

# McCain says Palin's background thoroughly checked

PHILADELPHIA — Republican John McCain said September 2 he's satisfied that Sarah Palin's background was properly checked out before the Alaska governor joined the Republican ticket. He predicted that public excitement about her candidacy will increase after her address to the GOP convention on September 3.

McCain visited fire houses in Ohio and Pennsylvania on September 2, and was due to arrive at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., on September 3.

Asked about whether Palin's background was thoroughly checked out before he selected her, McCain told reporters in Philadelphia: "The vetting process was completely thorough and I'm grateful for the results."

Later, after visiting a firehouse outside Cleveland in Brecksville, Ohio, McCain added: "I just want to repeat again how excited I am to



Republican presidential candidate, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and his vice presidential running mate, Alaska Gov., Sarah Palin, acknowledge the cheers of supporters during a campaign rally in O'Fallon, Mo., Sunday Aug. 31, 2008. AP Photo by Stephan Savoia

have Sarah Palin, the great governor of Alaska, as my running mate."

"America is excited and they're going to be even more excited once they see her tomorrow night," he said. "I'm very, very proud of the impression she's made on all of America and I look forward to serving with her."

Questions about the review of Palin came up after news sur-

facted that her unmarried teenage daughter, Bristol, is pregnant, and that the Alaska governor has retained a private attorney to represent her in an investigation into the firing of the state public safety commissioner.

The lawyer who conducted the background review said Palin voluntarily told McCain's campaign about Bristol's pregnancy, and about her husband's 2-decade-old DUI arrest during questioning as part of the vice presidential search process.

The Alaska governor also greatly detailed the dismissal of the state's public safety commissioner that has touched off a legislative investigation, Arthur B. Culvahouse Jr. told The Associated Press in an interview September 1.

Palin underwent a "full and complete" background examination before McCain chose her as his running mate, Culvahouse said. Asked whether everything that came up as a possible red flag during the review already has been made public, he said: "I think so. Yeah, I think so. Correct."

McCain's campaign has been trying to tamp down questions about whether the Arizona senator's team adequately researched his surprise vice presidential se-

lection.

Since McCain publicly disclosed his running mate on August 29, the notion of a shoddy, rushed review has been stoked repeatedly.

First, a campaign-issued timeline said McCain initially met Palin in February, then held one phone conversation with her last week before inviting her to Arizona, where he met with her a second time and offered her the job August 28.

Then came the campaign's disclosure that 17-year-old Bristol Palin is pregnant. The father is Levi Johnston, who has been a hockey player at Bristol's high school, *The New York Post* and *The New York Daily News* reported in their September 2 editions.

In addition, the campaign also disclosed that Palin's husband, Todd, then age 22, was arrested in 1986 in Alaska for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Shortly after Palin was named to the ticket, McCain's campaign dispatched a team of a dozen communications operatives and lawyers to Alaska. That fueled speculation that a comprehensive examination of Palin's record and past was incomplete and being done only after she was placed on the ticket.

Steve Schmidt, a senior advis-

er, said no matter who the nominee was, the campaign was ready to send a "jump team" to the No. 2's home state to work with the nominee's staff, work with the local media and help handle requests from the national media for information, and answer questions about documents that were part of the review.

At several points throughout the process, McCain's team warned Palin that the scrutiny into her private life would be intense and that there was nothing she could do to prepare for it.

Culvahouse disclosed details of his examination in a half-hour interview with the AP.

First, a team of some 25 people working under Culvahouse culled information from public sources for Palin and other prospective candidates without their knowledge. For all, news reports, speeches, financial and tax return disclosures, litigation, investigations, ethical charges, marriages and divorces were reviewed.

For Palin specifically, the team studied online archives of the state's largest newspapers, including the Anchorage Daily News, but didn't request paper archives for Palin's hometown newspaper. "I made the decision that we could not get it done and maintain secrecy," Culvahouse said. (AP)

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