

National News

'Medical marijuana' falls flat in D.C.

The Washington, D.C. chapter of the homosexual "AIDS" lobby, ACT UP, failed in its petition drive to have an initiative to legalize "medical marijuana" placed on the D.C. ballot. On Dec. 8, ACT UP claimed, according to the *Washington Times*, to have more than met the requirements by filing 21,000 petition signatures (17,070 were needed), with 5% of the registered voters representing at least five of the city's eight wards.

However, a voter who checked the petition found at least 1,000 fewer signatures than required. Even before the voter could assemble an ad hoc group to formally challenge the petition, the Board of Election had already rejected it.

However, a Board of Elections spokesperson also revealed to the voter, that ACT UP has already submitted the paperwork for a new initiative with the same goal, as has a second group.

Scaife scribblers churn latest murder thriller

Since early December 1997, the paid pens and gumshoes for "Get Clinton" moneybags Richard Mellon Scaife, have escalated their latest conspiracy theory that the President's circle had Commerce Secretary Ron Brown killed. Brown, a key player in Clinton's economic diplomacy in the Balkans and also China, was killed in a plane crash outside Dubrovnik, Croatia, as he was returning from Bosnia, in April 1996.

Beginning on Dec. 2, faxes and Internet messages from Scaife's hireling Chris Ruddy (who has otherwise worked full-time "proving" that Vincent Foster was murdered) began flying around, hyping a "major news report" in the Dec. 3 *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* which "will detail allegations that suggest Ron Brown was assassinated." (On Nov. 24, Ruddy had co-authored an article with another Vince Foster "assassination" buff, Hugh Sprunt, in Scaife's *Trib-*

une-Review describing Brown's alleged ties to all the major figures in the "Chinagate" Democratic National Committee fundraising scandal.)

Ruddy's Dec. 3 article claims that a circular hole in Brown's skull "could have been a gunshot wound," and that a forensic pathologist, Lt. Col. Steve Cogswell, called it "an apparent gunshot wound." Cogswell investigated the crash site, but, a close reading of Ruddy's article shows that Cogswell never examined Brown's body. Air Force Col. William Gormley, a military medical examiner, who did examine the body, said that the head wound was definitely not caused by a bullet, and he ruled Brown's death to have been accidental.

Truth aside, the pro-British "media food chain," in the form of the Hollinger Corp. London *Daily Telegraph* immediately recycled the story, quoting Cogswell, but ignoring the fact that he had never examined Brown's body, and other such "minor" details.

LaRouche associate Phau files Federal habeas

Donald Phau, a LaRouche associate incarcerated by Virginia as a political prisoner, filed a Federal petition for *habeas corpus*, in the U.S. District Court in Richmond, on Dec. 11. The Federal petition covers much the same issues which the Virginia Supreme Court denied. The state court made their decision based on lying affidavits from Phau's incompetent trial attorneys, Pat Monaghan and Doug Davis, without even giving Phau a chance to respond.

The *habeas* petition charges that he is being illegally held in prison by Virginia authorities, who, in collaboration with corrupt Federal officials, the news media, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, obtained an illegal conviction of Phau on bogus charges that he violated Virginia's securities statutes.

The 142-page petition, accompanied by eight volumes of evidence, charges Virginia authorities with an accumulation of prosecutorial misconduct, including: presenting false evidence, witness tampering, brain-

washing witnesses, black-bag jobs, illegal wiretaps, withholding exculpatory evidence, making false representations in court, and conducting a nationwide campaign of defamation to cover for these illegalities.

The petition also charges that Phau's trial attorneys were grossly incompetent.

A Federal judge will now determine whether Phau will get a hearing on his petition.

Clinton orders shutdown of drug trade on border

President Clinton headed a strategy session on U.S. drug interdiction in Miami, Florida, on Dec. 11. Pulled together by White House drug policy adviser Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.), it was attended by representatives of all the U.S. interdiction task forces: San Francisco, which handles the Eastern Pacific; Panama; Key West, which oversees the Caribbean; and Joint Task Force Six in El Paso, Texas, which handles the U.S.-Mexican border.

At a press briefing later, General McCaffrey announced that "my orders are" to pull together a "Southwest Border Initiative," to be announced in the President's January State of the Union address. The initiative's mission is "to try and stop drug smuggling into the United States across the Mexican-U.S. border in the next five years—substantially stop it," without closing "the biggest open border in the world." As McCaffrey said, "this is big doings." Crossing that border every year, are 260 million people, 82 million cars, 3.5 million trucks, 340,000 railroad cars.

The centerpiece of the initiative is applying a technology which *EIR* has championed for over a decade, including x-ray machines originally designed to look through Soviet ICBM shipping containers, which would eventually be used at all 39 points of entry between the two countries. "They work," McCaffrey said. "They absolutely work. You can see 20 kilograms of cocaine inside lead in the battery container, or . . . welded into walls of the truck, or suspended by wires in a load of wet concrete."

74 EXECUTIONS of prisoners in the United States in 1997 was not only the highest number since capital punishment was reinstated in 1976, but the most in four decades, according to a report released on Dec. 15 by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Texas was responsible for the increase over 1996, with 37 executions. Virginia ranked second, with nine.

CONGRESSIONAL staffers with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are travelling in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda, while two House International Relations Committee staffers are travelling in Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Ghana. In addition, two Democrats with the Black Congressional Caucus, Rep. William Jefferson (La.) and Rep. Charles Rangel (N.Y.), are visiting Eritrea, Ethiopia, and seven other sub-Saharan countries in connection with the Africa Trade and Investment Act.

MARY SUE TERRY, the former Virginia Attorney General who tried, unsuccessfully, to parlay her role in the Federal-state-private "Get LaRouche" task force as a ticket into the Governor's Mansion, has resurfaced as chairman of the Virginia Foundation for Women. Other members include Beth Marschak, a founder of the Richmond Lesbian Feminists.

NEW YORK MAYOR Rudy Giuliani (R) told the local CBS affiliate on Dec. 6, that he wants to set up a gambling casino on Governors Island in New York Harbor. Gov. George Pataki (R) proposed that the casino could use the abandoned Coast Guard station there. "I think the city and the state have to think competitively here. New Jersey and Connecticut are making a lot of money off New Yorkers who go there and gamble," Giuliani said.

A FEDERAL JUDGE has so far thrown out 4 of the 39 felony counts brought against former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy by independent counsel Donald Smaltz last August.

Welfare reform report: 'The jobs aren't there'

Jobs with Justice, a coalition involving organized labor, religious, civil rights, and other groups, has released a report, titled "Welfare Reform: The Jobs Aren't There." The release was timed to coincide with demonstrations in more than 50 cities on Dec. 10, and with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that "everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity."

The study argues that the basic premise of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, signed into law on Aug. 22, 1996, that requiring welfare recipients to find employment "would somehow create the necessary jobs and income, is demonstrably false."

Nationally, the report shows, the economy is projected to create only about half as many net new, low-skill jobs as there are welfare recipients targeted to enter the labor market, for 1997-98. If normal growth in the labor force is factored in, the ratio of job seekers to jobs is nearly 3:1. The odds against a welfare recipient getting a decent-paying job are about 97:1. The influx of former welfare recipients into the low-wage labor market is projected to reduce that sector's wage bill by nearly 12%. These low-wage workers will lose an estimated \$36 billion a year in income—some \$8.5 billion more than the total Federal and state spending on Aid to Families with Dependent Children in 1994!

'Get Clinton' special prosecutors running wild

After an investigation that has cost over \$4 million, and lasted 2.5 years, in December, an independent counsel obtained an 18-count indictment from a Federal grand jury against Henry Cisneros, the Clinton administration's first housing secretary. Cisneros was charged with conspiracy, false state-

ments, and obstruction of justice, in connection with statements made to FBI investigators during his confirmation proceedings in 1993.

Independent counsel David Barrett was appointed in May 1995 at the request of Attorney General Janet Reno—one of six times Reno has asked for appointment of an independent counsel to investigate an administration official. Barrett, a Republican activist, fundraiser, and former candidate, was appointed by the same special three-judge panel headed by David Sentelle, a Jesse Helms protégé from North Carolina, that had appointed Kenneth Starr to head the Whitewater investigation earlier.

It has been reported by many sources, including the *New York Times* of Dec. 12, that Justice Department officials, including Reno, have become disillusioned with the independent counsel process, with one department source describing the current crop as "overzealous amateurs."

Mayors say hunger and homelessness are rising

On Dec. 15, the U.S. Conference of Mayors released its annual survey of hunger and homelessness in American cities, and reported that requests for emergency food and shelter have increased for the 13th year in a row since the surveys began. Eighty-six percent of the 29 cities responding to the survey, reported an increase in emergency food requests. Requests by families increased by an average 13%. Nineteen percent of requests are estimated to have gone unmet, with the figure for families being 22%. Fifty-eight percent of people requesting food assistance were families, and 38% of adults were employed. Of the causes of hunger listed by city officials, "low-paying jobs" was on top of the list. The picture for homelessness is similar, though the rate of increase is not reported to be as great.

The report summary still pays lip service to the myth of the "strong economy," with Charleston, South Carolina Mayor Joseph Riley, explaining limply that "a rising tide doesn't lift all boats. Some boats are not seaworthy."