

Domestic issues dominate at Dems forum

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Eight candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination focused mainly on domestic issues at a forum Thursday at Howard University in Washington.

In a debate televised over PBS, the candidates spoke before a live audience at the historically black school, and one of the first topics was Thursday's U.S. Supreme Court ruling prohibiting the use of race in public schools' efforts to achieve racial integration.

The candidates denounced the ruling, and Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., told listeners he was a beneficiary of the landmark 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling that found school segregation unconstitutional.

"And it was their fundamental recognition that for us to achieve racial equality was not simply good for African-Americans, but it was good for America as a whole," he said.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a Latino, said "issues of diversity ... aren't talking points. They are facts of life."

After Richardson complimented the Bush administration's efforts to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa, Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., said more needs to be done on the issue in the United States.

"If HIV/AIDS were the leading cause of death of white women between the ages of 25 and 34, there would be an outraged outcry in this country," she said.

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