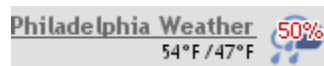


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## As primary season heats up, McCain stops at Penn

### Republican candidate to speak tonight at Zellerbach Theatre

Ashwin Shandilya

John McCain's "Straight Talk Express" is making a pit stop at Penn.

The Republican presidential candidate and Arizona senator will address students in Zellerbach Theatre tonight from 7 to 9 p.m. in a town hall-style meeting.

The event, sponsored by the Penn College Republicans, will also feature remarks by Utah governor Jon Huntsman and former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge.

McCain, as part of his trip from New Hampshire to Washington, D.C., is also stopping in Philadelphia for a fundraising reception, said campaign spokeswoman Brooke Buchanan.

Originally considered one of the top contenders for the presidency, McCain has stumbled over key issues like his immigration policies and now trails Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney in most polls.

So with important early contests in Iowa and New Hampshire fast approaching, what is McCain doing in Pennsylvania, a state with one of the latest primaries in the country?

"He's trying to create a bit of a buzz by trying to attend events in larger media markets," said Donald Kettl, director of the Fels Institute of Government.

McCain's "campaign hasn't gotten a lot of traction in the head-on battles in New Hampshire and Iowa, so he's trying a flanking move that appeals directly to voters," Kettl added.

McCain's straightforward, conversational style also proves popular with college students.

"He's definitely a person that attracts people from all sides of the spectrum," said College Republicans chairwoman and College senior Abby Huntsman, daughter of the Utah governor.

Buchanan said that Jon Huntsman, who serves as co-chairman of McCain's campaign, invited the Arizona senator to the event.

Abby added that her father and McCain have "developed a great relationship."

Jon Huntsman "admired McCain's character and reputation and he had the opportunity to travel with his campaign," she said, adding that her father will continue accompanying McCain on the campaign trail for the next week.

Kettl said that Jon Huntsman's support of McCain may come from the senator's ability "to straddle ideological boundaries."

"Both Huntsman and McCain are relatively moderate. Both are also westerners who have resisted some of the rightward pull in their party," he said.

College sophomore and College Republicans President Zac Byer said the organization expects over 300 people to attend.

"We're hoping that students take advantage of this opportunity," he said. "It says a lot about Senator McCain that he's spending his time with us in a city that's very Democratic, when he could be campaigning in New Hampshire."

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