. But he was dogged by reporters asking about

former aides' statements that supporters had made unreported in-kind contributions in the 1984 and 1988 campaigns and that businesses had provided services without being paid.

He resumed the race last month after dropping out last spring when questions were raised about his relationship with Donna Rice. Hart pledged on Wednesday to investigate one set of allegations — reports that video producer Stuart Karl may have improperly bankrolled Hart's two presidential campaigns.

Du Pont, sharing a stage with Kemp in Manchester, N.H., renewed his call for permitting younger workers to establish private IRA accounts instead of receiving Social Security.

Kemp, who opposes changes in the current system, said that was a "gloom and doom" view of the future.



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Students gather to browse and shop among dozens of boxes of used music books during her lunch break from her job for Texas A&M payroll.

Israeli officials ease curfews on Palestinians

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel eased curfews on some Gaza Strip refugee camps so Palestinians could go to work Thursday, and assigned more police to an Israeli highway where Arabs threw firebombs at a school bus.

The bombs missed the bus and did not explode.

A strike by merchants continued to paralyze Arab east Jerusalem. Riot police with truncheons patrolled the streets.

A visiting Red Cross official said there appeared to be no critical food shortages in refugee camps under curfew, which supported the Israeli position. U.N. officials who administer the camps in the occupied territories challenged his statement.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to have soldiers beat protesters instead of firing on them brought this comment from the State Department: "We are disturbed by the adoption of a policy by the government of Israel that calls for beatings as a means to restore or maintain order."

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt said he has a new plan for advancing Arab-Israeli peace efforts, which he is expected to discuss with President Reagan at a meeting in Washington this month.

In Cairo, a government source said Mubarak's ideas appear aimed at calming the occupied territories, and include urging Israel to end Jewish settlement there.

Violent protests began Dec. 8 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which Israel captured from Jordan and Egypt in the 1967 Middle East War. About 1.5 million Palestinians live in the occupied lands.

According to U.N. figures, 38 Palestinians have died in the violence, nearly all of them killed by Israeli gunfire.

Relative quiet has been reported for several days in the West Bank and Gaza, but many Israelis now worry that Arabs living within Israel's pre-1967 borders may take a bigger role in the protest.

The firebomb attack on the school bus Wednesday night occurred on the Wadi Ara highway linking the Mediterranean coast to Galilee. Police said they believed militant Arabs from villages along the road were responsible, and sent reinforcements Thursday to help protect traffic.

"I appeal to the Arab citizens of Israel: Don't be dragged into demonstrations or protests which in the end are based on lies," Rabin said while touring Gaza.

Military officials, who would not let their names be used, said 1,140 Palestinians had been arrested in the Gaza Strip and about half still were in jail.

The army lifted curfews on four refugee camps in Gaza from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. Camps open in the afternoon to receive food and allow people in and out.

"Most of the population — 80 to 90 percent — are tired of this (the protests) and want to go to work," Brig. Gen. Arye Ramot, head of the Gaza military government, said on Israel radio. "They feel as well as we that the situation has to return to normal."

Four other Gaza camps remained under strict curfew, some for the 13th day. About 230,000 Palestinians live in refugee camps, most of which are in the Gaza Strip.

In the occupied West Bank, two villages and one camp were placed under curfew. The Arab-run Palestine Press Service reported small demonstrations.

Stone gets third chance at transplant

John Stone, a 1984 graduate of Texas A&M, is in serious condition in the intensive care unit at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas, hospital spokesman Susan Hall said. Stone received his third liver transplant late Sunday night after his second liver was determined to be failing. His first liver was lost because of infection.

Stone's original liver was destroyed by Alpha-1-Anti-Trypsin Deficiency which kept his body from controlling his digestive enzymes. Aggies from across the nation have helped raise \$45,000 of the \$140,000 required for Stone's first liver transplant. Anyone wishing to contribute can write The John Stone Fund, Post Oak Branch of First State Bank in Caldwell, P.O. Box 10130, College Station, 77840.

Bullock sees border leading Texas in steady economic reconvery in '88

EDINBURG (AP) — Texas will experience a steady economic recovery this year, with the border leading the rest of the state, State Comptroller Bob Bullock said Thursday.

"In light of what you've gone through, there is some justice to the fact that our recovery has started first along the border, and we predict it will continue stronger, faster along the Rio Grande," Bullock said at the Rio Grande Valley Economic Outlook Conference at Pan American University.

Bullock said while the rest of the state lost 77,000 jobs in 1987, the border area gained 5,000 jobs, primarily in the area of manufacturing.

In 1988, he said the border could gain the same number of jobs and as many as 140 new twin plants, or maquiladoras, in which U.S. firms oper-

ate assembly operations on the Mexican side of the border.

Those plants increased by 30 percent last year, and also brought jobs to the U.S. side, he said. Bullock predicted a 4 percent increase in manufacturing jobs along Texas' border areas in 1988, and said the lower Rio Grande Valley will see the greatest increase in employment.

The state's chief fiscal officer said that while the rest of the state will see an economic rebound, the areas least tied to the oil industry will recover fastest.

Agriculture along the border also will be a bright spot, Bullock said.

"We like to feel the worst is over," Bullock said.

He said unemployment in the state has dropped to 8 percent, from a peak of 10 percent two years ago,

but that the lower Rio Grande Valley still suffers from an unemployment rate of about 13 percent.

Statewide, Bullock said unemployment insurance claims were down 38 percent for the same period and that newspaper employment advertisements have increased by 22 percent in Texas during the past year.

Seventy-five percent of new Texas jobs are in service industries, Bullock said, adding that oil has dropped from more than 25 percent of the state's economy to 15 percent and continues to fall.

Yet retail sales in the state, he said, have grown to \$9 billion per month, and have increased by 8.4 percent in the past year.

Along the border, however, retail trade has shrunk, due to the devaluations of the peso, the comptroller said.

And statewide, the construction, real estate and financial sectors will continue to lag behind, Bullock said.

He said a key to long-term economic growth in the Rio Grande Valley would be for the University of Texas System to incorporate Pan American University.

Kenneth Shwedel, vice president and senior economist for the National Bank of Mexico, told the economic conference that the retail industry along the border probably will continue to suffer from some negative effects of Mexico's economic austerity program.

Haitian police arrest leader of opposition

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — An opposition leader, Louis Dejoie II, was charged Thursday with inciting public disorder and taken back to jail after a hearing in the Palace of Justice.

Defense lawyer Georges Leger said his client, a leading presidential candidate in November's canceled elections, "is held on charges of disturbing the peace, inciting disorder and violence."

About 150 people who waited outside during the hour-long proceeding snatched "Free Dejoie, Free Dejoie!" as the portly businessman was led out by soldiers in camouflage flak jackets carrying automatic rifles.

Dejoie was clad in the same black slacks and white shirt he wore Wednesday afternoon when he was arrested after arrival at the Port-au-Prince airport. The soldiers re-

turned him to the national penitentiary two blocks away.

Puerto Rico. He lived there during 26 years of exile before dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier fled to France on Feb. 7, 1986.

Other opposition leaders denounced the arrest and threatened another general strike in this poverty-stricken nation, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic.

Judge Henock Voltaire did not give details of the charges against Dejoie, who had flown home from

"We are ready to call a general strike if Louis Dejoie is not brought to trial within 48 hours," said economist Marc Bazin.

It was canceled within hours because gangs of killers, sometimes joined by soldiers, slaughtered at least 34 people and wounded 75 in the streets and at voting stations.