

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition

New York: Today, very warm and sunny, high 89. Tonight, scattered showers, low 64. Tomorrow, breezy and cooler, high 72. Yesterday, high 90, low 68. Weather map, Page D8.

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\$1 beyond the greater New York metropolitan area.

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Florida Leaders Sign Agreement For Overhaul of Election System

Hand Recounts Would Be Used in Tight Races

By DANA CANEDY

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., May 3 — Six months after a chaotic election in Florida decided the protracted presidential race, state lawmakers have reached agreement on a bill that would do away with hanging chads, butterfly ballots and questions about determining voter intent.

It would also require that ballots in extremely close elections be recounted by hand — the very practice that Florida election officials and the Bush campaign had opposed so fiercely last year in their battle with Democrats who were insisting that manual recounts would tip the election to Al Gore.

After weeks of partisan debate and negotiations, House and Senate leaders signed an agreement this evening to ban punch-card ballot machines, give counties money for equipment and set guidelines for recounts.

The Florida House and Senate, both controlled by Republicans, are expected to approve the bill in largely ceremonial votes before the legislative session adjourns on Friday.

The changes would be in place for the state's next general election, in 2002 and the National Association of

improvements the day after his brother won Florida's 25 decisive electoral votes, and thus the presidency, said he was eager to sign the bill into law.

"Election reform has been a top priority of mine as well as the leadership in both chambers of the Legislature this session," Governor Bush said. "I look forward to signing this much-needed legislation that will ensure every Floridian's vote counts as well as serve as a model for the rest of the nation."

His language echoed the mantra of the Democrats last year, when Mr. Gore pleaded with state officials and the courts to "count every vote."

Terry McAuliffe, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, praised the bill, saying: "I commend the Florida Legislature for taking the leadership on this. I wish Jeb Bush would call his brother George to get the same type of action up here in the Congress."

Commenting on Florida Republicans' accepting such changes now that the election was over, Mr. McAuliffe said: "All the things we were attacked on before, like manual recounts all of a sudden they're the



Beth A. Keiser/Associated Press

Communism Meets Capitalism

Fidel Castro, or at least a wax replica, rode a sightseeing boat yesterday with a crew of extras, setting the scene for an advertising campaign for Madame Tussaud's museum in Manhattan. The real tourists were seated.

BUSH WILL MODIFY BAN ON NEW ROADS FOR U.S. FORESTS

LOCAL OFFICIALS WIN SAY

Twice-Delayed Clinton Rules Will Be Changed to Permit Case-by-Case Reviews

By DOUGLAS JEHL

WASHINGTON, May 3 — The White House will put in place Clinton administration regulations intended to protect national forests from development but will allow those rules to be amended case by case, senior administration officials said today.

The rules were issued within the last 15 days of the Clinton administration and never went into effect.

The White House decision, which is to be announced on Friday, in effect gives local officials the power to modify a plan that would have banned new road building and most logging on some 60 million acres of federal land, or about one-third of the national forests.

One Bush administration official who outlined the decision tonight