

Air Force One Pool-- Andrews to San Antonio

Wheels up 8:42 (est).

About hour later, Peter Kaye materialized with the following on the Texas primary:

He emphasizes Texas is not a beauty contest state; each of 24 Congressional districts will elect four delegates, with four remaining to be chosen at large. Crossover voting is permitted. While the state has 5.4 million registered voters, only 100,000 plus are registered as Republicans. The spread ranges from 793 in the first Congressional District to about 23,000 in the third and seventh districts (Houston and Dallas areas.) For that reason, a small district carries equal weight with the Republican population centers. This means that a candidate could well win the popular vote statewide, but clearly lose the delegate count.

Kaye ~~is~~ said Ford campaign is concentrating ¹⁷³ telephone banks in the 26 counties (out of a total of 254) containing 90 percent of the Republican vote. The counties have a total of 250 fones operating.

Some fones are also operating in 33 other counties, which have another eight percent. Campaign is also sending mailing to 67,000 Republican households. Advocate program will include Betty and Jack Ford, William Simon, Howard Baker, and John Tower.

According to Kaye, the Reagan campaign has predicted it will get 66 delegates--a prediction he ~~predicted~~ likened to the Reagan predictions in Florida. "We are not conceding a majority of the delegates to Reagan," he said, later adding, "We think we can win a majority of the delegates through hard work, intelligent campaigning. But it's going to be an uphill fight."

The major issues, he said, are the economy, energy, grain and foreign policy/defense. Ford's signing of the energy bill ~~was~~ was unpopular in the state, but particularly so in the Houston and Midland/Odessa areas.

Pool learned the Ford campaign expects to spend about \$450,000 on Media on Texas.

Kaye said the process of finding potential ~~and~~ Democrat and Independent crossovers is a needle in the haystack exercise. ~~Computers~~ Computers are being used in effort to identify areas where crossover vote is most likely to be heavy.

John ~~is~~ Tower came back after Kaye. He called the Texas primary "hotly contested."

"I think the President will win a majority of the delegates."

He said he thinks the toughest issue for Ford will be energy, but he believes the ~~issue~~ issue ~~has~~ "has been mitigated to some extent" by President's tough stand on natural gas deregulation.

On foreign policy and defense, he said: "The President has to hit hard on the defense issue. He has a good record on defense; he doesn't have to apologize to anyone. He can take the initiative on that one."

Asked whether he expects Ford to be tough on Reagan in the state, ~~for~~ Tower said the primary approach will be positive--extolling his own positions ~~but not~~ reserving any tough talk on Reagan for question and answer sessions.

On John Connally, Tower said: "I think Connally probably will not ~~en~~ endorse anyone in the primary. Of ~~course~~ course I would like to ~~be~~ pleasantly surprised and have him endorse the President."

He would not speculate on ~~the~~ the prospects for Connally--or anyone else--as a Ford runningmate.

He said "My view is that by early June--I think maybe by the time of the California primary, Reagan ~~might have been~~ may have been mathematically eliminated." (Kaye added, "By the Texas primary, we will be half way there (in delegates) and by the date of the California primary, we'll be all the way there." Tower said Reagan "will virtually have to sweep Texas to stay alive, viable."

"It looks like a desperation campaign to me," he said of Reagan's new strategy, "what we usually call in the trade 'high risk politics,' when you have nothing to lose and start throwing in everything but the kitchen stove."

abramson
brokaw
cormier
de frank
thomas