

# THE GAMECOCK

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## 6 candidates get personal at Columbia forum

BY JUSTIN CHAPPELL  
THE GAMECOCK

Six of the seven Democratic presidential candidates answered questions Friday morning in a forum at the Township Auditorium designed to encourage dialogue with America's families.

The Democratic hopefuls, excluding U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, Connecticut, who skipped the event to campaign in Delaware, spoke in front of nearly 3,000 people about the economy, education and health care.

U.S. Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina spoke of his southern upbringing and experience with upstate textile mills. When asked by James Holloway, a retired textile worker from Saluda, about the exporting of jobs, Edwards relied on his understanding of local issues and his southern drawl.

"We're so focused on free trade; there is no fair trade," Edwards

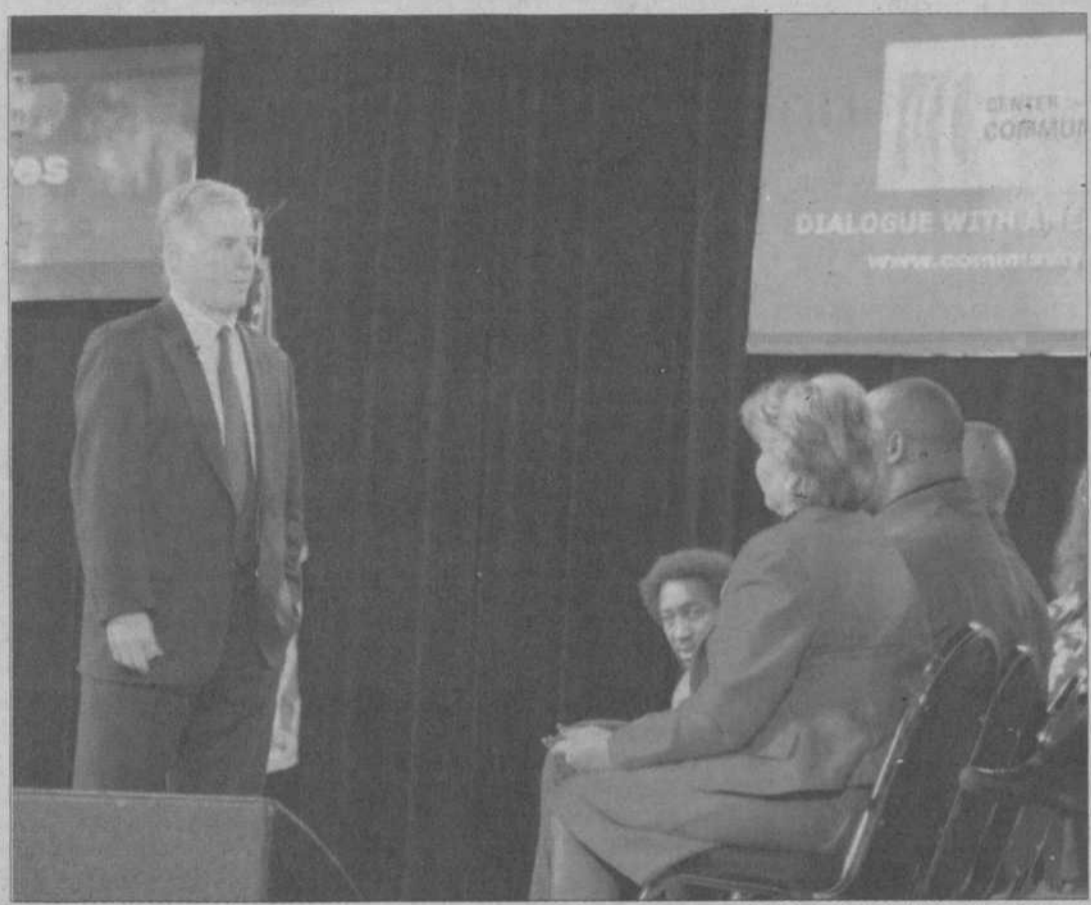
said. "I grew up the way you grew up."

The Rev. Al Sharpton, who drew the loudest applause, said he would institute a two-year tax deferral program that would help get businesses on their feet instead of giving tax cuts to big businesses moving overseas. Regarding trade policy, "I got here as an African because of bad trade policy," Sharpton said.

U.S. Sen. John Kerry, Massachusetts, the front-runner after winning in Iowa and New Hampshire, mentioned his experience in the Vietnam War as his connection to the audience and exposure to poverty.

"Most of the kids I was with in Vietnam came out of the south side of Chicago, south-central Los Angeles or the barrio," Kerry said.

Former governor of Vermont, Howard Dean, who described himself as "fiscally conservative and socially progressive," pre-



Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean answers questions about his platform at Friday's forum at the Township Auditorium.

sented a plan to make education obtainable. Dean said his \$7 billion education program would give everyone the opportunity to go to college and that the program has a built-in loan stipula-

tion that requires college graduates to repay no more than 10 percent of their yearly income toward the loan each year.

Also presenting an education plan, U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich,

Ohio, said students could go to college for free with an \$87 billion tax cut by repealing tax refunds to the wealthy and ending the war in Iraq.

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## Kerry boasts support

BY MICHAEL LAFORGIA  
THE GAMECOCK

U.S. Sen. John Kerry emphasized his military service in Vietnam when he spoke in the Russell House Ballroom Friday morning in an effort to drum up support before Tuesday's primary.

The Massachusetts senator upset some Southern Democrats in New Hampshire last week when he said in three speeches that candidates often make the "mistake" of concentrating on the South.

When asked about the comments during a debate in Greenville Thursday night, Kerry denied using the word "mistake" and said he was talking about the mathematics of an election.

When Kerry appeared in the Russell House Friday, he was accompanied by the Veterans Brigade, a group of Vietnam veterans assembled to campaign with the senator.

Also on hand to support Kerry at USC were U.S. Sen. Fritz Hollings, U.S. Rep. James Clyburn, Former U.S. Sen. Max Cleland, Georgia, and former College of Charleston President Alex Sanders.

For his part, Hollings scoffed at those who labeled Kerry a "liberal from Massachusetts," and took the opportunity to distinguish Kerry from Gen. Wesley Clark, who is also a veteran.

"I want to emphasize right now I'm a Washington insider," Hollings said. "In South Carolina, we believe in insiders." Clark has emphasized that he is a political outsider while campaigning in South Carolina.

Hollings also compared the Iraq situation to the Vietnam conflict.

"We're in trouble again — real trouble. It's Vietnam all over again," Hollings said.

Cleland, who lost his legs and an arm while serving in Vietnam, said he feels a special connection with Kerry, because the two fought for the same cause.

Also appearing to speak on Kerry's behalf was the Rev. David Alston of South Carolina, who served on Kerry's boat in Vietnam.

When Kerry addressed the crowd, he praised his Southern supporters and told them he has relied on the Veterans' Brigade to help his campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire.

"These are the same band of brothers that I relied on 35 years ago, some of them," Kerry said. "We may be a little bit older, we may be a little grayer, but we still know how to fight for this country." Kerry also took the opportunity to praise the South for its ability to overcome past adversity.

If elected, Kerry said he would roll back the tax cut for those earning more than \$200,000 a year, establish universal health care and crack



Carlos Rucker and Mark Bryan of Hootie and the Blowfish perform in support of Sen. John Edwards, North Carolina, Friday at Jillian's Bar and Grill.

## Edwards receives singing endorsement at Hootie concert

BY WES WOLFE  
THE GAMECOCK

Hootie and the Blowfish made good on its endorsement of Sen. John Edwards for president, when the South Carolina band gave a fundraising performance Friday for an overflow crowd at Jillian's Bar and Grill in Columbia.

"I'll be proud to have my good friends Hootie and the Blowfish at my side in South Carolina heading into February third," Edwards said when the concert was announced on Jan. 9. "This is South Carolina's band, and I intend to be South Carolina's candidate come primary day."

There were so many people in attendance that only those who bought tickets before the concert were admitted. Admission wasn't cheap, either. Student's admission was \$35, and the non-student minimum was \$50; Contributions could reach the federal maximum of \$2,000 to see the concert and Sen. Edwards.

Preceding Sen. Edwards on the

stage were College Democrats of America President Ashley Bell and Columbia Mayor Bob Coble. Edwards was also joined by his daughter, Cate, a 21-year-old Princeton student, and his parents, Wallace and Bobbie.

After Bell introduced Mayor Coble, Coble warmed up the gathering by talking about Sen. Edwards's connections to South Carolina.

"John Edwards was born in South Carolina," Mayor Coble said. "He grew up in a mill village. He knows what it means to make South Carolina a great place."

Mayor Coble then introduced Edwards, who made his trademark entrance by working from the back of the crowd to the front, shaking hands and greeting people while John Mellencamp's "Small Town" played over the speakers. Edwards's speech to the crowd was decidedly different than what he said in his candidacy announcement at USC on

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## Voter program brings Declaration of Independence

BY Z'ANNE COVELL  
THE GAMECOCK

Declare Yourself, a national nonpartisan, nonprofit campaign to motivate young voters for the 2004 presidential election, will be visiting USC today at Davis Field from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"We hope to encourage a whole population of voters to know they can facilitate change in their coun-

try," associate director Aimee Jasculca said. "It's really important in an election year to energize voters, and we hope it will be very successful."

The event will showcase one of the 25 remaining original copies of the Declaration of Independence drafted July 4, 1776.

Declare Yourself founder and producer of sitcoms "All in the Family" and "The Jeffersons,"

Norman Lear, bought the copy in an online auction.

Jasculca said the copy was originally found at a flea market behind a picture in a frame. "A man bought the picture just because he liked it, and when he removed the frame, he found the Declaration of Independence," Jasculca said.

Lear was determined that if his bid were successful, he would share the historic document with

the nation.

"When I learned it was going to be auctioned, I thought if I could get it, it was going to travel," Lear said. "It wasn't going to just sit around. I wanted the people to see it."

Declare Yourself evolved from Lear's Declaration of Independence Road Trip, a cross-country tour of the auctioned copy. After seeing people's responses to the tour, Lear decided

to use his copy of the Declaration as an inspiration to voters.

Declare Yourself particularly targets college-age voters to help them develop a lifetime habit of voting.

"Our research shows if a person votes at an early age, they are more likely to become a lifetime voter," Lear said.

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