

Electing a president is no easy task

By **JENNIFER GREGORY**
Catch 22

Recession. Poverty. War. These are merely a handful of the issues the next occupant of the White House will have to deal with beginning next January. However, before any attempt is made to fix the nation's problems, a president needs to be elected, and that process often proves to be as complicated as the presidency itself.

Gov. Rendell originally supported Sen. Hillary Clinton during the primaries because of her experience. He said that Sen. Barack Obama and Clinton's initiatives were "basically the same" but "Hillary proposed better solutions to the issues."

Now that Obama is the presumptive Democratic nominee, Rendell is supporting him, but appears to have some reservations.

"I worry for Senator Obama's lack of experience," he said.

His reservations are not keeping him from possibly serving as secretary of energy for Obama's Cabinet, a position for which he's been considered. However, such an appointment could happen only after his second term ends in January 2011, because, as Rendell said: "When you run for office, you have an implicit contract."

A candidate's experience is not the only factor that influences voters' decisions.

"I think it's true that people vote for all kinds of reasons," said Joe Torsella, chief executive officer of the Constitution Center. "But I think that when you go into the voting booth you should pick the person that's the best."

Race has played a big role in this election, and the issue is likely to intensify.

According to a recent Quinnipiac University poll, Obama has "near unanimous support from black voters," and he leads his presumptive oppo-

Nutter's vision of a better, brighter Philadelphia

By **KIRSTIN CHERISE EVANS**
Catch 22

Dignified portraits of past and present political figures decorate an immense room in City Hall. As Mayor Nutter entered this room, he presented the same dignity.

As a former city councilman and now mayor, Nutter is no stranger to Philadelphia politics. Since his election in November, he has dedicated himself to producing a positive difference in the city he now runs.

Reflecting on his victory, Nutter described it as exciting.

"No one expected me to win," Nutter said, but he had been determined to prove that nice guys can prevail.

Nutter's inspiration to run came from his experience as a councilman, during which he witnessed aspects of the city that were in dire need of improvement. Although the job seemed overwhelming to him at times, Nutter said he constantly reminded himself, "You only get one shot to do this."

Due to an increasing gap between the people and their representatives, Nutter believes in the importance of public visibility to gain the trust of the citizens. He has established city cleanups, and he in-



Nicole Heath

Mayor Nutter said he wants to gain Philly's trust.

tends to participate in them, alongside other volunteers. In April, he participated in the largest city cleanup in Philadelphia to date.

Nutter also is dedicated to communicating what his administration is doing and why.

It may be working. A resident of Southwest Philadelphia complained about her neighborhood and the police.

"It's horrible . . . the police don't do anything. It used to be a lot worse, but Nutter has helped a lot. If anything, we look to him [for assistance] but not those police."

The mayor hopes to improve relations between the police and the public by increasing street patrols, which is expected to lead to more interaction between the police and the

community.

He wants to be remembered for serving the best interest of all Philadelphians, especially in the area of public safety.

"I care less about race, more about crime," he said.

Some elements of Nutter's gun-control policy include the elimination of straw purchasing and the prohibition of assault-weapon sales. ★

Rendell grades himself on gov duties

By **BRANDON ALSTON**
Catch 22

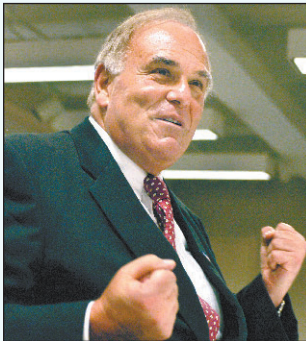
Ed Rendell has been governor of Pennsylvania for five years and before that, he served as mayor of Philadelphia. Speaking to the Urban Journalism Workshop earlier this month, Rendell gave us his own "report card" of his accomplishments. He was honest, too.

Gun control is a prominent issue in Pennsylvania because of increasing violence, especially in Philadelphia. Rendell gave himself and his office an "F" on this issue.

"We tried very hard to pass bills in legislation, but the NRA [National Rifle Association] is very effective in their campaigns."

However, Rendell and his office did manage to get House Bill 22 passed, which allows the purchase of only one handgun per month per household.

The economic recession has been another critical issue in Pennsylvania. Rendell gave himself and his office an "A+" on this issue. "The economic plans



Megan Walsh

Gov. Rendell gives himself an "F" on gun control.

have worked very well," he said.

Transportation is another battle Rendell has had to fight over, an issue for which he gave himself and his office a "B." Rendell has put \$25 million into modernizing and making more secure the state's railroads and airports.

One of the most universal problems is health care. Rendell gave himself and his office a "B" on this issue, too. By 2009, Rendell promises, every child in Pennsylvania will have affordable health care. "There is still more work to be done because there are a lot of people that don't have health care," Rendell said.

With research and studies showing the effects of global warming, protecting the environment has become very significant. Rendell gave himself and his office an "A-" on this issue. He said that when he was elected governor, there was a plethora of industrial parks polluting the environment. Now, building an industrial park in a green area in Pennsylvania is prohibited. ★

nent, Arizona Sen. John McCain, in support from women and young voters.

Even though statistics show that Obama has more support from the black community than McCain does, Mayor Nutter said: "Senator Obama did not get in the position he's in just because he's African-American."

For the 2,437 voters surveyed in Connecticut by the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, 55 percent say the economy is the single most important issue that will influence their decision in the general election. The war in Iraq is a close second (21 percent) and health care is third (9 percent.)

Aside from economic concerns and the war in Iraq, social issues such as abortion and gay marriage will have a significant impact on voters' decisions as well.

In terms of abortion, Americans remain divided. Nineteen percent of 1,783 voters surveyed said that abortion should be legal in all cases, 38 percent said that abortion should be legal in most cases, 24 percent said that abortion should be illegal in most cases and 14 percent said that abortion should be legal in all cases.

Democrats support same-sex marriage by a small margin, whereas Republicans overwhelmingly oppose same-sex marriage, according to the poll results.

Tom Koerber, co-director of the Coalition of LGBT Penn State Graduate Students, said: "For a lot of LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender] individuals, the issue of marriage is of the utmost importance. As we saw in the last presidential election, same-sex marriage was a very polarizing issue, and helped bring many more people to the polls in some states than originally anticipated."

Obama does not support full marriage rights for LGBT couples, but does support civil unions. McCain does not support civil unions, gay marriages or gay adoption. ★