

## Congressional Closeup by Kathleen Klenetsky

### Helms AIDS amendment kindles 'gay' outrage

Senate adoption of an amendment that would prevent government funds from being used to promote homosexual behavior has sent the "gay" lobby into a frenzy.

The amendment, to an FY 1988 appropriations bill for health, human services, labor, and education, was introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), and adopted almost unanimously Oct. 14. The only no votes came from Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) and that conservative Democrat, New York's Daniel Patrick Moynihan. On Oct. 20, the House, acting on a motion introduced by Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.), instructed House conferees on the appropriations bill to agree to the Helms amendment.

The measure is quite modest: It simply prohibits the use of federal money from funding AIDS educational programs and materials that "promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexual activities."

What specifically prompted Helms to introduce the amendment was the fact that the federal government had doled out \$674,679 in 1986 and 1987 to the Gay Men's Health Crisis organization to finance so-called "safe sex" materials that were pornographic in the extreme.

GMHC motivated one grant proposal on the grounds that, for many homosexuals, "safe sex has been equated with boring, unsatisfactory sex," and it was therefore necessary to inform them about "meaningful alternatives to high-risk practices." Options listed included, "healthy S&M," "waterplay, urination . . . to release sexual tension," and the use of erotic photos as a "sexual achievement tool."

During House debate on the pro-

posal, Rep. Bob Dornan (R-Calif.) reported that a friend of his, as an experiment, recently contacted the GMHC to request literature instructing teenagers how not to get AIDS. He received a comic book featuring "Ed the Jock" and "Julio the Pump Boy" engaged in a variety of perverted sexual acts.

"I will not sit on the House floor and have respected members get up and say this pornographic comic is the only way we can reach intelligent homosexuals and drug users," said Dornan, after Rep. Bill Green (R-N.Y.), had gotten up to defend the GMHC.

The Senate and House actions set the "gay" lobby on its ear. The pro-"gay" Human Rights Campaign Fund took out full-page newspaper ads denouncing the measure. "Sexually active people—singles, teenagers, and divorcés, married people who are not monogamous—gay and heterosexual—need frank, scientific information" about AIDS prevention, said the ad. "We cannot tolerate right-wing morality lectures in place of lifesaving medical instruction."

Soon after, New York's bachelor mayor, Ed Koch, weighed in with a commentary in the *New York Times*, berating Helms and defending the GMHC's "brilliant reputation in caring for and counseling those with AIDS and in educating others on how to prevent the spread of AIDS. . . . Those the [GMHC] materials reach," he added, "aren't innocents who'll be shocked by such literature. They already practice sex; they want to know how to practice it more safely. The organization tells them and thereby helps save lives."

What makes the uproar so ironic is the fact that, as Democratic presidential candidate LaRouche recently pointed out, citing statements by Bra-

zilian public health official Dr. Ricardo Veronesi, no laboratory proof exists that AIDS is sexually transmitted.

### 'American Scientists' want congressmen in Moscow

The Federation of American Scientists, which specializes in lobbying against U.S. defense programs, wants more members of Congress to visit the Soviet Union. "Only half of the U.S. Senate and one-third of the House of Representatives" have so far "cared enough to make the effort to travel to the Soviet Union," says the FAS in its booklet, "Congressional Travel to the Soviet Union: Raising the Rate of Exchange." It includes detailed instructions, complete with a form letter, on how constituents can persuade their congressmen and senators that a trip to Mother Russia is just what they need to make their legislative experience complete.

An introduction by FAS director Jeremy Stone states, "American hawks who visit tend to look for signs of strength and danger to America. They see, instead, relative backwardness and an unmistakable fear of war. They come home fearing the Soviets less." The booklet describes a "real life" scenario: A pro-defense senator visits Russia, and is so struck by the myriad World War II memorials, that "his opinions about the Soviet Union as a nation prepared to fight a major war are shaken. He returns . . . having decided that the Soviets may not be seeking confrontation on a massive scale."

The FAS contains one useful bit of information: a list of current members of Congress who have made the trip, among them: Senate Armed Services Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), his House counterpart, Les Aspin (D-

Wis.), House Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.), and presidential contenders Sens. Al Gore (D-Tenn.), Bob Dole (R-Kan.), Paul Simon (D-Ill.), and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.).

## **Murkowski: freeze Social Security COLAs**

Mootings from Capitol Hill that Social Security was headed for the chopping block became reality Nov. 10, when Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) introduced legislation to freeze cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increases for this and other programs with built-in COLAs, such as veterans' benefits and certain pensions.

Murkowski, a former commercial banker, insisted that the "key to success" for combatting the national debt "is putting everything on the table, from defense spending to Social Security." His bill, he said, would save \$12 billion the first year and \$40 billion over three years.

In a speech on the Senate floor Nov. 5, the senator also promoted a national tax on consumption, in the form of a value-added tax, as another cure for the nation's economic ills.

Murkowski's bill sums up Wall Street's program and the corresponding thinking—if you can call it that—on budget and broader economic issues on the Hill.

As *EIR* went to press, administration and congressional budget negotiators were nearing final agreement on a deficit reduction package, the main elements of which included tax hikes, and additional cuts in both domestic and military programs. There was little doubt that Sen. Alan Simpson's (D-Wyo.) cynical comment that Congress was eyeing Social Security cuts "for the same reason Willy Sutton

robbed banks; that's where the money is"—is driving the budget talks.

Nor is this urge to rob America's elderly limited to Republicans. Rep. Anthony Beilenson, a liberal Democrat from California, called for putting Social Security on the table in a Nov. 8 *Washington Post* commentary. "It is the one federal program in which enormous savings can be made with relatively little impact on the individual beneficiaries."

Tell that to the widow who's struggling to live on a \$500 per month government pension.

## **Elderly impoverished by nursing home costs**

A report issued by the House Select Committee on Aging Nov. 8 confirms what many people know through their own personal experience: that the great majority of the nation's elderly are impoverished by the tremendously high cost of nursing home care.

"With annual nursing home costs averaging over \$22,000 and elderly median annual income being just over \$11,500, a host of personal catastrophes are in the making," said committee chairman Ed Roybal (D-Calif.). "A year in a nursing home wipes out the income of over 90% of the elderly living alone," he noted. "The risk of long-term-care-induced impoverishment is great."

A major reason for this impoverishment, says the report, is that there exists no program for financing long-term nursing care, except for Medicaid, which funds about 40% of such care. But Medicaid imposes stringent financial requirements on recipients: An individual must divest himself of all but \$1,800 in assets to qualify. "The bottom line is that elderly persons must

essentially impoverish themselves before they are protected by Medicaid," the report charges.

Failure to include provisions for long-term nursing care is one reason why the "catastrophic health care" plan recently approved by the Senate, has run into such opposition from senior citizens' organizations.

## **Gore embarrassed by GAO report**

Sen. Al Gore's (D-Tenn.) vendetta against the U.S. space program suffered a setback Nov. 3, when the General Accounting Office exonerated NASA administrator James Fletcher of conflict-of-interest charges.

The GAO issued the results of an investigation it had launched, on Gore's request for a probe into whether Fletcher or other NASA officials had been guilty of bias in awarding Morton Thiokol contracts to produce the Space Shuttle's booster rockets.

An obviously disgruntled Gore issued a statement saying, "While I am not completely satisfied with the report, I recognize the difficulty of trying to pursue an investigation of events that occurred nearly 15 years ago." The fact that the GAO "was constrained to rely on incomplete documentation still leaves unanswered questions, but it appears they may never be fully resolved."

Fletcher hit back with a statement of his own. Suggestions that the GAO report is in some way flawed "are to be expected in a highly charged political campaign," said Fletcher, "but it is regrettable that such an important issue should be handled in this manner." The nation's civilian space program "should not be a political whipping post."