

# Bipartisan ticket aim of Unity '08

Tired of rancor,  
group to push  
for consensus

By Andrew Seaman  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Unity '08, a new group that believes the current two-party political system has failed the American people, is supporting a bipartisan ticket in the 2008 presidential election and plans to nominate a candidate through the first online convention.

The new bipartisan group was born in 2005 when former presidential aides Doug Bailey, Gerald Rafshoon and Hamilton Jordan met for dinner and decided to stop complaining about the current political system and do something about it.

Mr. Bailey, a co-founder of Unity '08 and former political consultant, said, "By the time we finished the entree, we decided that the idea of a bipartisan ticket, a unity ticket, was the right way to go."

Actor Sam Waterston has become a spokesman for the group, which has attracted as its CEO Robert Bingham, a California Internet entrepreneur. Mr. Bingham said a win for the Unity '08 ticket could have a powerful impact on the political system.

"Nothing changes Washington like a new president," Mr. Bingham said. "He makes a huge number of appointments, and for the first time, if you had a Unity ticket, they can pick the best people for the job and not necessarily their cronies or the people they are beholden to, to select for the key Cabinet positions and all the way down the chain of 60,000-some appointments that they have to make. How would Congress view this? I think Congress would want to work with the president because the president would have the popular vote behind him."

Unity '08 still has a long way to go to get to the White House, though. According to its Web site, the group is still working on recruiting delegates, securing its rules, gaining access to the ballot in all 50 states, holding a convention and setting an agenda and platform.

The lack of an identified candidate and agenda is a problem for Unity '08, says Jane Elmes-



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Actor Sam Waterston is a spokesman for Unity '08, a group advocating a consensus presidential ticket.

Crahall, a professor at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., who studies political rhetoric.

"It's going to hurt them because there is nothing substantial that well-meaning, critical American voters can hold on to," she said. "They're using Sam Waterston as spokesperson because he's identifiable, but most of us think politics in terms of an ideology, and there should be people, ideas and beliefs that are tied together, that are shared by people. And if discontent with the status quo is your only unifying factor, that's not going to be enough to hold it together, in my opinion."

Mr. Bingham, however, says Unity '08 will gain from the "fallout" of the accelerated presidential primary schedule, which he says will "be a giant bar fight."

"We are not going to have a candidate until June of 2008," he said, but predicted the primaries will leave "a lot of people that are going to be disappointed and disaffected. And so we think that those folks will come our direction, and because they will feel like the system isn't going to produce the solutions that they expected."

Mrs. Elmes-Crahall said she expects the movement's appeal to be chiefly to younger voters. "Unity '08, I think, is tapping into this generation of young people, who are very savvy in terms of news, who don't want to be boxed into a particular party," she said.

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