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CBS News

# FACE THE NATION

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**GUESTS: Governor ED RENDELL  
Democrat, Pennsylvania**

**Representative JESSE JACKSON JR.  
Democrat, Illinois**

**Governor KATHLEEN SEBELIUS (D-KS)  
Convention Co-Chair**

**Mr. DAN BALZ  
The Washington Post**

**MODERATOR/PANELIST: Mr. Bob Schieffer – CBS News**

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BOB SCHIEFFER, host (Denver):

Today on FACE THE NATION, from Denver, the Democratic convention and the Obama campaign.

The race between Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain seems closer than ever. What's the Obama strategy? What's the story behind his selection of Joe Biden as a running mate? We'll talk to three leaders of the Democratic Party: Governor Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas, Governor Ed Rendell from the must-win state of Pennsylvania and Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. of Illinois, Senator Obama's home state. Dan Balz of The Washington Post will be here with analysis, and I'll have a final word on these conventions.

But first, here come the Democrats on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION, with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now, from the site of the 2008 Democratic National Convention, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And good morning again. We're in Denver, on the floor of the Democratic National Convention. Joining us here this morning: Governor Kathleen Sebelius, the governor of Kansas; Governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. of Barack Obama's home state of Illinois.

And of course, when the Democrats crowd into here on Monday night, this'll be lit up like the Fourth of July. This morning, of course, the lights have not been turned on, but we won't let that stop us, will we?

Ladies and gentlemen, the--Barack Obama, the nominee, announced his running mate, Joe Biden, yesterday. It got very, very good reviews from Democrats. But you know, it got a very good review from a sort of unexpected source. Listen to what Katie Couric found out in Sedona, Arizona, yesterday.

KATIE COURIC reporting:

Senator, first of all, what is your reaction to the selection of Joe Biden as Barack Obama's running mate?

Senator JOHN McCAIN: Well, I think he's a good selection. Joe and I have been friends for many, many years and we know each other very well, and so I think he's probably made a very wise selection. I know that Joe will campaign well for Senator Obama, and so I think he's going to be very formidable. Obviously, Joe and I have been on different philosophical sides, but we have been--I consider him a good friend and a--and a good man.

SCHIEFFER: Well, Joe Biden said at one point it'd be an honor to run with either of these candidates. It sounds like John McCain would have loved to have had him.

Governor Rendell, let me ask you this. You were a big Hillary Clinton supporter. Do you think Obama-Biden is a better ticket than Obama-Clinton would have been?

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL (Democrat, Pennsylvania): Well, I think they're--they'd both be good tickets for different reasons. Both Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton are ready to be president of the United States tomorrow. They're both extremely well qualified and experienced. They both would bring things to the campaign that I think would be very attractive. I think both of them speak very well for the working class, middle class working voters throughout the country. So I think they're equally good tickets. Hillary Clinton obviously has a longer relationship with a broader spectrum of voters, women voters who've been following her for a long time, but Joe Biden's going to grow on the American people very fast because he's a tremendously engaging guy, a tremendously bright guy and a guy who's sort of Harry Trumanlike, he tells it like it is.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me ask you, Congressman Jackson. You've been a big player in this campaign. A lot of people, I have heard, have said that Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, really wanted somebody they could be comfortable with, somebody that they knew well, maybe like Governor Sebelius over here. But in the end the top advisers came and said, 'You've got to add heft to this ticket, and that means Joe Biden.'

Representative JESSE JACKSON JR. (Democrat, Illinois): Well, there are those who suggested that Barack should make a cautious choice, but he chose a leader who is outspoken, someone who is a skilled operative, someone who understands the crisis of the world and is prepared to be president, as Governor Rendell indicated, on day one. Joe Biden is bringing a tremendous amount of energy and credibility to this--to this ticket. Democrats are energized and they're excited about his selection, and we look forward to fall campaign.

SCHIEFFER: I want to show you something, speaking of Hillary Clinton. The McCain people say they're going to start running an ad here in Colorado today, and here's the ad. And guess who the star is? Hillary Clinton.

(Excerpt from McCain campaign ad)

SCHIEFFER: Well, Governor Sebelius, what about that? Is that going to be effective?

Governor KATHLEEN SEBELIUS (Convention Co-Chair; Democrat, Kansas): Well, I think what's happening, Bob, is that women across this country are going to be introduced to the second real champion for women on the Democratic ticket. Barack has an incredibly strong record and incredibly compelling life story; raised by a single mom, his grandmother, married to this bright and beautiful and talented woman and the father of two young daughters. There's no way he is going to forget about women's issues. Joe Biden joining him as a partnership, working-class issues, author of the Violence Against Women ad. There's no question--Hillary Clinton has served with both these men, she chose Barack Obama. This ad is a bit disingenuous, I would say, suggesting somehow that John McCain would get the support of her or her supporters.

Gov. RENDELL: And Bob, this ad will have a three-day life span. When Hillary Clinton speaks on Wednesday night, she will blow this ad out of the water.

SCHIEFFER: But you know, this, I guess, is maybe the downside of these long campaigns where you have so many debates. I mean, you can go back...

Gov. SEBELIUS: Sure.

SCHIEFFER: ...and get all these quotes that people made against both Barack Obama and John McCain, for that matter. I mean, how do you get around that?

Rep. JACKSON: Bob, I think that Democrats fully understand that the primary process expanded the party. It brought millions of new voters into the process. It simply could not have taken place without the contest--the extraordinary contest between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. We're a larger party. Now, this convention is about making us stronger. It's about unifying the party and it's about focusing on John McCain. This is a clever effort by McCain to divide Democrats at our convention, but I assure you, we're going to leave here stronger and more unified.

SCHIEFFER: Does this mean, though, that Hillary Clinton is going to have to do more to rally her people behind Barack Obama?

Gov. SEBELIUS: Well, I think she's done a spectacular job so far. I think she and the former president will continue to do a great job. Losing an election is always tough. This was a hard-fought and very long race. And as you've already said, 21 debates. I mean, you say a lot of things, you try and get an edge over your opponent. But right now I don't think there's any question at all that the Clintons are wholeheartedly behind Barack Obama. They want to see a Democrat elected president of the United States. She will speak on Tuesday night, the former president will speak on Wednesday night. We are going to hear from them where they think this country should go and that Barack Obama and Joe Biden are the ticket to get us there.

SCHIEFFER: There's no question, though, Governor Rendell--and you talked about it during the campaign--Barack Obama has not done as well as he should among the lower income Democrats. How is he going to get those Democrats? And he can't be elected without the vote of those people.

Gov. RENDELL: Right. And I said yesterday, somebody asked me a question, 'Well, is; Joe Biden all you need?' No. As good as Joe is, we need Barack to get in there, show more of his personality. He's got a great personality. He's a regular guy, par excellence. But secondly, he's got to talk about economic issues and he's got to be more clear; here, a working-class guy who makes \$40,000 a year, here's what's going to happen to you under the Obama tax cuts. You're going to get a bigger tax cut under me than you are under John McCain. John McCain's going to tax your health premiums. And we've got to go through it chapter and verse. John McCain's refuses to close the loophole on companies that take jobs overseas, I will.' When the working-class folks hear those issues from Barack himself, it's going to change.

SCHIEFFER: I must say, a Democratic strategist said to me just this morning the Obama people have got to spend more time getting George Bush's name into this campaign...

Gov. SEBELIUS: Right.

SCHIEFFER: ...and spend less time trying to get Hillary Clinton out of it.

Gov. RENDELL: And Joe Biden did a great job of that yesterday.

SCHIEFFER: What about that?

Rep. JACKSON: There's no doubt about it. This campaign is not about Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, this campaign is about George Bush and four more years of George Bush under John McCain. Now, that message is going to echo clearly from this platform, and I'm fairly confident Democrats are going to leave this conference--this convention more unified than ever, Bob.

Gov. SEBELIUS: Right.

Rep. JACKSON: I mean, you think about the new players who'll be here, the youngest convention of all time. You think about bringing older voters into the process. Barack Obama has united this country and united this party in ways that we have never seen it before, and it's going to be exhibited right here on this floor.

SCHIEFFER: We want to talk some more about this in just a minute, but let's take a one-minute break.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: We're back again with Governor Kathleen Sebelius, Governor Ed Rendell and Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr.

One of the things that cropped last week and got a lot of attention was when John McCain was asked by a reporter a very simple question, 'How many houses do you have?' and suddenly, John McCain was stumped for an answer. Well, he hasn't responded, nobody's asked him about it since. But yesterday Katie Couric asked him the question directly, 'How could you forget how many houses you have?' Listen to this.

COURIC: This week you were roundly criticized for not being able to...

Sen. McCAIN: Mm-hmm.

COURIC: ...remember the number of homes...

Sen. McCAIN: Mm-hmm.

COURIC: ...you own.

Sen. McCAIN: Mm-hmm.

COURIC: How is that possible? How could you not be able to recall that?

Sen. McCAIN: Well, first of all, let me say that I am grateful for the fact that I have a wonderful life. I spent some years without a kitchen table, without a chair, and I know what it's like to be blessed by the opportunities of this great nation. Cindy's father barely finished high school, went off and distinguished himself in World War II in a B-17, and he came back with practically nothing and realized the American dream. And I am proud and grateful for that. And I think he is a role model to many young Americans who serve in the military and come back and succeed. So

the fact is that we have homes and I'm grateful for it. We spend our time primarily in Washington, DC, where I have a condominium in Crystal City; here in this beautiful Sedona that I'm blessed every moment I can spend here; our condominium in Phoenix, Arizona; and a place over in San Diego. The others are also for investment purposes, so all I can say is I am blessed to have the opportunity to continue to be part of a country where you can succeed and do well.

SCHIEFFER: Well, Governor Sebelius, is that going to cut it? Will that put the issue to rest?

Gov. SEBELIUS: Well, I think, Bob, as we talked about before, we need, certainly, Senator Obama to let the Americans know what his plan is for--as president of the United States; how he's going to help rebuild, restore the middle class. But I think we have an opportunity with the candidate on the Republican side who is totally out of touch with what's happening across American towns and cities. People are in foreclosure. They're terrified they're going to lose their homes or they've already lost them. They are afraid they'll never buy a home. We still don't have any idea how many homes John McCain owns. And I don't begrudge him seven, 10, whatever the number is, but I think it's an indication that he has no idea. He doesn't support the kind of foreclosure protection that Senator Obama has put forth. He doesn't support stabilizing this market. The middle class tax cut he's put forward is three times as big as John McCain's. Over and over and over again he wants to help people restore the American dream. John McCain has lived the American dream, but he somehow doesn't feel that that should be opened up to all Americans.

SCHIEFFER: Congressman?

Rep. JACKSON: And this convention is about ensuring that John McCain does not get an eighth home. He has seven homes, that's enough. But public housing...

Gov. SEBELIUS: We think it's seven, Jesse, we're not quite sure.

Rep. JACKSON: Well, we think--could be 10? Well, we don't want an 11th home. We don't want him in the White House. He says he has seven kitchen tables, we don't want him to have an eighth kitchen table. And we understand that he has a wonderful life. This is a great--this is a great country. But millions of Americans at this hour are suffering through a housing market that is collapsed, housing foreclosures. And so when John McCain gets up in the morning and he leaves his house to lock his door, he has to shuffle through a number of keys to figure out which key works in which door in which home he's at at any given time. That suggests, Bob, a significant disconnect between the average American who is experiencing quite a different economy than the one John McCain has been advocating. And I'm sure Governor Rendell and Governor Sebelius can tell you that they're experiencing this in their states.

Gov. RENDELL: Yeah. And what concerns me more than not exactly knowing how many homes he has, Bob--and Jesse's right, it shows he's out of touch. But when he said in January that Americans have done well under the George Bush economy...

Gov. SEBELIUS: Right.

Gov. RENDELL: ...he's so out of touch. Hardly any American, except people who make 5, \$600,000-plus, have done well under this economy. Wages are down, everything else is up.

Americans--middle-class working Americans are getting slaughtered under this economy. How could he have said that?

Gov. SEBELIUS: And he wants to continue those policies. I think that's the most terrifying thing. He thinks we have done well and he thinks more of the same will do even better. That's what we have to let Americans know across this country. He--he's top financial adviser talked about the fact that it's a mental recession, we have a nation of whiners. I'd like him to come to towns across Kansas and Pennsylvania and Illinois and see what's really happening in communities.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you all this. There's no question that John McCain has made some inroads going negative. Is Barack Obama going to have to go negative? Some people are saying he needs to kind of climb off the mountaintop here and get down here and mix it up. What do you think, Governor?

Gov. RENDELL: Well, I think he has to mix it up the way Joe Biden did yesterday. I think that's going to be the tone that both Joe and Barack are going to take. They're going to say, 'Look, John McCain--good man, American hero--but he wants to extend the Bush administration,' as Governor Sebelius said, 'for another four years. This is what he's going to do to your pocketbook. This is what he's going to do to your health care.' So we've got to do it. But we're going to do it on the issues, because we're right on the issues and the American people know we're right on the issues. So they've got to forget all the other stuff and vote for their--the party and the person who's going to be best for their pocketbooks, and that's Barack Obama easily.

Gov. SEBELIUS: And Bob, we've got, again, candidates who have voting records, who have platforms. This isn't some position paper on some Web site, this is the way they voted, the way they work. We've got Barack, who started as an organizer in Chicago, who fought for working-class issues in Illinois, who took that philosophy to the United States Senate. And John McCain for 25 years, and most recently in the last eight, has been a top lieutenant of the Bush-Cheney policy over and over and over again.

SCHIEFFER: But you know, the other party is...

Rep. JACKSON: But Bob, of course we're going to fire back, and we should fire back. But it can be done in a way that's poetic and substantive. Barack Obama must not rise to the call at this convention of the critics, and he must not rise to reactions from McCain, from outside of our convention dictating the terms of the dialogue amongst Democrats. Barack Obama must rise at this convention to the call of history. And if he rises to the call of history, the American people can hear him. Forty-five years ago during this period, Martin Luther King Jr. rose to the call of history and he spoke to millions of Americans, and it led to progressive legislation that changed the face of this country...

Gov. SEBELIUS: Right.

Rep. JACKSON: ...and made this moment possible. Barack Obama will have that moment and that opportunity. Millions of Americans will be listening. Beyond the critics, beyond McCain's antics from the outside, Barack Obama can unify this party and this nation.

SCHIEFFER: Is it going to be hard, though, for Joe Biden? Clearly he's going to have to be the spear guy here, he's going to have to be the point man. Is it going to be hard for him to go after John McCain because they are such close friends?

Gov. RENDELL: No. I think Joe feels very deeply that this country needs change and needs Barack Obama, needs economic change, needs changes on health care, and that overrides even personal friendship. I think Joe's going to be a happy warrior. He's going to go out there and in his special way point out the differences.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, I want to thank all three of you for a very interesting discussion.

Gov. SEBELIUS: Thank you.

SCHIEFFER: I'll be back with a final word in just a moment.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And we're back again at the site of the Democratic National Convention. With us now for a Campaign Quick Check: Dan Balz of The Washington Post, who's been with us and on this story from the very beginning.

Well, what do you think? Joe Biden. Why did he pick Biden?

Mr. DAN BALZ (The Washington Post): Well, I think he came to the conclusion in the end that he needed to do something about concerns about his foreign policy experience, his overall inexperience. I think he wanted somebody who he was confident would be able to go after John McCain in a vigorous way, and we certainly saw that yesterday in Springfield. Joe Biden did not hold back. I talked to a friend of Biden's afterwards and he said, 'I think he demonstrated he is not going to be a reticent vice presidential candidate. He's going to lead the attack.' I think there's another element, though, Bob, and that is the sort of middle class economic message that I don't think Senator Obama himself has quite articulated in the way that the campaign needs, and I think...

SCHIEFFER: And you certainly heard these governors today talking about that.

Mr. BALZ: Absolutely. They were--they were very clear that A, that's needed; and that B, Joe Biden can help to do that.

SCHIEFFER: In a funny kind of way, it's as if the Russians and Paris Hilton are responsible for Joe Biden getting on this ticket.

Mr. BALZ: I think there's a lot of truth to that. I think once those tanks rolled into Georgia, it raised the opportunity for Joe Biden to be the vice president.

SCHIEFFER: So what happens next? How do you see this campaign unfolding?

Mr. BALZ: Well, I mean, this is a very competitive campaign, there's no question about it. I think the Obama people understand that to the degree they thought they might have an easier time, I

think they're well aware that this is going to be a dogfight all the way to the end, probably. It's clear that he's got--that Senator Obama has work to do with this convention, that he has to obviously come out of here with a very united party, that he and the Clintons have got to make it clear that they are all on the same page. Those speeches by both Senator Clinton and former President Clinton I think will be important moments. But the big moment is obviously his speech Thursday night, and he has to both raise the comfort level among people who are not sure that they really know him well enough, but also drive home that economic message.

SCHIEFFER: I meant to ask the governors and I just forgot, whatever happened to Bill Clinton?

Mr. BALZ: Well, he'll be here, and that speech on Wednesday night that he gives will be important. When Bill Clinton is on there are very few people who can make an argument, a political argument, more effectively than he can. But he's not done it yet on Barack Obama's behalf, so we'll be watching that Wednesday night.

SCHIEFFER: Why do you suppose John McCain hasn't picked his candidate yet, or his running mate? Because he told Katie Couric yesterday that he still hasn't made the decision on that. Do you think he was just waiting to see what Obama did?

Mr. BALZ: I think so. I think there were Republicans who were telling him in the campaign that, 'Look, you have the luxury of waiting until you know what the Democratic ticket looks like. There is no reason to go to try to preempt them. You don't get a big PR advantage in doing that. You're much better off to wait and see what the entirety of the opposition looks like. Make your pick at that point.' And I--so I think that they've waited to do that.

SCHIEFFER: Who do you think it'll come down to?

Mr. BALZ: Well, it looks like it's, at this point, down to Governor Romney or Governor Pawlenty. But, you know, these are always personal decisions. There's always an element of surprise that can be added into it. So I continue to wait to be surprised on this. But those two look like they're the leaders at this point.

SCHIEFFER: If he does go with Romney, it'll be because he thinks that Michigan is critical and he absolutely needs him to carry it. But they're not close friends, to put it mildly.

Mr. BALZ: They are not close friends, but I'm told that since the primaries ended they have begun to develop a much warmer relationship, that it is much better than it was during the campaign.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think this kitchen thing, how many houses that John McCain owns, would that in some way argue against putting another very wealthy person, Romney, on the ticket?

Mr. BALZ: Well, we'd be counting a lot of homes if you had a McCain-Romney ticket, there's no question about that. I don't know in the end whether that'll--that will be decisive, but there are little things that happen in a campaign that can affect the internal discussions, and this could be one of them.

SCHIEFFER: All right, Dan Balz, thanks so much.

Mr. BALZ: Thank you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: We'll be back with the final final word in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And finally, today's convention comes on the 100th anniversary of a Democratic convention here in Denver that nominated William Jennings Bryan to carry the Democrats' banner. Contrary to the belief of many of my colleagues I did not attend that gathering, but I have been to a couple of conventions since. I attended my first Democratic convention in 1968 and every one since, so this will be my 11th convention with the Democrats. Next week will mark my 10th with the Republicans, so I've been to 21 in all.

I have to say, the first one for me was the most memorable not for political, but for personal reasons. My first daughter was born nine months to the day after that one. As she later remarked, Chicago in '68 wasn't all fighting in the streets. At another Chicago convention in 1996, that same daughter met the guy she married. How could I not like conventions?

For sure, they aren't as spontaneous as they once were, they're more infomercial than nominating conventions now. But they are still important; that rare time in American life when so many of us take a break, gather round the TV and concentrate on the same thing at the same time. A combination of goofiness, political spin, bombast, talent show auditions and serious business, deciding who we want to lead the nation. It may not be the most official way to do it, but it is the way we do it and it seems to work for us. I guess conventions are an acquired taste, but I wouldn't miss one for the world.

CBS News will be here in Denver all week, and FACE THE NATION will be back next Sunday from St. Paul, where we'll be at the Republican National Convention. Thank you, see you then.

