

Dole lends Gingrich \$300,000

Loan money is meant to pay Republican speaker's ethics fine.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The deal, one of the more unusual financial arrangements in political history, was sealed at a private meeting between Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole on the speaker's Capitol balcony, a perch with a sweeping view of the nation's Mall and monuments.

At that moment Tuesday evening, Dole, the Republican party elder statesman and 1996 presidential nominee, became Gingrich's personal banker.

Dole's good-Samaritan, easy-terms \$300,000 loan to the House speaker stunned many members of Congress when it was announced Thursday.

But associates and friends of the Kansas Republican suggested the 8-year, 10-percent loan was just another manifestation of Dole's magnanimity, a trait that did not always come across in his failed presidential race.

"Dole just came up with it himself. I think this is a brilliant solution to a difficult problem," said Charles Black, a longtime GOP consultant and 1996 campaign adviser to Dole.

Dole called the loan "an arms-length transaction between two friends" and told reporters, "He could

have done better at a bank."

"I'm a good Republican. I hope my integrity is intact. I want to help the party, help Newt," Dole added.

At one point, Dole said, he considered asking former Presidents Ford and Bush to help him with the loan. "It seemed it was a responsibility for the senior party leaders. ... But I never pursued that."

Some Democrats suggested the loan itself raised ethical questions, coming from a new member of a lobbying firm whose clients include NBC, the National Football League and energy and transportation companies. Dole has said he will do no lobbying with the firm.

Netanyahu vows he won't resign

JERUSALEM (AP) — Defiant in the face of an influence-peddling scandal, Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Thursday to hang tough through calls for his resignation.

"We're not going anywhere," he told supporters.

The government, and efforts to revive the peace process, have virtually stopped while Israelis wait to find out whether prosecutors will follow police advice and charge the prime minister with fraud and breach of trust.

The police recommendation that Netanyahu and three key allies be charged in the scandal has fueled speculation about — and calls for — an early end to his stormy 10-month reign. The prosecutors' decision was expected by Sunday.

At his Likud Party's headquarters in Tel Aviv, Israel, Netanyahu suggested his government was under a politically motivated attack for its policies to keep Jewish settlements in the West Bank and all of Jerusalem under Israeli rule.

"The truth will be victorious," he told his cheering supporters.

"We are staying in the place where the people and history put us, and we will continue to lead these people."

The scandal stems from Netanyahu's decision in January to appoint Jerusalem lawyer Roni Bar-On as attorney general. Bar-On resigned after a day in office amid a storm of criticism that he was unqualified.

Days later, Israel TV alleged that the appointment was part of a conspiracy by senior officials who expected Bar-On to end the corruption trial of Aryeh Deri, head of the Shas religious party. Deri was to ensure in return that the Shas' two Cabinet ministers gave Netanyahu the majority needed to approve the Israeli troop

"The truth will be victorious."

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU
prime minister of Israel

pullback from most of the West Bank town of Hebron.

Netanyahu, 47, would not be obliged to resign even if convicted. But several allies have hinted they may bolt the ruling coalition and deprive Netanyahu of his parliamentary majority.

There are, however, several scenarios that could bring new elections:

■ If no charges are pressed, Netanyahu could call a vote to clear his name and campaign as a victim of the media and elites who never could accept him.

■ If charges are brought, Netanyahu might resign or he could be impeached by a vote of 61 Knesset members.

■ If charges are brought and Netanyahu insists on remaining in office, the Supreme Court could force him to resign or suspend himself.

On Thursday, the Supreme Court rejected a request by liberal lawmaker Avraham Poraz to have the court require Netanyahu's immediate suspension.

Commentators suggested that self-suspension coupled with a quick trial ending in acquittal would be Netanyahu's best bet to clear his name.

"If he's not charged, he won't be able to clear his name and his name will be permanently smeared in the public eye," Tel Aviv University law professor Zeev Segal said.

The Lighter Side...

of The Associated Press

'Madam, is there a government discount?'

CARSON CITY, Nev. — So much for noble intentions.

Nevada lawmakers canceled a trip to tour a legal brothel next week after the plan was ridiculed in a newspaper column.

Assemblyman Bob Price, a Democrat from North Las Vegas, had called the trip a "fact-finding" mission to teach legislators about an industry that he says generates at least 30 percent of the tax revenue in some counties.

In lampooning the tour, Nevada Appeal publisher and editor Jeff Ackerman said some taxpayers might suggest that "except for the degree of pleasure they provide, lawmakers and prostitutes might actually have lots in common."

Price said phone calls flooded into his office from people wondering how they could be included in the tour of the Mustang Ranch brothel near Reno.



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Same-sex marriages nixed; some benefits to be allowed

HONOLULU (AP) — Negotiators for the state House and Senate agreed to let voters bar the legalization of gay marriages, reaching a compromise plan that also would give same-sex couples some of the rights and benefits available to married couples.

The compromise approved by conferees late Wednesday is expected to gain easy approval by the House and Senate next week. It is intended to reverse the Hawaii Supreme Court's 1993 ruling that found a ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional.

A proposed state constitutional amendment letting the Legislature restrict marriage to couples of the opposite sex would be put on a statewide ballot next year.

Lawmakers also agreed to let gay and lesbian couples sign up as "reciprocal beneficiaries," giving them inheritance rights, the right to sue for wrongful death, spousal benefits for insurance and state pensions, and similar rights.

The proposal also would offer such rights to other pairs living together who could not

marry, such as a widowed mother and her unmarried son.

Gay and lesbian activists denounced the compromise, saying it fell short of the equal rights they would receive if the state Supreme Court ruling prevails.

"I can't tell you how upset I am," said Tracey Bennett, a leader of Marriage Project Hawaii. "We had hoped the Senate would have adhered to its desire to extend civil rights to all people, and the Senate caved."

Lawmakers spoke proudly of the compromise. Rep. Terrance Tom, chairman of the House conferees, said it would address the needs of gay couples while still giving Hawaiian voters "the opportunity to reconfirm their belief that marriage, the fundamental unit of our society, is the union of one man and one woman."

Hawaii's legal case on same-sex marriages took center stage in legislatures across the country because the U.S. Constitution says marriages performed in one state must be recognized in all.

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