Gore takes legal assistance

Republicans criticize vice president one day before Reno's decision.

WASHINGTON (AP) - Vice President Al Gore fended off a fresh Republican attack Thursday for taking free legal help from a high-profile lawyer, one day before Attorney General Janet Reno[†]was to decide whether to move a step closer to seeking a special prosecutor for White House fund-raising.

President Clinton said Reno should make her decision without pressure "from me or from anyone else.'

The White House has accused Republicans of trying to force Reno's hand by threatening her with impeachment if she does not move against Clinton and Gore.

Reno is determining whether to open a 90-day preliminary investigation to study the possibility of requesting a special prosecutor against Clinton and Gore. She must decide by Friday in the Gore case; her deadline for Clinton is Oct. 15.

Expecting Reno to take the next step toward a special prosecutor, Gore has hired two defense attorneys. One of them, James Neal, a Nashville, Tenn., lawyer who is also a former Watergate prosecutor, said Thursday that he would not

charge legal fees - a move that dent and vice president are allowed drew instant criticism from the GOP.

Neal and George Frampton of Washington were hired by Gore last month in an effort to convince Reno that a special prosecutor was not needed. Neal was in Washington for the case Thursday.

He will not bill Gore for his services, though the vice president will be charged for Neal's expenses and for any time the law firm's associates spend on the case. The Office of Government Ethics determined that 'pro bono" legal work is a contribution that is excluded from federal gift bans.

But the arrangement could open Gore to criticism that Neal might expect favors from the vice president or his staff in the future.

So-called pro bono or free legal services are supposed to be for the poor and the needy, not the vice president of the United States," said Republican National Chairman Committee Jim Nicholson.

'Mr. Gore owes the American people an immediate explanation of this unusual fee arrangement; at the very least, it is a questionable exercise of the vice president's judgment," Nicholson said in a statement.

Vincent Falamony, an attorney with the ethics office, said the presi-

to accept gifts — such as free legal work — if they don't solicit the gifts and don't do any favors in return. Another exception is when the gift is motivated by a longtime friendship.

Gore's office referred questions to Neal, who released a brief statement.

"The idea to volunteer my time to represent the vice president during this period was mine, based on my high regard for the vice president, and my longtime friendship with his entire family," he said. An assistant to Frampton, Susan

Kaslow, said the co-counsel will bill Gore "at a commercial rate."

Falamony confirmed that an attorney in Gore's office sought and received clearance to accept the free legal work.

Clinton determined that he could not accept free legal work in the sexual harassment lawsuit filed by Paula Jones because the allegation did not relate to his duties as president. He set up a legal defense fund.

In a brief exchange with reporters Thursday, the president defended his party's fund-raising p ractices.

"It is my understanding that everything the Democratic National Committee did had the prior approval of the lawyers," he said.



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around," she said. "They're not supporting gay sexuality, but they are supporting gay people and recognizing them as individuals.

"It's the first step and I think it's a very positive first step."

But she said she couldn't speculate on how much tolerance and acceptance the statement would lead to.

"It's hard to say," she said. "I'm just happy they made such a positive public statement."

Those talked to agreed the statement was especially positive for children and families.

Krejci said it all came down to

"For Catholic parents who have gay and lesbian children - all parents want to do is love their children - this makes it a little less painful. This says there is nothing wrong with them."

And parents who were once torn between loving their children and serving God now have somewhere in the church to look for help, Eickhoff said.

"For the parents who think that Yes, homosexual acts are wrong, but how am I supposed to treat my daughter or son,' they can now feel like they aren't in such a predicament," he said.

Navy F-14 crashes in ocean; search for pilot under way

F-14 Tomcat fighter jet crashed fighter's radar intercept officer. A Thursday in the Atlantic Ocean off the East Coast. The Navy said one crew member was rescued by a Coast Guard, and a search was under way for another.

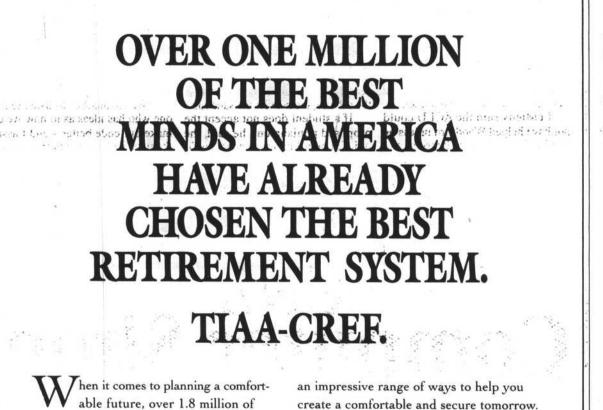
The plane was on a routine training operation with other aircraft when it went down about 4 p.m. EDT off the coast of North Carolina or Virginia, said Mike Maus, a Navy spokesman.

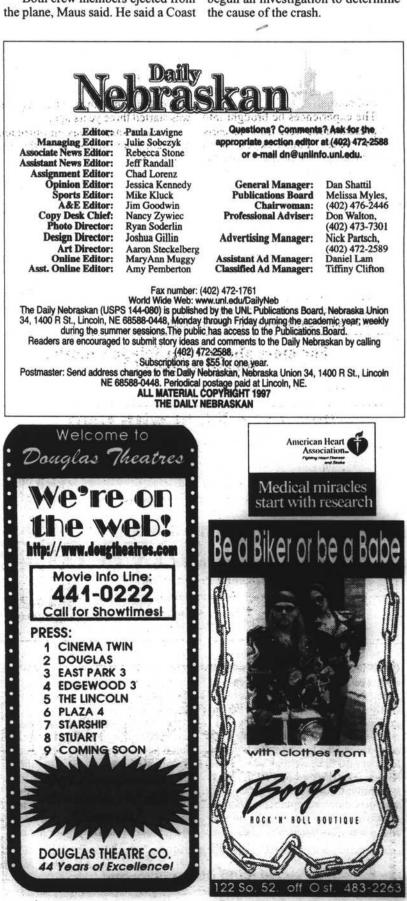
WASHINGTON (AP) - A Navy Guard J-Hawk helicopter rescued the search was still under way for the pilot, Maus said.

> The fighter was assigned to the Oceana Naval Air Station at Virginia Beach, Va.

The Navy said three of its ships were within 40 miles of the crash site and, along with aircraft from the Navy and Coast Guard, were participating in the search.

Maus also said the Navy has Both crew members ejected from begun an investigation to determine





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