

Congress returns in September.

"The budget process virtually guarantees that we will not be able to act on appropriations, and that there will be a big CR [continuing resolution]," Conte said, pointing out that the budget process prevents Congress from deliberating on appropriations that help determine future economic growth.

Advocates of replacing our constitutional republic with a parliamentary system have long schemed to use the budget process to aid in their designs.

"In 11 fiscal years under the Budget Act, we have met the deadline for adopting the first budget resolution once, in 1977," Conte said. In the last five years, "out of a total of 65 appropriations bills, only 9 were signed before the start of the fiscal year, and 38 bills were carried for the full year in a CR," he said.

"Repeal the Budget Act. Repeal Gramm-Rudman-Hollings," Conte said. "Then the President will propose, and the Congress will dispose, and the responsibility for deficits and CRs will be absolutely clear."

Kennedy, Waxman introduce AIDS bill

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) introduced legislation on July 31, S. 1575 and H.R. 3071 respectively, to establish a testing policy for AIDS.

The bill provides \$400 million per year for the next three years to expand voluntary testing programs, and would require extensive counseling before and after testing. Proponents of the bill point out that the waiting period to get an AIDS test voluntarily is as long as three months in some states.

The major focus of the bill, however, is to protect the civil rights of those infected with the virus. Grants can be made to testing centers only as long as they "ensure the confidentiality of information and records with respect to individuals counseled or tested."

A very narrow exception to strict confidentiality would allow doctors to inform spouses or sexual partners of the risk, or to inform a blood bank, but only after a court procedure.

Penalties would be leveled against an individual who violates confidentiality of test results or discriminates against someone who has AIDS. "A person may not discriminate against an otherwise qualified individual in employment, housing, public accommodations, or governmental services, solely by reason of the fact that such individual is, or is regarded as being, infected with" the AIDS virus, the bill reads. The AIDS victim can sue, and civil penalties of \$2,000 may be levied for discrimination or breach of confidentiality.

Presidential aspirant Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), a co-sponsor, denounced the idea of routine testing. "The President made testing a goal in itself—doing more to set back AIDS policy in one day than he had already done in six years of silence," Gore said.

House creates second AIDS commission

The House passed legislation to create a second national commission on AIDS, H.R. 2881, by a vote of 355 to 68 on Aug. 4.

Proponents argued that Congress needed a coordinating body and more

input into the AIDS issue, and that it would not duplicate the commission recently appointed by the President. The President, the Speaker of the House, and the President *pro tem* of the Senate would each appoint five members.

The commission would have to produce comprehensive recommendations to deal with AIDS within a year, and would have to report again at the end of two years, with an option to continue its work at the discretion of the President. It is funded with \$2 million.

The chief sponsor of the bill is Rep. Roy Rowland (D-Ga.), the only medical doctor serving in the House. The primary activity on the bill was by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, chaired by Rep. Sonny Montgomery (D-Miss.). The bill was also passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, but without hearings in the Health Subcommittee chaired by the civil rights for AIDS advocate, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.).

The Veterans Committee issued a report on the bill which clearly indicated their motivation. "The Committee is alarmed," the report said, "that meaningful and impartial national policy which is consistent with the expectations of the American public has not yet emerged. Time is of the essence, and critical choices that should be made cannot longer be delayed."

In addition to creating a commission, the Veterans Administration would be required to compile a synopsis of all medical research worldwide on AIDS. "The Veterans Administration hospital system must be a vital part of the national effort to fight AIDS," ranking Veterans Committee member Rep. Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.) said.