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Supporters celebrate legacy of UM Press

By Janese Silvey

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For months, Clair Willcox has been trying to dispel the notion that the University of Missouri Press is stuck in the paperback age of publishing — and yesterday, he had an e-reader to prove it. During a celebration of the UM Press, Willcox — laid off as editor in chief at the press last month — read an excerpt from a UM Press-published book from a Kindle.

UM System administrators have said they want to phase out the current UM Press and open a new high-tech press model on the MU campus that would publish books but also embrace new types of technology. Opponents argue that the press already offers titles in a variety of digital formats. The UM Press was "offering online databases long before the iPad was a gleam in someone's eye," Willcox said.

Roughly 100 professors, community members and students attended a celebration of the history of the press at Jesse Wrench Auditorium on campus. Sponsored by the Coalition to Save the University Press, the event included readings and book displays and also allowed press supporters to plan their next move in hopes of reversing the UM System's decision to close it.

"We are here to save the press by praising the press," Columbia author William Least Heat-Moon said. "We are not here to bury the press."

Heat-Moon is not affiliated with the UM Press but has been a vocal critic of plans to replace it with a new model. "The new model is bogus," he said. "It is totally, completely, absolutely and fully unnecessary, and we must not allow this change to happen."

MU officials announced last month English Professor Speer Morgan would direct a new press staffed mostly by graduate students. The model was based on a proposal Morgan sent to Steve Graham, UM associate vice president for academic affairs, in April.

Heat-Moon pledged \$100,000 to support the current press and called on others to also contribute. Some said they're worried, though, that donations would be redirected to the new press. The current press's endowment of \$100,000 now appears on a proposed budget for the new campus model.

That budget also shows the new operation relying on an initial \$575,000 from sales off the UM Press backlist. But that figure might be in flux: As of this morning, 45 authors have asked for the rights to their books back.

"I do not wish to be associated with the press if it is merely going to be a vanity press for MU administration or faculty members rather than the fully functioning nationally-respected and fine press that it was before your changes," Tom Spencer, a former Missouri historian, wrote to the UM System yesterday requesting rights to his three books.

Ned Stuckey-French, who is in the English department at Florida State University, said he planned to meet with an attorney today to discuss legal action if rights aren't returned.

UM spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said the UM System is calling for nominations for an advisory committee including authors and faculty that will consider suggestions and make recommendations about the future press.

"We appreciate supporters of the University of Missouri Press coming together yesterday, and we continue to hear and listen to their concerns," she said. "Like them, we remain committed to strengthening the press to better serve the scholarly community."

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'Godliness is the key to healthiness': Religion boosts mental health, research says

Religious people have better mental health than non-believers, new research has revealed.

Those who follow a faith, regardless of which one, have enhanced well-being, which scientists attribute to their spirituality.

And doctors could take advantage of this relationship by tailoring treatments and rehabilitation programs that accommodate a patient's religious beliefs - especially among mental health sufferers.

Professor Dan Cohen, of the University of Missouri in the United States, said: 'Our prior research shows that the mental health of people recovering from different medical conditions, such as cancer, stroke, spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury, appears to be related significantly to positive spiritual beliefs and especially congregational support and spiritual interventions.'

He said that those who seek spirituality may help them come to terms with mentally challenging situations, like stress or neuroticism.

He said: 'Spiritual beliefs may be a coping device to help individuals deal emotionally with stress.'

The researchers used three surveys to determine if correlations exist among people's mental and physical health, personality factors, and spirituality in Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Catholics and Protestants.

Across all five faiths, results showed a higher level of spirituality was related to better mental health, particularly lower levels of neuroticism and greater extraversion despite how often the patients participated in religious activities.

The researchers believe spirituality may help people's mental health by reducing how self-centred they are and developing their sense of belonging to a larger whole.

Spiritual interventions - such as religious-based counselling, meditation, and forgiveness protocols - could enhance spiritually-based beliefs, practices, and coping strategies in positive ways.

Many different faiths encourage spirituality, even though they use different names for the process - a Christian monk would not say he had attained Nirvana - but they may be referring to similar phenomena.

The researchers say the selflessness that comes with spirituality enhances characteristics that are important for adopting a global society based on the virtues of peace and cooperation.

Professor Cohen said: 'In many ways, the results of our study support the idea that spirituality functions as a personality trait.

'With increased spirituality people reduce their sense of self and feel a greater sense of oneness and connectedness with the rest of the universe.

'What was interesting was that frequency of participation in religious activities or the perceived degree of congregational support was not found to be significant in the relationships between personality, spirituality, religion and health.

'Health workers may also benefit from learning how to minimise the negative side of a patient's spirituality, which may manifest itself in the tendency to view misfortune as a divine curse.'

Teens who can cope don't think 'me first'

Adolescents who cope with stress by working to reduce it are more likely to take part in actions that help others, like volunteering and donating money.

Infants innately relieve stress by crying, turning their heads, or maintaining eye contact. Adults manage emotional tension using problem-solving or by seeking support. A new study describes how the developing personalities and coping habits of adolescents affect their behaviors toward others.

"We're each born with some personality tendencies; for example, we see that babies are fussy or calm," says Gustavo Carlo, professor of diversity in the University of Missouri Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

"Those characteristics can change over time as people experience certain events or as a result of their parents, peers, or communities. At the same time, as we get older, our personalities become more stable."

Carlo and his colleagues surveyed 1,557 students ages 12-15 years old in Valencia, Spain, to measure their feelings toward others, their past prosocial and physically aggressive behaviors, their emotional stability, and how they manage stress. The findings are published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

Empathetic adolescents were more likely to use problem-focused coping, which aims to reduce or eliminate the source of the stress. These adolescents also were more likely to perform prosocial behaviors that benefit others, such as volunteering, donating money, or helping friends with problems.

Conversely, emotionally unstable, impulsive adolescents relied more on emotion-focused coping tactics such as venting, avoidance, or distraction, and they showed more frequent signs of aggression.

"Empathetic kids are generally very good at regulating their emotions and tend not to lose their tempers," Carlo says. "When you're good at regulating your emotions, you're less concerned

about yourself and more considerate of other people. On the other hand, impulsive children are more self-focused and have difficulty engaging in problem-focused coping.”

Teaching adolescents multiple ways to handle stress will help them decide which coping techniques to use based on the unique situations, Carlo says. In some cases, people may use both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, while in others, one might be more beneficial.

For example, emotion-focused coping might be more constructive when children witness their parents’ divorces because the kids cannot change those situations. On the other hand, planning ahead to study for tests or complete homework is a problem-focused coping technique that can help adolescents effectively ease academic stress.

“Sometimes we get stuck dealing with stress in one way because it was successful in the past; that coping style may not be effective with other stressors and in other situations,” Carlo says. “There is more than one way to cope in situations, and people need to know when to apply which coping mechanisms.”

Co-authors included researchers from Chatham University in Pennsylvania and the University of Valencia in Spain.



Balance 529 Savings Plan Distributions With Other College Funding

Financial experts offer tips on how to utilize 529 funds along with other education money.

It's tempting for parents to withdraw funds they've saved in a 529 plan, a higher education savings account with tax benefits, if their son's or daughter's freshman-year education costs are entirely paid for by scholarships, grants, and tax credits. **But Ryan Law CFP®, director of the University of Missouri's Office for Financial Success, says it's not always a good idea.**

Availability of funds can vary from year to year. In certain years, 529 plan distributions may be needed to supplement other forms of college funding, Law says. Other years, he notes, there may be enough funding without 529 plan funds.

Before parents withdraw their first dollar from 529 plans, they should follow these three steps:

1. Start with the cost of attendance: The cost of attendance, according to the Department of Education, is the total cost of going to school—from tuition to housing. This number is available on university websites via cost of attendance calculators, such as this one from Louisiana Tech University. But parents can get a better estimate by discussing their son's or daughter's current or future college budgeting with someone in the student money management or financial aid office, Law says.

For instance, the university cost of attendance calculator doesn't track if particular majors require more lab fees or equipment charges, he says. Compare the revised college costs estimate with total grants, scholarships, and tax credits parents expect this year, Law says. Then supplement with 529 plan distributions as needed to make up the difference for qualified higher education expenses, education-related costs allowed to be paid with 529 distributions.

2. Consider factors affecting future availability of funding: Once you know if this year's college expenses are covered by grants, scholarships, grants, or tax credits, you can consider future years, Law says. He notes that availability of funding can change annually for a variety of reasons.

For example, scholarships that students receive one year may not be available the next. Four-year scholarships can even be rescinded; it's important for students and parents to know what can

cause a student to lose continuation of a four year scholarship, Law says. For instance, Law was among 20 students who received a certain college scholarship during his undergraduate career. In order for his scholarship funds to renew, he had to maintain a certain GPA and complete a community service requirement.

Availability or amounts of federal grants and tax credits can also change at the discretion of Congress, Law says. In addition, changes in family income affect eligibility.

3. Avoid emptying 529 plans until education is complete: Parents aren't assessed a tax penalty on money withdrawn for a non-educational purpose equal to or less than the amount of scholarships or grants received within the same tax year, but they do have to pay income taxes on earnings, says Jason Washo, a personal financial specialist and certified public accountant.

The income tax paid is based on the parents' tax bracket, Washo says. For example, if a parent were to withdraw funds from a 529 account with \$25,000 left in it—\$12,500 was from money the parent contributed and \$12,500 was from investment growth—at the end of a child's college career, he or she would be charged income tax on the half from earnings, Washo explains.

If the parent is in a 25 percent tax bracket—between \$70,700 and \$140,700 in income for 2012—the tax is slightly more than \$3,000. If \$10,000 of the \$25,000 was withdrawn because of scholarships received in previous tax years, there would be an additional 10 percent penalty, equaling \$500, on the portion from earnings. But the parent is still left with just under \$21,400 that they can spend on anything they want, Washo notes.

THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN

The 4-1-1 on Mizzou in the SEC

By Ishmael H. Sistrunk | [0 comments](#)

Ever since the autumn announcement that the University of Missouri athletics would join the SEC, pigskin prognosticators have been predicting the demise of Mizzou football. Of course the big, bad boys of the South have dominated college football of late, having had a conference affiliate crowned BCS National Champion the past six seasons. The notion that SEC football is the greatest, purest form of college football ever known to man has been so often repeated that it's now accepted as second-nature - but is it true? If so, do the Tigers have a chance to swim with the big fish or is the team doomed to drown in deep waters of its new home?

First off, had the Tigers remained in the Big 12 Conference following the team's mildly underwhelming 8-5 finish a season ago, they would've likely been considered strong contenders for the conference title. Last season, the team struggled to an 4-5 start in sophomore QB James Franklin's first season at the helm. As Franklin grew more comfortable in the offense, the team improved tremendously and finished the season with a four-game winning streak, including an impressive 41-24 victory over North Carolina in the Independence Bowl.

Franklin finished the season with nearly 3000 yards through the air and 21 passing touchdowns versus just interceptions. He also rushed for nearly 1000 yards and 15 scores. With his top receiver, T.J. Moe, returning for his senior season and incoming five-star freshman wideout Dorial Green-Beckham expected to work his way up the depth chart to become a big contributor, Franklin is poised for a big season.

Of course, the SEC's staunch reputation has quelled the lofty expectations the Tigers might have faced in the Big 12. In its first seven games, the team will face three top-10 preseason squads (#6 Georgia, #9 South Carolina and #2 Alabama). They will also face tough teams such as Tennessee and Florida on the road. Many fans and experts are expecting Coach Gary Pinkel's team to lose all the aforementioned games, meaning the best case scenario would be another 8-5 season, presuming another mid-level bowl win.

However, in his book "Better Off Without 'Em," author Chuck Thompson challenges the ideal of SEC dominance and claims the reason for the six consecutive BCS titles has more to do with the league's lucrative deal with ESPN than actual league dominance. He claims because the network has deals with both the SEC and the BCS, it's in best interest of ESPN, for the SEC to play for the national championship as often as possible, hence the impressive preseason polls.

The numbers seem to support the theory considering the SEC has won 57% of the titles in the BCS era, but only won 10% of the titles in the 50 years prior. Thompson also put together a compilation of the SEC's records versus other power leagues since the start of the BCS era (1998) and the results are surprising:

SEC vs. PAC-12 regular season: **10-12**

SEC vs. Big 12 regular season: **6-10**

SEC vs. ACC regular season: **42-36**

SEC vs. Big 10 regular season: **7-4**

SEC vs. Big East regular season: **16-15**

So as the Tigers veer into the uncharted lands of the SEC, there will undoubtedly be a learning curve. In addition to the additional \$750k the school is expected to pay for travel expenses, the team will be playing new opponents in new stadiums. But despite the league's reputation for dominance, Mizzou should have a fighting chance to compete in its new conference.

Instead of worry about their supposedly indestructible foes and the passionate and intimidating fans on the road, the success of Mizzou's season will depend on Franklin's surgically repaired shoulder, Green-Beckham's learning curve and Kendial Lawrence's performance as the starting tailback in the absence of Henry Josey due to injury - and of course the defense.

For the school that's credited with the invention of Homecoming, fans will be interested to see how many wins the Tigers can bring home in its first season in the SEC. Only time will tell, but there's plenty of reasons to expect the Tigers to put up a good fight against the schoolyard bullies.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Extension reduces services in Greene County

19 hours ago

The University of Missouri Extension is reducing services in its Greene County office because of funding decreases.

The extension says in a news release that it's moving a 4-H job out of the county, cutting the positions of two part-time secretaries and leaving a vacancy in the nutrition program unfilled.

The moves come as county funding dropped from \$95,000 in 2009 to the statutory minimum of \$10,000.

The University of Missouri pays for five specialists headquartered in Greene County. County money pays for support staff and office expenses.



Idea behind Akin's rape comment has ancient roots

By Rudi Keller

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U.S. Rep. Todd Akin's explanation of how a woman's body prevents pregnancy during rape has been roundly condemned as false, but as the controversy has unfolded, he has revealed that his source for the idea is a doctor who also has advised Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

The idea might have its roots in ideas that were widely held from about 300 B.C. until the Age of Enlightenment, which is dated to have begun about 1785, said Stefani Engelstein, director of the Life Sciences & Society Program at the University of Missouri.

"From at least 200 or 300 B.C. through the Enlightenment, people thought both partners needed to come to orgasm and release something that would form the offspring," Engelstein said.

A woman would not orgasm during a rape, and that made pregnancy impossible under that set of ideas, she said. If a woman became pregnant, it was interpreted as she was probably lying, she said.

"Blaming the victim was always a component of the theory that women needed to experience pleasure to conceive," Engelstein said. "It allowed people to claim that women were deceptive because their bodies told one story and they themselves another and that women in general were also more lascivious than they might claim to be."

The Romney adviser whose ideas became the basis of Akin's assertion is John Willke, a physician who once was president of the National Right to Life Committee. In 1999, Willke wrote an article, posted on the Physicians for Life website, titled "Assault Rape Pregnancies are Rare" that claimed rape victims have difficulty getting pregnant. "To get and stay pregnant a woman's body must produce a very sophisticated mix of hormones," Willke wrote. "Hormone production is controlled by a part of the brain that is easily influenced by emotions. There is no greater emotional trauma that can be experienced by a woman than an assault rape."

In that article, Willke asserted that the number of pregnancies that result from rape to be 200 to 1,000 per year. Other studies came to different conclusions. One survey of rape victims estimated that the number of rape-related pregnancies is closer to 32,000 pregnancies per year.

Willke's assertion has been condemned after Akin on Sunday said, "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

The University of Missouri Health System issued a statement today on rape and pregnancy. "A woman who is raped has no control over ovulation, fertilization or implantation of a fertilized egg (i.e., pregnancy). To suggest otherwise contradicts basic biological truths."

Conservative talk show hosts Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity both denounced Willke and Akin's assertions. "He's not the first guy to say this," Limbaugh told his audience. "I've had people tell me that a woman's body shuts down in rape. There's no evidence for this. I mean, it's absolutely absurd."

Willke, however, repeated his claims in an interview this week with The New York Times.

"This is a traumatic thing — she's, shall we say, she's uptight," Willke said of a woman being raped, adding, "She is frightened, tight and so on. And sperm, if deposited in her vagina, are less likely to be able to fertilize. The tubes are spastic."

With Akin on his program yesterday, Hannity told him those ideas are wrong and that there is no distinction between "assault rape" or "legitimate rape" and other kinds of rape.

"Rape is rape, I mean we got to be honest here," Hannity said. "And when you talk about, well, a woman's body has a way of doing that, a lot of people, including myself, thought it was a pretty ignorant statement in terms of medical science and biology."

Akin acknowledged to Hannity that he was wrong in his statement and that he has since learned that pregnancy in rape is common. "Well, and I don't know, I am no medical expert, so I don't pretend to know percentages or anything like that. It was just an article I read or a couple of articles I read, and I think that they were probably in error."

Limbaugh had insight into why abortion opponents continue to make the claim. "This is the kind of thing that people who do nothing but talk amongst themselves will conjure up ... they'll grab onto anything they can to support what their empirical belief is because their ultimate aim is to save life," he said.

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How Todd Akin Could Save His Senate Campaign

He says he's not giving up despite furor over rape comments. Strategists offer advice on recovery.

MU MENTION PAGE 2

Karl Rove called Missouri Rep. Todd Akin's comments about rape and pregnancy "so bad, so deplorable, so out of touch that there's no way to recover." But Akin's made it clear that he's not walking away from his U.S. Senate campaign. Despite calls from everyone from presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney to Sen. Scott Brown of Massachusetts to abandon the fight, Akin's gone rogue.

Republican money giant Crossroads GPS won't fund him, and as long as he sticks it out, the National Republican Senatorial Committee is holding its \$5 million for the Missouri race hostage.

"His ability to control the message of the campaign has been lost," says GOP strategist Ron Bonjean. "If the Republicans thought there was a chance he could win, they wouldn't have pulled his ad time."

So what can Akin do?

Republican and Democratic strategists alike aren't placing bets on Akin, but they do have some advice. First of all, they say, stop hiding.

Politico reported Wednesday that Akin has "been in a bunker. Holed up at his political consultant Rex Esass's office in Ohio."

Matt Mackowiak, a GOP strategist, points out that if Akin is so set on running for the Senate, he has to get out on the ground and start connecting with voters again.

"Come back to the state you are running in," Mackowiak says. "When you are in these circumstances, the immediate, knee-jerk response is to buckle down, but if you act like there is a problem, you have a problem. If you are going to stay in, you have to be on the ground showcasing your family, building a women's coalition."

Advisers close to the campaign should be scheduling media interviews with Akin's daughters and his wife, strategists suggest. It's the trick that presidential candidates Romney and Rick Santorum both used in the primary to bolster their position with women.

Strategists say if you are not doing well with women, place your closest female allies front and center on the campaign trail.

Next, advisers say, Akin has to stop floundering on his comment, apologize once and for all, and move on. [Meet Rex Elsass, The influential GOP Consultant Keeping Todd Akin in the Race.]

"He needs to go on Missouri TV and say, 'I am running for Senate. Tell me what you think I should do,'" says Lanny Davis, a Democratic crisis management consultant. "He has to be honest and say, 'I still believe that a rape victim should have a baby, but do you forgive my stupid words?'"

After that, campaign strategists warn, Akin should stay quiet on social issues.

"Pivot to something else," says Mackowiak. "I don't think women are voting specifically on these social issues, but when a politician stirs it up, it makes women stop and say, 'I am not sure if this person belongs in the race.' "

Peverill Squire, a political science professor at the University of Missouri, says Akin needs to refocus on attacking his opponent Claire McCaskill's close ties to President Obama and any failed policies she's embraced in the past.

"Akin's best hope is for the campaign to return to a focus on jobs and the economy," Squire says. "Running a race focused primarily on social issues, as Akin has suggested, will not be enough to win in November because too many suburban Republicans, particularly women, are likely to be turned off by strident appeals."

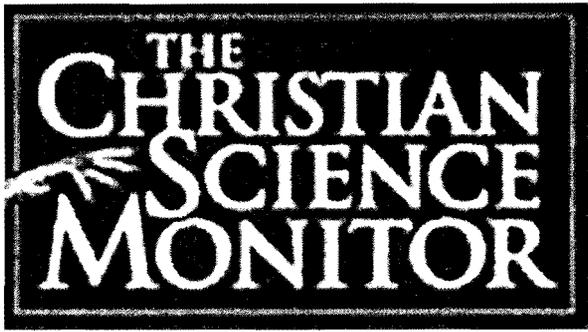
Akin's other major obstacle is cash. With just over \$500,000 on hand as of mid-July, Akin has a fraction of the cash McCaskill is holding onto. Without help from outside groups, the disadvantage could spell the end for Akin.

Strategists advise Akin to reach out to major pro-life donors, who may not be able to keep up with McCaskill's over the long haul but could provide some cushion as Akin attempts to bounce back.

"Find a way to capitalize on the mistake," Mackowiak says. "For everyone you are making mad, you are resonating with someone else."

Already, Akin's won over the support of major pro-life groups like the Family Research Council. And in his own backyard, Missouri Right to Life was one of the first groups to come to his defense.

"Missouri Right to Life supports Congressman Akin's defense of the life an innocent, unborn child conceived by rape," said the group's president, Pam Fichter.



Who will stick with Todd Akin?

Todd Akin, refusing to bow out of the Missouri Senate race, is appealing to social conservatives, religious pro-family groups, and high-profile politicians to try to steer his campaign back on course.

The purse strings have tightened as Rep. Todd Akin has defied top Republicans, staying in the Missouri Senate race amid controversy over his views on rape and abortion.

The Senate campaign committee has revoked the \$5 million it designated for Representative Akin, and key fundraising events have been canceled. Republican operators like Karl Rove have withdrawn support from Akin's campaign.

So who will stick with him?

In a bid to steer his campaign back on course, Akin has begun appealing to social conservatives, religious pro-family groups, and high-profile politicians (even if publicly, they're steering clear of him right now).

A sign that his appeals could work: The Boone County Republican Central Committee, which is representative of Missouri's more-moderate demographics, declined on Tuesday night to call for Akin to step down.

Also, for now at least, polls show him still ahead of the embattled incumbent in the race – Sen. Claire McCaskill, a “blue dog” Democrat who earned the nickname “Obama-Claire” after backing national health-care reform.

How Missourians are reacting “is sort of hard to know, because the harsh glare of the national spotlight has made it difficult to see what’s happening locally,” says Marvin Overby, a political science professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia. “But the fact is, time has a healing effect, and it’s hard to imagine hard-bitten, hard-nosed Republican operatives [staying] angry at Akin if it looks like he could still win.”

Professor Overby adds, “He’s got this very rabid base of supporters who are going to turn out for him come hell or flash floods.”

At least right now, this Senate seat is arguably the most important one in America. Who wins it could determine which party has control of the Senate in January.

Akin has apologized several times for insinuating that women usually don't get pregnant from "legitimate rape," a statement that was taken by many Americans to be as much about his views on women and sex as on abortion.

The remarks have been political gold for Senator McCaskill, who has sometimes struggled to connect with her constituents. The dust-up should help her raise money and could pad an already formidable lead in fundraising over Akin.

For the Akin camp, the big question, for the moment at least, is whether his campaign will be able to raise enough cash to fight a defensive TV ad war in the high-dollar Kansas City and St. Louis media markets.

Bill Hillsman, a veteran campaign consultant in Minneapolis, sees some fundraising potential for Akin.

His decision to stay "has less to do with social conservatives in Missouri and more to do with a calculation that national money will come back to him," he says. "If the Republicans are stuck with him, they're not going to abandon him, because it's Missouri."

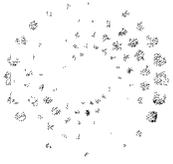
But Akin might not be dependent on national money, Overby says. "You ... have to remember he was outspent 5 to 1 in the primaries, so he's not as reliant on big campaign donations as" an average candidate, he says.

But Akin's appeals to conservatives could run aground if another brewing development – GOP kingmaker Sarah Palin agitating for a possible third-party ballot challenge – comes to fruition.

"If this thing is going to be thrown into a jump-ball situation [between two damaged candidates], if they could get somebody on the ballot running as an alternative, [that candidate] could have a serious chance of winning with not even that much money," Mr. Hillsman says.

Depending on how polls and fundraising pan out in the next few weeks, Akin could still drop out of the race. According to Missouri law, he could withdraw as late as Sept. 25 by petitioning a state court. But that petition could be challenged by Missouri's secretary of State, and a court case could dredge up the controversy just over a month before the election.

Despite the candidate's defiance, that option remains open, political analysts say.



REUTERS

Akin furor knocks Republicans off message, again

MU MENTION PAGE 2

For Republicans, it could be another lost week in their effort to keep November's election focused on President Barack Obama's handling of the weak U.S. economy.

After much of the summer news cycle was dominated by immigration, Obama's healthcare overhaul, Medicare and a gaffe-ridden foreign trip by Mitt Romney, the Todd Akin controversy is further obscuring the Republicans' central message on jobs.

Uproar over comments by Republican congressman Akin that women's bodies automatically protect them from impregnation after "legitimate rape" is also overshadowing the buildup to the party convention in Tampa next week.

Despite appeals from Romney and other leading Republicans, Akin refused to quit the Missouri Senate race before a deadline on Tuesday, increasing the party's risk of losing women's votes and distracting from Romney's message on the economy.

Vowing not to bow to pressure from "party bosses", Akin said he would remain in the contest against Democratic U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill to respect the wishes of Missouri voters.

But he left open the possibility of pulling out.

"I'm never going to say everything that could possibly happen. I don't know the future," he said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

Republicans fear the Akin episode could not only damage Romney's White House bid but also prevent them from winning the Senate seat in Missouri. That could have important national consequences as it might end their chances at the four-seat net gain they need ensure a majority in the 100-member Senate.

Democrats are linking Akin to Romney's vice presidential running mate Paul Ryan, a staunch opponent of abortion rights.

"I just think that what Akin's done has been damaging not just to him, not just to other candidates in Missouri, not just to our ability to win Missouri at the presidential level, but to Ryan and to Republicans across the country," Republican strategist Matt Mackowiak said.

Romney, running neck-and-neck with Obama in opinion polls, is also at risk of being hurt by the controversy just as he seeks positive headlines before next week's convention.

An anti-abortion physician who is the source of Akin's widely ridiculed claim that trauma caused by rape makes a woman's reproductive system shut down was a prominent Romney supporter when he first ran for president four years ago.

Romney called the doctor, Jack Willke, "an important surrogate" in 2007, the Los Angeles Times reported.

A fervent opponent of abortion rights, Akin says his convictions are keeping him in the Missouri race.

"It's about trying to do the right thing and stand on principle," he told NBC's "Today" program.

Akin apologized again in multiple television interviews on Wednesday for his earlier remarks but refused to bow out. "The people of Missouri chose me, and I don't believe it's right for party bosses to decide to override those voters," he told ABC.

Akin has another deadline - September 25 - to take his name off the ballot in Missouri, but that would be far too late to prevent damage at the Republican National Convention.

Republicans hope to use the Tampa gathering to reinvent millionaire former Massachusetts Governor Romney as a warmer, less aloof man than the image that is often cast of him.

A strong convention performance will launch Romney into the last two months before the November 6 election on a high note he has rarely achieved. The Akin affair would then quickly be forgotten, said Republican strategist Ford O'Connell.

"If they hit the ball out of the park in Tampa we're not going to be talking about this," he said.

Akin has so far resisted huge pressure from the party to quit, although he may eventually hit money problems especially since a Senate Republican funding group held back \$5 million it had intended to spend on his behalf.

A Super PAC linked to strategist Karl Rove, which has already spent \$4.5 million in Missouri, said it will not spend any more on the Missouri contest if Akin is in the race.

"We assume Akin will stay in and that it will be much more difficult for him to win than it would have been before he made those comments. I don't know if further down the road if he really does lack funds, if he might reconsider," said Peverill Squire, a University of Missouri political science professor.

A fundraising website bannered "Help Todd Fight Back Against the Liberal Elite," said he had raised almost \$30,000 by Wednesday afternoon.