



## Hudson GOP leaders praise Palin as McCain VP pick

by Amy Sara Clark/The Jersey Journal

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Several Hudson County Republicans embraced Sen. John McCain's choice of Sarah Palin as his running mate, saying the 44-year-old Alaska governor would energize the campaign and perhaps even attract Democratic and independent women voters to the ticket.

"It's a good choice," said Debra Cuseglio, vice chair of Hudson County's Republican Party. "Half the country are women. Don't you think we should be represented by a woman also? It's about time."

State Republican leaders have said that by choosing Palin -- who has a history of challenging Alaska's GOP hierarchy -- McCain will cement his own maverick status.

"I think she got fed up with things she saw as inefficient and wasteful, and worked really hard to correct some of those things. She definitely takes the party in a new direction," said Irene Asbury, a Jersey City attorney who is serving as a delegate to the Republican National Convention next week.

Area Republicans said adding Palin to the ticket might also bring in disgruntled supporters of Sen. Hillary Clinton, even some who disagree with her on abortion.

"She's a woman that is pro-life but I'm pretty sure that she understands women's issues better than a man," said Jose Arango, chairman of Hudson County's Republican Party.

But adding a pro-life woman to the ticket is unlikely to attract Clinton supporters, said Ann Graham, former co-chair of Hoboken for Hillary and vice-chair of the Hudson County Democratic Party.

"If Sen. McCain believes that putting a woman who is conservative and antithetical to all the issues that Hillary believes in is going to attract former Hillary supporters, I think that's gravely in error," she said.

Even if Palin had been pro-choice, her addition to the Republican ticket is unlikely to attract more women voters, said Ruth Mandel, director of Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics.

"I think he is trying to appeal to women, but we don't have any precedent that would suggest that women would be influenced by gender," she said. "The consistent pattern has been that women have preferred the Democrat. ... It's a partisan vote, not a gender vote."

But even if Palin doesn't bring in women voters from the Democrats, she's sure to energize the ones the Republicans already have, as well as feminists of every political stripe, said Christine Carmody-Arey, a women's studies professor at New Jersey City University and former president of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Organization of Women.

"I think that would have a positive effect on conservative women who will be ready to work for the candidate," she said. "It reminds me of when Walter Mondale made the decision to choose Geraldine Ferraro as a running mate in 1984. Oh my God, people were crying ... the enthusiasm, the emotions. It was another step in the long road for women in America to be represented in political office."

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