

Puerto Rico has unique role in Dems race

by UPI

SAN JUAN - Puerto Rico could play a pivotal role in choosing the Democratic presidential nominee, even though Puerto Ricans cannot vote in November's election. The South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported Thursday that because Puerto Ricans can vote in presidential primaries by agreement by the Democratic and Republican parties, their support is being courted by Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Historically, the Puerto Rico primaries were not in the national spotlight, but because there is a tight race for the 2,025 delegates needed to clinch the party's nomination, both candidates are eyeing the state's 63 delegates up for grabs in the commonwealth. "It's poetic justice," said Kenneth McClintock, president of the Puerto Rico Senate and a superdelegate of the island's Democratic Party. "With so much at stake, people are going to vote en masse," he said. Clinton and Obama have said they will campaign on the island, the newspaper said. In addition to the Iraq war, healthcare and the economy, many Puerto Ricans are also concerned with whether to remain a commonwealth or seek statehood or even vie for independence. "You can't simply ignore where a political leader stands on the issue when you are considering what they are saying," said Columbia Law School Professor Christina Duffy Burnett, who has studied the issue.

© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Puerto Rico has unique role in Dems race by UPI