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By The New York Times

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Today in Politics: Democrats Seek an Early Start to the Endorsement Season



Hillary Rodham Clinton in Cedar Falls, Iowa, last month. Mrs. Clinton is expected to meet with the American Federation of Teachers on Tuesday. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

Good Tuesday morning from Washington. Many of the Republican candidates are heading to Disney World to discuss the economy and to try to lay a foundation in a crucial primary state. And the Democrats are also reaching out for a hold on a critical strategic cog: the American Federation of Teachers.

The three candidates officially running for president as Democrats will begin the endorsement screening process on Tuesday with the American Federation of Teachers, a union led by a longtime ally of **Hillary Rodham Clinton**.

Endorsements from the major public sector unions can have a big effect in a nominating contest, particularly in uncertain economic climates. Many labor groups, for example, have been pressuring Congress against the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal [sought by President Obama](#).

Mrs. Clinton, as well as **Martin O'Malley**, the former Maryland governor, and **Senator Bernie Sanders** of Vermont, will each spend an hour with union members and the executive council and take questions. Mrs. Clinton will appear on Tuesday, and Mr. O'Malley and Mr. Sanders will appear on Wednesday.

Mrs. Clinton has not taken a clear yes-or-no position on the trade deal. Nor has she said where she stands on some of the issues important to those seeking changes to the education system, who have lobbied for tenure overhauls and for new measures of accountability, and whose members say they want Mrs. Clinton to speak out.

Randi Weingarten, the president of the union, said there would be a dialogue in the meetings about where the candidates stand on education issues.

For the first time, the union also asked Republican candidates to fill out a questionnaire and to attend its executive council sessions, either during this round or one in July. Ms. Weingarten said there had been no responses from the Republican side.

Most of the focus, however, will be on Mrs. Clinton, whom Ms. Weingarten has supported since she led the New York-based United Federation of Teachers and Mrs. Clinton was the junior senator from New York. Early last year, Ms. Weingarten was named a board member of Priorities USA, the “super PAC” supporting Mrs. Clinton.

The American Federation of Teachers’s screening process raises the prospect that the union, which seems most likely to support Mrs. Clinton, could give her an early endorsement.

— *Maggie Haberman*

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What We’re Watching Today

In the morning **Mr. Obama** will award the Medal of Honor to two Americans who saved fellow soldiers in World War I. For most of the last century, the Army resisted efforts to award the medal to one of the men, **Pvt. Henry Johnson** of the “Harlem Hellfighters” — who, armed with only a knife, helped hold off an attack by a dozen German raiders — because the unit was under French command as part of the Army’s policy to segregate its black and white regiments.

In addition to the meetings with the teachers union, **Mrs. Clinton** will appear virtually at Macaulay Honors College at City University of New York, where she gave the school’s first commencement speech a decade ago.

Republicans Vie for Positioning at Disney World

A primary win in Florida would be a dream come true for any of the Republican presidential hopefuls, so on Tuesday, six of them will head to Disney Resorts (the place where dreams... well, you get it) in Orlando to make their pitches.

The event, an “Economic Growth Summit” meeting organized by **Gov. Rick Scott**, will offer candidates an opportunity to spread their messages on the economy, and, this being Florida, possibly immigration, to more than 300 attendees.

Not surprisingly, both of Florida’s own candidates — **Senator Marco Rubio** and **former Gov. Jeb Bush** — had been given prime speaking slots, though Mr. Rubio, who was set to kick off the event, had to cancel at the last

minute to be at the Senate for a vote. He will still deliver brief video remarks and will still be “speaking” first. Mr. Bush gets to say he is headlining, or speaking last.

Both Mr. Bush and Mr. Rubio are counting on victory in Florida, and the battle between them is expected to be intense. (Mr. Bush served as a mentor to Mr. Rubio.) **Gov. Scott Walker** of Wisconsin, who is also speaking on Tuesday, [said last month that he might let them duke it out there](#).

Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey, **Gov. Bobby Jindal** of Louisiana, **Mike Huckabee** and **Rick Perry** are also scheduled to appear.

Mr. Scott will speak twice, bookending the event. But, while the candidates would surely be grateful for his endorsement, don’t expect many of them to fall over themselves to win his affection. Mr. Scott has a [negative approval rating](#), despite having just recently [won re-election](#).

– *Nick Corasaniti*

N.S.A. Bill Moves Slowly Forward

If all goes smoothly, the Senate on Tuesday could finish its prolonged National Security Agency legislation debate. Of course, [all has not gone smoothly](#) so far.

But the chamber is moving inexorably toward passage of some version of House-approved legislation that would end the government’s bulk collection of telephone records. And there are limits on what **Senator Rand Paul**, the Kentucky Republican [who has been stalling the bill](#), can do to hold it up much longer.

The Senate Republican leadership would dearly like to see legislation approved as soon as possible to reduce the time for which the N.S.A.’s surveillance powers are limited. The main question is whether the Senate will approve any proposed changes to the bill, including a longer transition to a new system. If so, the measure would have to go back to the House for approval and conservatives there may want to give any revisions a good look.

So the end is in sight, but there may be a few more hiccups before the legislation reaches Mr. Obama.

– *Carl Hulse*

Our Favorites From Today’s Times

[A New York Times/CBS News poll finds](#) Americans of both parties reject the regime of untrammelled money in elections made possible by the Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling and now favor overhauling how political campaigns are financed.

In the struggle over surveillance powers, **Senator Mitch McConnell** of Kentucky, the majority leader, [is finding](#) that some of the new, ambitious conservatives do not adhere to the old rules of operating on Capitol Hill.

Mrs. Clinton’s team said on Monday that [she would hold her first major rally](#) of the campaign on June 13 in New York City.

Graham Supporters Know the Climb Is Uphill

They came from across South Carolina to cheer him on, but [as Senator Lindsey Graham announced his plans to run for president](#), many of his

supporters seemed to understand that [he faced an uphill battle](#).

Although he was just re-elected to the Senate, Mr. Graham, a South Carolina Republican, has struggled to register in local and national presidential polls. As he sets off this week to New Hampshire and Iowa and to a fund-raising stop in New York, many of his most ardent fans remain realistic.

“His problem will be finances,” said Lou Hansen, 74, of Westminster, S.C. “It’s all about money.”

Nelson Vasquez, of Clemson, said that Mr. Graham faced the challenge of trying to appeal to conservative voters without turning off a wider audience.

“He gets bashed because he’s not conservative enough, but if he’s too conservative, he can’t get anything done,” said Mr. Vasquez, who attended the announcement rally but is still considering supporting Mr. Rubio.

Mr. Graham will also have to be careful about how he discusses war in a country that is weary after more than a decade of overseas fighting. Lloyd Walters, who is Mr. Graham’s uncle, said that when voters believed that he was not hungry for more conflict, they would be drawn to him.

“He’s going to put country above party,” Mr. Walters said. “Once the people realize he’s not a war hawk, that he’s going to defend the country, I think he’ll surge in the polls.”

– Alan Rappeport

What We’re Reading Elsewhere

In [an interview](#) with The Des Moines Register, **Donald Trump** said that though he would not say for sure whether he was running for president, he did know some things. Like: “I’m the most successful person ever to run for the presidency, by far. Nobody’s ever been more successful than me” and “I have a Gucci store that’s worth more than” **Mitt Romney**.

Dan Pfeiffer, a former senior adviser to **Mr. Obama**, told CNN that **Mrs. Clinton** was eventually going to have to [“engage with the press.”](#)

And the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette [reported on](#) the practice of several past political campaigns to help pay off debts by renting supporters’ contact information to “data brokers who repackage such information for other politicians and causes.”

‘Bum Ankle’ Prompts Sanders to Reach Across the Aisle

Mr. Sanders has been [winning over big crowds](#) on the left since he formally entered the presidential race, but with a bit of chivalry on Sunday, he earned a pair of Republican admirers.

“Thank you, @BernieSanders, who carried my wife’s bag off their plane today as she struggled with our girls and a bum ankle!” [wrote Jon Seaton](#) on Twitter about his wife, **Kristina Seppala**, a Republican fund-raising consultant, who was on a flight to Washington from Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Mr. Seaton is also a Republican operative, but he was not with his wife, who is nursing a broken ankle, and his two daughters because he was with one of Mr. Sanders’s colleagues: **Mr. Graham**. Mr. Seaton is working for his campaign and was in South Carolina preparing for Mr. Graham’s own official entry into the White House race.

– Jonathan Martin