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FACE THE NATION

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GUESTS: Senator CARL LEVIN
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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION, the Democrats decide to seat the Florida and Michigan delegates at their convention but give them half a vote. That makes it even more likely that Barack Obama will get the nomination. But will Senator Clinton take the fight all the way to the convention, as her people now threaten? We'll go first to Michigan senator Carl Levin, who's not happy with the ruling. Then we'll talk about Senator Clinton's next move with one of her long-time advisers, Mandy Grunwald. We'll get analysis from Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, who led the Clinton campaign in his state, and Missouri senator Claire McCaskill, one of Obama's early supporters. Then I'll have some final thoughts on all of the above. It all starts now on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now, from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And good morning again. Well, it got fairly ugly yesterday when the Democratic rules committee decided to seat the Michigan and Florida delegations at the party convention this summer, but also decided the delegates would get only half a vote. That's to penalize those states for holding their primaries earlier than the national party wanted. That dealt a heavy blow to the Clinton campaign and will make it much harder for her now to slow down Senator Obama, who's getting closer and closer to having the delegates needed to wrap up the nomination.

We're going to start this morning with Michigan senior senator Carl Levin.

Senator, you were one of the prime backers in moving that primary up into the opening weeks of the campaign season. You haven't come out for either candidate yet, but I take it you're not satisfied with what the committee did yesterday. Why not?

Senator CARL LEVIN (Democrat, Michigan): Well, we actually--we made great progress yesterday, so overall we are satisfied. The Michigan delegation is seated, that was our main goal. The party told us that if we took on New Hampshire and insisted that the new rule which put New Hampshire third instead of second be enforced--they didn't do that, they waived it to give New Hampshire their continuing privilege to go second, and we objected to that. It violated their own rule. The rules committee never should have given New Hampshire a waiver. We've been fighting to open up this process for literally a decade now, so it's not always Iowa, New Hampshire, Iowa, New Hampshire. And so since the rules committee had made that change after a long battle to put New Hampshire third and New Hampshire violated it, unilaterally announced they were going second and the rules committee let them get away with it, and that's what we objected to. And we decided we were going to hold our primary in a--at a time when we were not, under the rules, allowed to do it.

SCHIEFFER: Well, so what are you going to do?

Sen. LEVIN: We're going to fight for the full vote. We're assured we're going to get a full vote. We already now yesterday got our full delegation seated. This is a big victory for Michigan yesterday. Our full delegation's going to be seated in a fair way. The Michigan...

SCHIEFFER: What--you just said you're assured you're going to get a full vote.

Sen. LEVIN: We are.

SCHIEFFER: But who assured you of that?

Sen. LEVIN: Both candidates. Barack Obama publicly has said that when he is the candidate-- and now there's a fixed number for him to shoot at, which was the big advantage for him yesterday. He got fewer delegates than she did yesterday, she got more delegates, but now there's a fixed finish line for him to achieve and to get to. So that's a big advantage for him. And both candidates have said that they want Michigan's delegation to have a full vote. She said that yesterday and Senator Obama has said that he can guarantee that the Michigan delegation will be seated and they'll have a full voice at the convention when he has enough delegates to know that he's the nominee.

SCHIEFFER: So it really won't make any difference by the time they get a full vote, but he's telling you that once he gets the nomination, he'll see that they get a full vote.

Sen. LEVIN: Once he's assured that he has the nomination, we'll have the full vote at the convention. There's a lot of other things at the convention, of course, other than who the candidate is.

SCHIEFFER: So, you're--this is not about Senator Clinton or about Senator Obama, this is about New Hampshire.

Sen. LEVIN: For us.

SCHIEFFER: From your standpoint.

Sen. LEVIN: That's exactly right. And about Michigan taking on the reform of this system, which is a really messed up system where a few states always go first. They kind of muscled their way into this position. They think they got a privilege to always go one, two. Well, the rest of the states have got to have an opportunity. We've got to have some kind of a rotation system. Michigan's been fighting for this. It was a more complicated fight this year...

SCHIEFFER: Mm-hmm.

Sen. LEVIN: ...because of the way it worked out.

SCHIEFFER: So...

Sen. LEVIN: But nonetheless, we believe we took a major step towards reform this year because we're going to be fully seated.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. LEVIN: And that's an important...

SCHIEFFER: But what if this goes all the way to the convention, as Mrs. Clinton is now threatening? Do you think, in fact, that's going to happen?

Sen. LEVIN: I think it's very unlikely. But until she decides that she can't win at the convention and makes a decision, it's going to stay open. However, I think it's more than likely that within a week or two that Senator Obama will have enough votes to claim that he's going to be the nominee.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, Senator, thank you very much for coming by this morning.

Sen. LEVIN: Thank you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: In from the other side of the table joining us now, Mandy Grunwald, who may have a different take on all this. She is, of course, one of Senator Clinton's long-time advisers and a long-time friend, I should also add.

So what do you think? As...

Ms. MANDY GRUNWALD (Clinton Advisor): Well...

SCHIEFFER: ...he's saying, it's about over.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Well, I think I agree with Senator Levin that a lot of progress was made yesterday. Senator Clinton has fought for a very long time to make sure that Florida and Michigan counted, that we didn't nominate somebody in Denver with 48 states speaking instead of 50. Well, now we know that 50 states will speak and I think that's a credit to the fight that Hillary has waged. What concerned us is not the issues that Senator Levin raised, but that in the way delegates were portioned by the rules committee yesterday they broke their own rules, and that's a terrible precedent. That's a terrible precedent. And that's why our campaign has said we will consider taking this fight to the convention, just to explain they took the votes, the delegates, and apportioned them the way they chose. They had nothing to do with the way votes were made in Michigan. That is an arbitrary ruling that simply violates the rules of our party and is a...

SCHIEFFER: Well, I mean, but...

Ms. GRUNWALD: ...is a bad precedent.

SCHIEFFER: ...Senator Obama's name wasn't even on the ballot in Michigan.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Well, Senator Obama...

SCHIEFFER: They could've given him no votes.

Ms. GRUNWALD: They could have. They could have given him no votes, because he chose to take his name off the ballot. That had nothing to do with any of the rules of--that the party had set forward. But they not only gave him all of the votes that went to uncommitted people, who--and his people encouraged people to vote for him through voting for uncommitted--they took

delegates away from Senator Clinton and gave them to Senator Obama, and that's just not right. So we'll reserve the right to talk about that.

SCHIEFFER: Let's go on to--well, I mean, are you really serious about this, about going all the way to the convention, having a fight, a nasty, knock-down, drag-out fight eight weeks before the--before the election?

Ms. GRUNWALD: We obviously want this party to be united and we want to win in November, and we think we have the best candidate to do that.

SCHIEFFER: But, you know, they--she doesn't have the delegates.

Ms. GRUNWALD: But she has over 17 million votes. She has more votes than any primary candidate...

SCHIEFFER: If you count Florida and Michigan.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Well, Florida and Michigan, as of yesterday, are counted. And we have always counted them, because 2.2 million people voted. There's been a dispute about whether the delegates should be seated, but those people voted. And, you know, we have a pretty simple principle: if you vote, you should be counted. So Hillary will have won more votes than any candidate in the history of this country--any primary candidate in the history of this country. And we're going to make a very strong case to the superdelegates who, by the way, are going to decide this. No can--neither candidate will have enough delegates as of Tuesday night. So the question will be what the superdelegates decide. And we have a very strong case to make to them that over 17 million people have now voted for Hillary Clinton, the deepest and broadest coalition.

SCHIEFFER: Well, does that 17--does that 17 million, does that include the voters in Iowa and Nevada, Washington and Maine? Because those were caucus states where they didn't release how many people voted.

Ms. GRUNWALD: You know, if you go back and look at the news reports, somehow you and the press figured out how many people voted. Because every one of those states, there were reports of exactly--I can, you know, remember two the number how many people voted. So, yes, that does include those states.

SCHIEFFER: I--the part that is hard for me to understand is each of these states chose the way they were going to selected their delegates.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: They set their own rules. You chose to enter those contests.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Yes.

SCHIEFFER: And now that you haven't won some of those caucus states, you're suggesting that, well, maybe that's not a fair way to do it. I mean, what game does one play? What enterprise does one enter where you change the rules after you get into it?

Ms. GRUNWALD: We haven't changed the rules. We have superdelegates who are going to decide that, that's part of the rules, and they have to make a choice. Their job is to figure out who our strongest nominee will be. Because let's remember what this is about. From the Democratic point of view, we have to change course in this country, we have to take back the White House. We are going to make the case to superdelegates, as we have been, that Hillary Clinton will be the strongest nominee of this party. That coalition that she's put together of over 17 million people, that includes all the swing states we have to win--Florida, Ohio, states where Senator Obama is losing and Senator Clinton is winning, Kentucky, West Virginia. These are all states--there was a poll this week in Kentucky that showed Hillary winning by I think seven points, Senator Obama was losing by 25. We have got to win in November. And if you look at the electoral...

SCHIEFFER: Well, there are other polls that show...

Ms. GRUNWALD: ...if you look at...

SCHIEFFER: ...different results...

Ms. GRUNWALD: ...if you look at...

SCHIEFFER: ...in different states.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Absolutely. But if you look at the Electoral College based on the polls right now, she is far ahead of Senator McCain and he's about tied. So if you look at the electoral map and if you look at the swing constituencies--rural voters, where Democrats have gotten killed in recent years and where a lot of people think the race will be won--Senator Clinton is doing far better than Senator Obama.

SCHIEFFER: But then...

Ms. GRUNWALD: Latinos, women. These are the core constituencies.

SCHIEFFER: Well, if you're going to...

Ms. GRUNWALD: And working-class people...

SCHIEFFER: ...bring race into it...

Ms. GRUNWALD: ...who have been the heart and soul of our party and the heart and soul of our campaign. These are people who need to be respected in the process and who Senator Clinton has become a champion for.

SCHIEFFER: Do you--do you think that any Democrat can be elected president without a large African-American vote? And if an African-American candidate goes into that campaign leading in delegates...

Ms. GRUNWALD: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: ...and some white superdelegates take it away from him, how's that going to play with one of the big core constituencies of the Democratic Party?

Ms. GRUNWALD: And I would ask you the same question. Because that is certainly a core constituency of our party; so are women. And if a female candidate, the first successful one in history, goes into the--into the convention leading in the popular vote and it's taken away from her, how do you think women are going to feel heading into the November election?

SCHIEFFER: Well, most--a lot of women I know believe in the rules, and that might...

Ms. GRUNWALD: And...

SCHIEFFER: ...figure into it, too.

Ms. GRUNWALD: And we are playing by the rules.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Ms. GRUNWALD: So, we're feel--we feel pretty good about that. Seventeen million is a lot of voters, and we think that that's a very strong case to make to those superdelegates.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Mandy Grunwald, who makes a good case for her candidate.

Ms. GRUNWALD: Good to be with you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: Thank you very much, Ms. Grunwald.

We'll be back in just one minute with a little campaign analysis.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And now for a campaign quick check, joining us for a little analysis from Philadelphia, Governor Ed Rendell; here with us in the studio, Senator Claire McCaskill.

Senator McCaskill, you've been with Obama from the very beginning, one of the first members of the Senate to come out for him. Governor Rendell, of course, ran the campaign, basically, for Senator Clinton in Pennsylvania, where she won. What'd you think about what Mandy Grunwald just said here about they are going to press this thing on and they're going to take it right on to the convention, it sounds to me like she's saying, unless something happens here?

Senator CLAIRE McCASKILL (Democrat, Missouri; Obama Supporter): Well, I think we all want to believe that will not happen, and I think Senator Clinton will do the right thing. We've got three more primaries, today and two on Tuesday, and I think the superdelegates are going to continue to do what they've been doing for the last two months. As the Clinton campaign has made this argument, the superdelegates have continued to come to the side of Barack Obama. They have last week, the week before, the week that Clinton wins a primary, they still come to the side of Barack Obama. And the argument she's making, Bob, about the popular vote, they're

not counting some states. I mean, how can you not count Iowa, where this incredible journey that Barack Obama has come through, that's where it began, in people's living rooms in Iowa. And, you know, that's the Midwest. That's where I'm from. I don't know how you can count the votes in this election and not count Iowa, not count the state of Washington. So, clearly, Barack Obama has won the majority of the states, the majority of the delegates and the majority of the votes in this country so far.

SCHIEFFER: Well, Governor Rendell, what do you think Hillary Clinton ought to do at this point? Let's say, for example, that at the end of this week there's no question Barack Obama--by every prognostication, suggestion, indication--is going to be very, very close to having the number of delegates that he needs to wrap up the nomination. And I would guess you'll see superdelegates then who will want to be able to say, 'Look, I was the one that put you over the top.' I think they're going to be very tempted to come out and endorse him at that point. What do you think Hillary Clinton ought to do if that happens?

Governor ED RENDELL (Democrat, Pennsylvania; Clinton Supporter): Well, let me say a couple of quick things first, Bob, again.

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Gov. RENDELL: One, I agree with Senator Levin, this party's got to do something about our nominating process. It's a shambles. Number two, we convicted--we should play by the rules, but we convicted Florida when the Florida Democrats did not break any rule. If that case was a criminal case, the judge would've thrown it out before it reached a jury for total lack of evidence.

Now, what do I think Senator Clinton is going to do? I am not a Clinton insider, I'm not inside the campaign mechanism, but I believe she'll do the right thing for America and I don't think we're going to fight this at the convention. Because even were we to win it, unless it's going to change enough delegates for Senator Clinton to get the nomination, then it would be a fight that would have no purpose. And let me tell you, all of the Clinton elected officials, like myself, we're going to be deeply disappointed because I believe this party is nominating its weaker of two fine candidates. But if she doesn't get the nomination, we're going to be for Barack Obama 100 percent and we don't want Denver to injure his chances of winning the nomination.

But let me also say to superdelegates out there who haven't made up their mind, look at the last three months. In the last three months, as the country has gotten to know these candidates better, Hillary Clinton has clobbered Barack Obama in the popular vote, almost 53, 54, 55 percent of the total popular vote. That's going to continue with a significant win today in Puerto Rico. The polls make it clear that on the states that are necessary for us to win the Electoral College, Hillary Clinton is by far our strongest candidate in the fall. What are we doing nominating the weaker of our two fine candidates? It makes no sense to me.

SCHIEFFER: Well, all right. That seems to be the perfect question for Senator McCaskill.

What are you doing nominating the weaker of two candidates, in the words of Governor Rendell?

Sen. McCASKILL: Well, first of all, this remarkable leader has come on the scene and challenged a political dynasty in this country and succeeded. I think that shows strength. I think

his ability to campaign in every state, play by the rules, unite our country, unite new Democrats, old Democrats. He's won in very white states, he's won in rural states, he's won in populated states. And this idea that he is not the stronger candidate, he is the stronger candidate. He is winning because he's the stronger candidate. And today, as Governor Rendell knows, he is winning Pennsylvania by a comfortable margin against John McCain. He is winning a big margin in New York and California. This idea that primary votes translate into general votes is just not true, because many of the people who voted for Hillary Clinton in my state have already said, 'We're anxious to campaign for Barack Obama in November.' We will come together, because you know why? Hillary Clinton is going to do the right thing. Because she's a tremendous leader, she's a good person, she cares much more about this country than she cares about herself. And that's why I know she will do the right thing and we will unite. People are disappointed, I understand that. Many of my supporters are big supporters of Hillary Clinton. I get their emotional disappointment. But they will do the right thing, too. Because what's at stake here, Bob, is the future of our country as it relates to the American dream as we know it. That's way too important to get sidelined over the difficulty of this closely contested primary.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just ask Governor Rendell the same question I asked Mandy Grunwald, and that is if Barack Obama should go into that convention and have the most delegates--he's an African-American, and most of those superdelegates are white people, quite frankly--and they somehow take it away from him, how do you come out of that kind of a situation with a strong candidate? I mean, won't--that just seems like that'd be pretty tough for Senator Clinton to go out and sell to people in the African-American community after that.

Gov. RENDELL: Well...

SCHIEFFER: And you can't win without a big black vote.

Gov. RENDELL: Sure. Well, first I want to say I agree with what Claire said in the last half of her statement. But in the last three months when people have gotten to know the candidates, it's clear who the strongest candidate is. It's clear in the states like Ohio and Florida that are crucial for us who the strongest candidate is, and it's Hillary Clinton. But leaving that aside, look, the polls show that we will lose more Clinton voters in the fall against John McCain if she's not the nominee than we will lose Obama voters if he's not the nominee. But I happen to agree with the Senator. Whatever happens, we're going to go out and deliver a message that what happens in the fall is far too important for Obama/Clinton disappointment. We have to change this country around. And Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are this close on the issues; Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and John McCain are this far apart in the issues. And where we are on the issues is for the future of the American people, and we've got to be united as one party and we will.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Now, we'll come back and talk about this in just a minute, but we're going to pause for one minute here and then we'll be back.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Senator Obama has decided to leave his church because of comments that yet another pastor has made there. He managed to do that when there was a lot of publicity and a lot of news about what the Democratic rules committee was doing, so there may have been a little bit of politics in the timing here. Should he have done that and will that help, Senator?

Sen. McCASKILL: I think it was painful for him. The church is bigger than any given minister or any guest sermon. The church are people who have done great work in that community, and I think it was difficult for him. But I think he fundamentally disagreed with what Reverend Wright said, fundamentally disagreed with the guest priest from last Sunday. And most importantly, he wanted to take the political circus away from the church. And by doing this, I think he's hoping that many of the good people who attend that church will not have their lives disrupted as they try to worship God on Sunday. And so I don't think this was something that he relished doing, but I think he thought it was very important to take that step.

SCHIEFFER: You think it'll make a difference, Governor Rendell? Should he have done it?

Gov. RENDELL: Yeah, I think he did the right thing. And I agree with Claire, I think the main thing was to just take the light of--and focus of attention off the church. Good grief. It must be so hard for those people to go to church on Sundays now. I think he did the right thing for the church and the right thing for himself as a campaigner.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you, Governor, what about the idea of the dream ticket here? We're getting to the point where I suspect people are going to start talking about that again. You think that'll happen? Would it be a good idea?

Gov. RENDELL: Well, I think it would be a powerful ticket which could sweep the country. But the only way that's going to happen--no politicians are going to be able to broker it, the staffs, who have a little bit of animosity, as always is the case, can't be involved. I think Senator Clinton and Senator Obama have to sit down together and talk about the future of this country and talk about whether that's a viable option.

SCHIEFFER: Let me...

Gov. RENDELL: And it's up to the two of them.

SCHIEFFER: One other quick question, Governor. Do you think there is any way--if Barack Obama does go over the top this week, if superdelegates do swing behind him, do you think there's any way that Senator Clinton would stay in the race after that?

Gov. RENDELL: Personally, I don't believe she would. I believe she's going to do the right thing for unifying this country. But, again, I don't have that on any inside information, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: What do you think, Senator McCaskill?

Sen. McCASKILL: Well, I think that these two people have made our party very, very proud. We've made history in this presidential campaign in the Democratic Party, and I think these two people, these two incredible leaders will make the right decision about the ticket going forward. And I do think, as I said before, I have great confidence that Hillary Clinton will do what's right for our party and for our nation, and for all those people out there that are hurting and are going to keep hurting if we let four more years of George Bush in the White House, as that's what we'd get with John McCain. So I think she'll do the right thing, because the stakes are way too high for America.

SCHIEFFER: About 30 seconds left. What would you think of a dream ticket, as some people call it?

Sen. McCASKILL: Well, I think certainly there is a lot of strength to that ticket for obvious reasons. But as Ed said, it's an intensely personal decision. You're choosing someone to be not only your running mate, but someone who's going to help you run government for the next four, hopefully eight years. So I would not second guess whatever Senator Obama decides to do if he is the nominee this week. I think that's what we'll all support, including Senator Clinton.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, I'm going to thank both of you for some real insight this morning. We'll be back with a final word in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And finally today, despite all the hollering and general rudeness at the meeting of the Democratic rules committee meeting that played out on television yesterday, by this time next week the primary season may finally be over and both parties may have a nominee. I know, I know. When the committee gave those disputed delegates from Michigan and Florida only half a vote and dealt a serious blow to Senator Clinton's chances, her supporters shouted 'Nobama' and 'McCain in '08,' and her main man Harold Ickes threatened to take the fight all the way to the convention. But even after what we heard this morning I doubt that, and here is why. Once we get through these last three contests this week, Senator Obama will be very close to having the delegates he needs to win the nomination. When that becomes obvious, I expect a sizable group of superdelegates will swing behind him. They'll race to get the credit for being the ones who put him over the top. Such is the nature of politics and the desire to be on the winning team. Once Senator Obama has those delegates in hand, it will be all but impossible for Senator Clinton to take them away from him, and she is smart enough to know the nomination wouldn't be worth much at that point even if she did. The bluster and bad tempers we saw yesterday showed how deep the division in the Democratic Party already is, but I think this thing is about done.

That's it for us. We'll see you next week, right here on FACE THE NATION.

