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Miller/Wenhold, Men's Wearhouse and the American League of Lobbyists Come Together in Pursuit of Clothes

The Washington, DC-based lobbying firm Miller/Wenhold Capitol Strategies worked together with Men's Wearhouse to collect gently used men's and women's business attire for individuals who are reentering the workforce.



These clothing items are used to make a good, professional first impression on potential employers. The event, entitled the Capitol PurSUIT Drive, was held in the Rayburn House Office Building, collected close to 10,000 articles of clothing from lobbyists, Members of Congress, staffers, and others in the DC community. Capitol

Hill notables such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Wisconsin Rep. Ron Kind, and California Rep. Loretta Sanchez all took a moment to share their thoughts on the drive.

In addition to these congressional members, representatives from the White House and Men's Wearhouse founder George Zimmer were in attendance. Moreover, the groups worked hand-in-hand with California-based Working Wardrobes and New York-based Career Gear to make the event possible. Congratulations to Miller/Wenhold's own Dave Wenhold for helping to coordinate this tremendous event.

AT HOME

Drilling Key Political Issue Before Recess

Democrats and Republicans in Congress have vastly different ideas for solving or fixing the current energy problems in the United States. With gasoline prices increasing, Republicans say that the voters are ready to move forward with more domestic oil drilling, and there may be some validity to their argument.

According to a recent Zogby poll, close to 60% of Americans support government efforts to elevate national drilling capabilities. On the other hand, Democratic lawmakers are continuing their push towards alternative energies and conservation. The GOP believes that its message will carry much more water with the voting public, and, in their minds, hopefully limit their congressional losses in the fall.

Housing Bill Become Law

The long-awaited housing bill was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush this month. The legislation, which gives a steady hand to mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, was supported by several vulnerable Republican incumbents as well as Congressional Democrats. T



wo notable GOP supporters were Reps. Phil English (PA) and Robin Hayes (NC). Overall, 45 Republican House Members voted for the bill, which passed the House 272-152. The President's signature also came as somewhat of a surprise as the White House has signaled an intention to veto the measure in the weeks leading up to the vote.

Republicans Protest Summer Adjournment

House Republicans were back at carrying on with their protest on the floor aimed at forcing Speaker Nancy Pelosi to convene a special session to pass energy legislation that includes more domestic oil drilling.

They could be waiting a long time. Pelosi, D-Calif., has shown no inclination to give in to GOP demands. But the protest continues just the same. The country may not be listening or watching, but summer vacationers touring the Capitol are getting up close and personal with lawmakers.

A band of 25 Republicans who took to the floor Monday led by Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., invited tourists and staff members to join them on the floor so that there was a continually rotating crop of onlookers watching as each member took his or her turn speaking. Normally, the House is off-limits to the public, but members have the power to circumvent that rule if they "invite" guests.

AROUND THE GLOBE

Possible Change in US-Iran Policy

Has the Bush Administration shifted its stance on talking and possibly negotiating with the Ahmadinejad regime in Iran? Even though the Iran has recently test-fired missiles in an attempt to show its might and saber-rattle, the White House has sent diplomats to talk with Iranian representatives on the state of affairs in the Middle East.



Apparently, the talks ended without much resolution, and the United States may very well press for more sanctions. The real concern seems to be the possibility of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons and then threatening Israel and other more moderate Arab nations in the region. Moreover, a nuclear Iran might force other Middle Eastern countries, such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, to move towards creating their nuclear capabilities.

Candidates Differ on Iraq Policy

After the close of his much anticipated trip to Afghanistan and Iraq, presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Illinois Senator Barack Obama has returned to the campaign trail convinced that more attention needs to be given to the War in Afghanistan.

In addition, both President Bush and likely GOP nominee for the presidency, John McCain seem to have made recent overtures about supporting a timetable of sorts for a drawdown in American troops in Iraq. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has time and again called for a reduction in troops from his country.

On the Trail

National Polls

Ah August. It's a time for grilling, vacations, the beach, and Congressional recess. It's a time for Members of Congress to return to their districts to drum up support for their campaigns, walk in parades, eat fair food, and talk to voters who might not quite be paying attention. August is a difficult month for politics because it is only three months from Election Day; however, historically, the voting public only begins to pay attention to campaigns after Labor Day.

That being said, the presidential race is heating up between likely Democratic nominee Barack Obama and presumptive GOP nominee John McCain. According to recent polls, McCain has closed the gap between the two to about 4 percentage points. However, there is plenty of time left in the campaign for both camps to stride ahead. In the lead up to the election in November, it will be interesting to follow the race in several close states that might play an important role in the Electoral College.

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For instance, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Virginia and several others very well may sway the entire election. Currently, Virginia and Ohio are toss ups as to who, if the election were to be held today, would win that race. Obama is leading in Pennsylvania and holds a slight lead in some polls in Ohio and New Hampshire.



House

NM-01

In the race to replace Rep. Heather Wilson in the Albuquerque-based district, Republican nominee Darren White is leading the Democratic candidate Martin Heinrich. Wilson is leaving the House of Representatives because she campaigned for the GOP nomination to replace retiring Senator Pete Domenici. She lost that primary race to Rep. Steve Pearce. White, a sheriff, and Heinrich, an Albuquerque city councilor both still have room to grow with regard to their name recognition; however, White has a lead in that category.

OH-16

State Sen. Kirk Schuring (R) is facing State Sen. John Bocchieri in the campaign to replace retiring Republican Congressman Ralph Regula. Regula, who has been in Congress for over 30 years, is leaving behind big shoes to fill. Schuring and Bocchieri will do battle until Election Day to see who will have the right to represent the people of the 16th District.

CA-37

Freshman Democratic Congresswoman Laura Richardson will be facing a write-in challenge from college professor Peter Matthews. Under normal circumstances, this may not raise too many eyebrows. However, Richardson has come under scrutiny from the press and colleagues in the House from being affected by the current housing situation and failing to report some of those debts on her congressional financial disclosure forms.

It remains to be seen whether or not the Congresswoman's financial woes will impact her reelection bid. Richardson won a special election to replace the late Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald.

Senate

VIRGINIA

The battle of the Governors. Two former governors are going head to head in the battle to become the next Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Democratic nominee, former Gov. Mark Warner will be facing off against the GOP nominee, former Gov. Jim Gilmore.



These two individuals are aiming to replace retiring Republican Sen. John Warner. Most polls in the Old Dominion have Gov. Warner defeating Gov. Gilmore by a fairly wide margin. Warner is touting his experience as the commonwealth's chief executive and his previous career as a corporate executive. A wave of Democratic and Independent voters in Virginia could very well swing this southern state into Barack Obama's column.

COLORADO

Former Rep. Bob Schaeffer (R) and Rep Mark Udall (D) are facing one another for the right to replace retiring Sen. Wayne Allard. It seems as though energy could be the defining factor in this race, with Udall being an environmentalist and Schaeffer being more oil oriented. This race could be closer than the other Udall race being held in New Mexico. It will be interesting to see if the Democratic National Committee's convention, which will be held in Denver, will have any effect on the congressional race.

OREGON

Incumbent GOP Senator Gordon Smith is being opposed by the Oregon State Senate President, Jeff Merkley. Merkley, who was the favorite of the national Democratic Party, is furiously fundraising and attempting to tie Smith to the policies of the Bush Administration and national Republicans. Smith and his Democratic Senate colleague from Oregon (Sen. Ron Wyden) generally have an agreement that they do not campaign against one another, and, so far, that is staying true.

ALASKA

In perhaps his closest race to date, legendary Alaskan Senator Ted Stevens is facing popular Democratic Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich. In addition to defending his use and fondness for congressional earmarks (appropriations), Stevens has also come under scrutiny from federal officials. The investigation has resulted in a raid of his office and the office of his son, the former Alaska State Senate Majority Leader. As of the end of July, Stevens has been indicted on seven felony counts for purportedly concealing a quarter of a million dollars in gifts from an oil services company. His trial will begin before the November elections.

Will It Take Ohio to Win It All

Ohio's close presidential contest in 2004 made it the last among the states to be decided, and Bush's win by slightly more than 2 percentage points over Kerry gave him the 20 electoral votes that clinched his re-election.



The fact that no Republican has ever won the presidency without winning that state, more than any other, speaks to the importance — and the uncertainty — of winning Ohio. The last Democrat to win the presidency while losing Ohio was John F. Kennedy in 1960. Ohio is one of just four states that has backed the presidential election winner in each of the past 11 elections dating to 1964, in a bloc that also includes Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.

Obama can expect a warm reception and plenty of votes from the state's large urban centers of Cleveland and Columbus. Cuyahoga County, which includes Cleveland, casts more votes than any other jurisdiction in the state, and in 2004 it backed Kerry by a 2-to-1 ratio and a margin of 227,000 votes (he fell short statewide by almost 119,000 votes). Columbus, the state capital and its most-populous city, dominates Franklin County, which Kerry won by 9 points.

Cincinnati, Ohio's third most-populous city, leans Democratic, but the near-South quality of its environs, including its Hamilton County suburbs, typically create a Republican lean. Bush carried the county by 5 points. Among mid-sized counties, Republicans run up huge margins in Butler, Warren and Clermont near Cincinnati and in Delaware County north of Columbus. The clincher for Bush was his strength in Ohio's many conservative-leaning rural counties.

The presidential race in Ohio will dominate center stage in a year in which the state has no elections for governor or senator. But Ohio has drawn the close attention of House campaign strategists because the state is hosting competitive races in as many as seven districts, nearly all of which are being defended by Republicans.

Vice Presidential Sweepstakes Continues

Barack Obama

Sam Nunn – Georgia	10-1 odds
Evan Bayh – Indiana	2-1 odds
Kathleen Sibelius – Kansas	2-1 odds
Claire McCaskill – Missouri	8-1 odds
Tim Kaine – Virginia	4-1 odds
Bill Richardson – New Mexico	10-1 odds

Chuck Hagel – Nebraska	25-1 odds
Bill Nelson – Florida	75-1 odds
Janet Napolitano – Arizona	75-1 odds
Ed Rendell – Pennsylvania	8-1 odds
Chet Edwards—Texas	15-1 odds

John McCain

Mitt Romney – Massachusetts	3-1 odds
Kay Bailey Hutchison – Texas	20-1 odds
Charlie Crist – Florida	10-1 odds
Tim Pawlenty – Minnesota	2-1 odds
John Thune – South Dakota	8-1 odds
Meg Whitman – fmr eBay CEO	10-1 odds
Joe Lieberman – Connecticut	25-1 odds
Tom Ridge – Pennsylvania	5-1 odds
Rob Portman – Ohio	5-1 odds

