

McCain declares candidacy

Arizona senator puts focus on military background

NASHUA, N.H. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate John McCain issued a "new patriotic challenge" for America yesterday, promising to return dignity to the White House, strength to the U.S. military and honesty to a government that is now "a spectacle of selfish ambition."

Formally opening the campaign he began nearly 10 months ago, the war hero and Senate maverick also pledged to protect Social Security, cut taxes, veto pork-kernel spending, improve access to the Internet and test the merits of spending government money in private schools nationwide.

His top issues: reform political campaign laws and prove America's national security. McCain said both issues are examples of how he wants to challenge Americans to champion a "cause greater than self-interest."

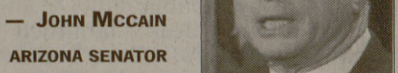
Speaking to a crowd of about 500, McCain said, "It is because I owe America more than she has ever owed me that I am a candidate for president of the United States."

As McCain concluded, confetti and miles of streamers was dropped on the crowd as a recording played of Luke Berry's "Johnny B. Goode."

The son and grandson of Navy admirals, the former avy pilot and Vietnam prisoner-of-war scheduled his start with a visit to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. A poor student and troublemaker, McCain barely graduated from the school but later distinguished himself as a flyer and prisoner of war.

Later, in New Hampshire, the lead-off primary state, his speech to voters was laced with references to his military record — "I have passed from a young man to an old one in the service of my country" — and with criticism of his political foes.

"It is because I owe America more than she has ever owed me ..."



— JOHN MCCAIN
ARIZONA SENATOR

President Clinton, he said, broke a promise to protect Social Security and weakened the U.S. military. By promising to "respect the dignity of the office," McCain suggested that Clinton has not.

He said both parties in Congress wasted money on "unnecessary weapons systems and other pork projects while 12,000 [military] personnel — proud young men and women — subsist on food stamps."

Congress disputes spending bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Disputes over everything from milk prices to NASA have dashed any hope Congress' Republican leaders had of keeping their pledge to complete spending bills before Friday's start of fiscal 2000.

Already planning to violate a second promise to honor 2-year-old spending limits, Republicans are using accounting gimmicks to claim they are holding to a third promise: that they will not use Social Security surpluses to pay for federal spending.

Though most Americans pay little attention to the government's fiscal calendar or spending limits, polls show they are attuned to both parties' pledges to protect Social Security's huge trust funds.

Violating these promises can be particularly harmful to the GOP because its core conservative supporters care deeply about their party's efforts for fiscal austerity.

New drug shows promise

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A medicine that blocks the AIDS virus from entering cells has shown promise as a last-ditch treatment for patients who fail to respond to standard AIDS drugs.

The medicine, code-named T-20, is still in early-stage testing, but researchers said yesterday that it could offer a reprieve for those who have run out of options.

The drug is the furthest along of a new class of AIDS medicines called fusion inhibitors. They work by thwarting the virus's ability to fuse with blood cells and inserting their genetic material into them.

"It looks quite good" Dr. Michael Saag of the University of Alabama, said. "We are looking at something with a totally different method of action. It is an important, potent new option."

The treatment has one large drawback compared with other AIDS drugs: Instead of being a pill, it must be injected twice dai-

ly. Nevertheless, Saag said patients in advanced stages of AIDS are willing to give themselves shots, and they seem to tolerate the drug well.

The results were reported Monday by Dr. Jay Lalezari of Quest Clinical Research in San Francisco at a meeting of the American Society for Microbiology.

Other AIDS drugs work principally by thwarting the virus's ability to stitch its genetic material into cells it has invaded or by blocking its ability to disperse mature copies of itself.

Doctors gave T-20 to 55 people who had high levels of the AIDS virus despite trying many different combinations of AIDS medicines.

While these standard drugs have proved to be life savers for many with AIDS, they do not work for all patients.

Doctors administered T-20 in combination with other drugs, even though the patients' HIV was resistant to the older medicines.

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