A late afternoon shower possible. High 55-60°F (13-16°C). Low weekend.

By Michael C. Morgan

Defining a company ultimatum to return to work or risk losing their positions to replacement workers, thousands of striking employ-

ers, including those at Caterpillar Inc., stayed off the job Monday in a dramatic strug-

gle that could determine the future strength of organized labor.

Caterpillar officials said roughly 400 workers crossed picket lines and returned to their jobs at the start of the morning shift, only a frac-

tion of the more than 12,000 United Auto Workers members who have been striking since the heavy-equipment manufacturer, some of them

since last fall.

But with no new negotiations scheduled between the two sides, the strike "is only starting," according to the most important U.S. labor-management confrontation since President Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers more than a decade ago.

Clinton and Brown Trade Charges
On the Eve of New York’s Primary

By Dan Balz and E.J. Dione Jr.

Two days after a high-volume campaign-

ing, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton and former California gov-

ernor Jerry Brown traded final charges Monday on the eve of a pri-

mary that could be crucial to Clinton’s candidacy.

The Democratic candidates bat-

tered through two final debates, with Clinton focusing Monday on his pro-

posed flat-tax proposal while seek-

ing to ease doubts among New York voters about his own character, then

threw to the states for last-minute appeals to an electorate that has shown displeasure with both of them.

Although there also are concerns Tuesday in Wisconsin and Kansas, attention remained fixed on the big primary here in New York, where a Clinton victory would set the Democratic front in a showdown on the path to the nomination and make it virtually impossible for Brown or anyone else to catch him.

An opus written by, who stormed into New York after his March 24 victory in Connecticut, could throw the Democratic contest into turmoil, possibly bringing for-

mer Massachusetts Governor Paul E. Tsongas back into the race and encour-

aging new talk about finding an alternative to the front runners. Two recent polls show Tsongas on the ballot here have added a measure of enthusiasm.

"If the people of New York think there is a way to stop the hopeless dance and the fact that Tsongas remains on the ballot here have added a measure of enthusiasm," Clinton said Monday afternoon before a rally on the campus of the University of New York.

With the nomination now at hand, he should announce his plans tomorrow after the primary and that his decision would depend on both his performance and Clinton’s. But he did not say how well he would have to do — or how poorly Clinton would have to fare — for him to rejoin the race.

Clinton left New York in the afternoon, flying off to Wisconsin and Kansas for last-minute campaign-

ing after a three-state sweep, before returning to Arkansas, where he planned to attend a debate and then a rally. Then he will fly to giant Sam Walton, who died Saturday.

Brown continued to work New York strongly in the primary. Clinton will rally upstate in Albany and then an evening rally in Brooklyn.

The two candidates began the day on a quiet note, spending nearly an hour in a closed meeting to discuss some details about domestic policy on a special edition of the "Donahue" show Monday morning. But during a half-

hour joint appearance on NBC’s "Today," they showed the combat that had dominated their campaign.

Brown reiterated on the flat tax issue, saying he would "sign any bill that is in my comprehensive Social Security" and volunteered that he would "fight any tax, if necessary, to assure that low- and moderate-income families pay lower taxes under his plan."

Clinton, whose campaign was jettisoned by the controversial tax issue that he was said to have had a draft induction notice in the spring of 1969, defended his record Monday. "Today" show host Bryant Gumbel suggested that Clinton had "ended the war" he then was to win delegations, but did not see him as facing difficulties in getting like-

er from his support. "It’s pure political gam-

ing," Clinton argued.

Stanley Greenberg, Clinton’s pollster, and he expected Tsongas to add the 15 percent he needed to win delegations, but did not see him as facing difficulties in getting like-

er from his support. "It’s pure political gam-

ing," Clinton argued.

Ian Gaidar, justify the govern-

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