

Veep Beat: Veeps in Waiting
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By Arlette Saenz

VEEPS ON STANDBY: ABC News' Jonathan Karl reported on GMA that the Romney campaign has told at least two VP short-listers to stand by for a potential announcement any day now with just over three weeks until the Republican National Convention in Tampa.

ROMNEY TO APPEAR WITH POTENTIAL VPS - Mitt Romney is back in the U.S. after an international trip plagued with gaffes, and in his second event slated for tomorrow, he will share the stage with a number of Republican governors and VP possibles in Colorado. Romney will appear with Govs Chris Christie and Bob McDonnell and potentially others at an event in Basalt, Colo., Thursday.

MEETING OF THE GOVS: A number of potential running mates, including New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, and New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez head to Aspen today for the RGA's quarterly meeting and a few will participate at a conversation at the Aspen Institute.

ROMNEY VEEP TOUR? Romney's campaign is planning a bus tour through key battleground states for the week before the Republican National Convention, prompting speculation that the tour may be an avenue for Romney to showcase his VP pick, CNN's Peter Hamby reported. "Mitt Romney's presidential campaign is quietly laying the groundwork for a high-profile blitz of several key battleground states in the run-up to the Republican National Convention in Tampa, and Republicans briefed on the plans say it has all the trappings of a vice presidential rollout tour...Beginning Aug. 10, Romney will ramp up his campaign operation with a splashy four-day bus tour targeting the largest media markets in several of the states that will decide the November election, CNN has learned. And in a show of force and party unity, Romney will be joined at each stop by prominent Republican officials and campaign surrogates," Hamby wrote. "Some details are still murky, and Republicans cautioned that they are subject to change, but on Aug. 11, Romney will hit three of Virginia's biggest population hubs - the Washington, D.C. metro area, Richmond and Norfolk - before heading down to North Carolina the following day. On Aug. 13, the Monday after the Olympic Summer Games finish in London, Romney will arrive in Florida for campaign stops in Jacksonville, Orlando and Miami. Romney aides are also scouting multiple campaign venues in Ohio for later that week, knowledgeable Republican sources told CNN. Other states may also be added to the itinerary that week. 'Sounds like V.P. week,' said one Republican familiar with the schedule, who did not want to be identified revealing the campaign's plans. 'Hitting the big markets in the big states. It just makes sense.'"

McDONNELL: 'I LOVE CHICKEN' Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell waded into the Chick-Fil-A controversy Tuesday, saying people should be allowed to open and grow businesses regardless of their political beliefs and also declared his affection for chicken, WTOP's Paul Shinkman reported. "The governor of Virginia became the latest politician to offer his perspective on a controversy that could banish Chick-Fil-A from jurisdictions

nationwide," Shinkman wrote. "When asked about the backlash stemming from the fast food restaurant's public opposition to gay marriage, Gov. Bob McDonnell said, 'I love chicken.' Following a pause, the governor continued: 'If we start having governments issue permits or zoning changes, or withholding those because of someone's political or religious beliefs, we are going down a very bad road.' 'I think people have an ability to start and grow a business regardless of their political beliefs,' he said, while speaking on WTOP's 'Ask the Governor' program.

FORMER BUSH SPEECHWRITER PUSHES RYAN: Marc Thiessen, a former speechwriter for President George W. Bush, wrote Tuesday that Romney needs to select a running mate like Dick Cheney, suggesting that Rep. Paul Ryan would fit the mold. "That is precisely what Mitt Romney needs: someone who, like Cheney, is seen by conservatives as one of their own, and, like Cheney, will be taken seriously from the get-go as a potential president of the United States," Thiessen wrote. "But Romney also must shore up his right flank, and generate enthusiasm for his ticket that is currently lacking with the GOP's conservative base. He needs a pick who will give conservatives a reason to vote for the Romney ticket and not just against Obama-Biden. So the question for him becomes, is there anyone among the current vice presidential contenders who can meet both tests? One obvious choice here is Paul Ryan. Ryan is serious, substantive - wonky, even - and is clearly ready for the presidency. Importantly, insiders report that Romney likes him, feels comfortable campaigning with him, and considers him a 'safe' pick - in the sense that he would be taken seriously as a potential president. But Ryan would also electrify the conservative grassroots. Conservatives love him for his courage in presenting bold solutions to our nation's fiscal problems. They bonded with him when he came under withering attack from the left for doing so, and were impressed with his eloquence in defending his ideas on the national stage. They have seen him go head-to-head with President Obama and win."

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