

# GOP's Huckabee Wins S.C. Straw Poll

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COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - Republican presidential candidate John McCain said Thursday that Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton isn't tough enough to be president.

Sen. McCain, R-Ariz., told about 600 conservatives that his Senate colleague showed her lack of fortitude Thursday by voting against a resolution condemning the liberal interest group MoveOn.org for a newspaper ad calling Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, "Gen. Betray Us."

"My conclusion is that if you're not tough enough to take on MoveOn.org and their attacks on a decent and honorable member of the United States military, then you can't be tough enough to be president of the United States," McCain said.

McCain was among several Republican presidential candidates who spoke to the Palmetto Family Council's stump and straw poll crowd by telephone. They emphasized the war, family, opposition to gay marriage and ending abortion.

Fred Thompson and Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, also spoke by telephone. Mitt Romney sent regrets by video, saying he was out raising money.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who appeared in the flesh, said it was important to be with voters to talk about their issues.

"If we want to end poverty in this country, the best thing to do is to keep strong families and strong marriages together," he said.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., also attended in person.

Huckabee won the straw poll with 206 votes. Paul finished second with 179 votes, followed by Thompson, a distant third with 43 votes.

The only candidate without a presence at the meeting was former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose campaign said he skips events linked to straw polls. The crowd booed his absence.