

Candidacy creates dilemma for moderates

TOPEKA (AP) — Sen. Sam Brownback's presidential hopes could put moderate Kansas Republicans who don't like his positions on social issues in an awkward position.

Candidates are supposed to enjoy the unquestioned backing of their parties in their home states for the obvious benefits it could bring to the state. In 1996, when Bob Dole was the GOP nominee, there seemed no question from the beginning that he would enjoy the support of any Kansas Republican of any prominence.

However, there are questions about whether Brownback can say the same.

Not only does his strong opposition to abortion and embryonic stem cell research bother moderates, but many believe he has actively helped push the state GOP to the right.

"Senator Brownback has got to reach out to traditional Republicans, and he doesn't seem too eager to do that," Ryan Wright, executive director of the moderate Kansas Traditional Republican Majority, said Monday. "That leaves their votes up for grabs."

Brownback kicked off his GOP presidential campaign Saturday, entering a field that could include as many as 10 contenders, including Arizona Sen. John McCain, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. While McCain, Giuliani and Romney all are better known nationally, Brownback enjoys solid support among conservative Christians.

In his announcement, Brownback declared, "I am a conservative and I'm proud of being a conservative." He spoke about promoting a "culture of life" and preserving marriage as a union of a man and a woman.

But his speech also included broader themes, including a call for the United States to fight for the downtrodden. He also said the nation is too divided and, "We need reconciliation."

After his remarks, Brownback expressed confidence that his positions reflect most Republicans' views, despite 2006 elections that gave Democrats control of Congress. He said most Americans are "center-right" in their politics.

"This last election was about Iraq and corruption," he said. "It isn't about basic directions as far as the philosophy of the country."

House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, a fellow conservative, said Brownback has moved toward the center. He cited Brownback's support for an eventual path to citizen-

ship for millions of illegal immigrants.

"I've heard several comments from people that Brownback seems to not have the same agenda that he's had in the past," said Neufeld, R-Ingalls. "He's starting to broaden his agenda."

Yet Wright doesn't think Brownback will enjoy the same support as Dole did.

"There will never be another Senator Dole," Wright said. "Sam Brownback has not achieved the level Bob Dole did. That's largely his own doing."

And Sen. David Wyson, R-Mission, said support for Brownback isn't automatic.

"There are three parties. There's the Democrat party, the moderate Republican party and the conservative Republican party," he said. "Obviously, Senator Brownback belongs to and is the leader of the conservative Republican party."

Bob Beatty, a Washburn University political scientist, said moderates are likely to avoid criticizing Brownback unless he appears to have a chance of winning the nomination. Criticism of Brownback in Kansas "plays terribly" to a national audience, he said.

Several prominent moderate Republicans were noncommittal Monday about Brownback's candidacy.

"There's a lot of candidates who will be running for president. This is early," said Rep. Joann Pottorff, R-Wichita. "No one tells me how I vote on anything. I would look at the candidates."

Sen. John Vratil, R-Leawood, said: "I don't feel any pressure or for that matter any expectation to automatically support somebody just because of the political party they belong to."

But Rep. Tom Sloan, R-Lawrence, said if Brownback proves a viable candidate, moderates will feel pressure to support him.

"Certainly, Eisenhower, when he was president, did a lot for Kansas," Sloan said. "If Bob Dole had been president, he would have done even more than he did as the Senate majority leader and such. There's always a vested interest for Kansans to support the hometown boy or girl."

However, Beatty said: "I think the message would not necessarily be, 'You need to get behind Sam,' but, 'Don't bad-mouth him.'"

On the Net:<

Brownback's campaign: <http://www.brownback.com/>

Internet lies come back to haunt person

Dear Dr. Brothers: I started talking to this guy on a dating site on the Internet. At first, I didn't think I would like him or meet him or anything like that, so I gave him the standard pack of lies about myself. I mean, I lied about my age, my weight, my name, my education and other facts you don't want to tell a stranger. But now, after a month of chatting together, we are about to meet. It turns out I am very interested in him, based on similar interests and hobbies we have (these I didn't fake). Should I confess about my lies before we meet, or just surprise him? — M.C.

Dear M.C.: Before we deal with your upcoming meeting, I'd like to talk a little bit about giving strangers on a dating site a "standard pack of lies" about yourself. I think it is wise not to reveal things like real names, phone numbers, addresses or employers to just anyone, and I'm glad you are prudent. But you should probably use the type of dating site where you



Dr. Joyce Brothers

● Ask Dr. Brothers

can feel comfortable telling the truth about your age and weight and hair color — in other words, one where there isn't a lot of pressure to present yourself as looking a certain way.

It sounds as though your incipient friendship is not based on those things you lied about, but on the hobbies and activities you might enjoy together. That's excellent — and if your new friend can get past the fact that you lied about the other things, it sounds as though you might have a chance to develop a real relationship. But be prepared for him to be disappointed or even angry — especially if he didn't do the same thing and give you a "pack of lies" too! Tell him now, so you can meet

on an even playing field.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am a young widow who has just remarried (we are both in our 40s). I didn't live with my new husband before we joined our lives together, but we traveled together several times and of course visited in each other's homes, went on dates, etc. Well, I have found out since becoming his wife and buying our own place that my man doesn't know how to do anything men are supposed to do! Either I do it (mow the lawn) or we hire someone to do it (change a tire). I am losing respect for him. Am I being unfair? — H.H.

Dear H.H.: I am pretty sure you are being unfair. I doubt very much that your wedding vows included any kind of clause in

which you promised to bake pies from scratch and he promised to fix leaky faucets, so you really can't blame him for putting his priorities elsewhere! Apparently your husband didn't come from the type of background where he was encouraged to learn to do things around the house. Perhaps he never had to help out, or his parents also paid people to do the domestic chores. Your background — though you didn't state as much — probably included a father and perhaps brothers, and almost certainly a first husband who carried a wrench and knew how to use it! I can understand how the idea of manliness is all tied up in your mind with an image of what a man is "supposed" to be able to do. If your husband treats you kindly and is able to pay for the things he doesn't know how to do or doesn't care to do himself, perhaps you could use those strengths of his to form a new image of what is macho.

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Legislators review illegal immigration

TOPEKA (AP) — Over time many Kansans have become increasingly frustrated at the federal government's inability to control the nation's borders as illegal immigrants, especially from Mexico, cross over and fan out across the country.

That frustration from voters led many legislators this year to offer proposals dealing with immigration issues, including making English the state's official language and cracking down on employers who hire illegal workers.

But some lawmakers acknowledge there's only so much they can do because it's largely a federal issue.

"Immigration was the No. 1 issue in my district," House Majority Leader Ray Merrick said. "The frustration is the federal government isn't doing anything and the voters want us to do something."

Melinda Lewis, policy and research director for El Centro Inc., a Hispanic advocacy group in the Kansas City area, agreed Tuesday the frustration factor is there.

"We have a broken immigration system. In immigration, if you're not frustrated, you're not paying attention," Lewis said as she directed some 100 people brought to the Statehouse by El Centro to talk to legislators.

"We're trying to bring members of the Legislature to the point of common knowledge. There's a lot of misinformation about newcomers to the state," she said.

Hispanics are the fastest-growing segment of the state's population of 2.6 million, doubling in number from 1990 to 2000. Census Bureau estimates for 2005 put Hispanics at 8.4 percent of the population.

Last year, 84 bills about immigration were enacted in 32 states, ac-

cording to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The NCSL ranks immigration as the No. 1 policy issue among the nation's legislators this year.

Immigration issues gained momentum, particularly among Republicans who control the Legislature, after the Sept. 11 attacks, said Bob Beatty, Washburn University political scientist.

"Once it became linked to security, it's an issue to didn't go away. The mixture of security and law and order made it a bedrock issue for many Republicans," he said.

In Kansas, House leaders want to make English the state's official language, following the lead of some two dozen other states. Among other things, the proposal says no state or local government agency shall be required to issue written materials in any other language except English.

"We've made it too easy for people not to learn the English language," said Merrick, R-Stilwell. "There's no incentive to learn English. If you're going to live here, you need to learn the language."

Maria Torres, of Salina, one of the El Centro group, said she opposes the legislation.

"It's kind of silly when we are a land of immigrants," Torres said. "We should welcome the immigrants as well as their beliefs and the language they speak."

The official language idea also has detractors among legislators.

"If you want to affirm that English is the obvious language of Kansas, that ranks right up there with naming the Western Meadowlark the state bird. If you want to forbid bilingual, that's just silly," said Sen. Pete Brungardt, who heads a task force studying immigration issues.



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