

## D'Amato endorses McCain

*by UPI*

NEW YORK - Former U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato endorsed Arizona Sen. John McCain for the Republican presidential nomination after his first choice left the race Tuesday. D'Amato, a Republican powerhouse, was supporting former Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson, who bowed out of the race Tuesday after his disappointing showings South Carolina, Nevada and Michigan. "I think he is our best chance to win the White House," said D'Amato, when asked why he chose McCain over former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. "My support for him is not because there's somebody else in the wings that I may have differences with -- even though that may be true." McCain came to New York Tuesday as polls indicate him leading Giuliani there 36 to 24 percent, in a poll by Siena College, and 36 to 23 percent, in a survey by WNBC/Marist, The Washington Post reported. "Last night, I noticed the Democratic candidates mentioned my name quite frequently," said McCain, flanked by D'Amato and former Texas senator Phil Gramm at New York City's swanky St. Regis Hotel. "I'm always flattered to be mentioned in a Democratic debate. It's pretty clear they view me as the most formidable opponent. I agree with them."

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