

National News

Oregon euthanasia law claims ten victims

Oregon's "Death with Dignity Act," which allows physicians to prescribe lethal doses of medications to presumably terminal patients, has now claimed ten lives, according to the Oregon Health Division. The agency claims to meticulously collect information about compliance with the law, but, according to the confidentiality clauses of the act, Oregon physicians can provide or withhold whatever information they wish.

In the first known case of "assisted-suicide" since it was passed in November 1997, the law has already been broken. According to the act, patients seeking suicide drugs must be considered mentally competent by two physicians. According to Compassion in Dying's medical director, Peter Goodwin, the first person to die under the law was a woman in her eighties with cancer. She requested suicide help, but was turned down by both her longtime physician and a second physician, because her despression was a major factor in her presumed desire to end her life, and accordingly they considered her "not a candidate."

Goodwin, whose organization lobbies hard for legalized euthanasia, decided that her doctors were wrong: Without seeing or treating the patient, he determined that she was not depressed, but just frustrated and feeling powerless, and put her in touch with a suicide doctor, to prescribe for her the drugs she needed to kill herself. She used them on March 24.

Gingrich attends GOP convict's fundraiser

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich attended a Washington State Republican Party fundraiser at the estate of Thomas J. Stewart, who pleaded guilty to violating campaign finance laws. Stewart confessed that he had doled out \$100,000 to employees of his Services Group of America and directed them to make contributions to certain Republican

candidates. His scheme violated the law, which limits individual contributions to \$1,000 per candidate, and prohibits corporate contributions. Stewart was fined nearly \$5 million, and sentenced to two months of home detention (he lives on a lavish estate on Vashon Island), and 160 hours of community service.

Stewart spent at least \$100,000 on Washington State's Republican Party fundraising picnic on Aug. 22. Gingrich, who attended as part of an 18-day fundraising marathon, had planned to break the Guinness record for the number of people with whom one is photographed in one day.

The *New York Times*, which reported the story on Aug. 22, did not mention that Gingrich himself had used tax-exempt "educational" foundations as fronts to pay for hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of campaign costs for himself and other favored Republicans. In late 1996, Gingrich's "ethics" lawyer, Ed Bethune, arranged a deal with his buddies at the Department of Justice and with a House Ethics subcommittee that the DOJ would immediately stop all investigations into Gingrich's fundraising shenanigans. Bethune is now the FBI Agents Association lobbyist, in charge of stopping the McDade-Murtha bill, which would protect Americans from DOJ abuses.

Reno pressed to probe into Clinton-Gore funds

With all the major media pressing Attorney General Janet Reno to appoint yet another independent counsel, this time to probe alleged campaign finance illegalities in the 1996 Clinton-Gore campaign, on Aug. 26, Reno opened a 90-day preliminary investigation of Gore campaign fundraising. The probe will look into whether Gore lied to Justice Department officials looking into the campaign finance scandal. Her probe could lead to the appointment of an independent counsel.

The *New York Times* commented on Aug. 20 that such an independent counsel probe would probably mean the end of Al Gore's 2000 Presidential ambitions.

Gore was originally cleared by Reno in

December, but now faces an investigation of whether he misled DOJ prosecutors and FBI agents during an interview on Nov. 12, 1997, when he said he understood that a massive Democratic media campaign in early 1996 was going to be financed entirely by "soft money." The *Times* cited a Nov. 21, 1995 White House memo with handwritten notes that allegedly show Gore was lying when he delivered his account of campaign fundraising calls to the Attorney General after the 1996 elections. The *Times* said the notes suggest that Gore was part of discussions aimed at diverting Democratic Party "soft" money contributions to the Clinton-Gore campaign.

Maryland Dems lash out at LaRouche slate

The Maryland Democratic Party made a potentially fatal mistake, lashing out against the slate of LaRouche Democrats running in the state primary. In a memorandum to "All Democratic Primary Candidates," dated Aug. 4, which regurgitates the lies of the discredited former Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairman Don Fowler, State Chair Peter Krauser highlights the "List of Candidates filed on the Marylanders for Justice slate (LaRouche). As you can see, some areas have quite a few LaRouche candidates filed, particularly for Central Committee. The DNC does not recognize LaRouche candidates as *bona fide* Democrats. We need your help in making sure that the right candidates are elected."

The enclosure does not mention that Fowler's exclusion of popularly elected LaRouche delegates from the 1996 national convention is the subject of a civil rights suit, charging Fowler, the DNC, and several state committees with violation of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

A spokesman for the LaRouche slate called the party to point out that LaRouche Democrat Lawrence Freeman, who is seeking the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, has repeatedly admonished another candidate, Eileen Rehrman, for her divisive personal attacks on incumbent Gov. Parris Glendening (D), for his opposition to allow-

CHINA TELEVISION interviewed *EIR* Washington correspondent William Jones on Aug. 24, regarding a "U.S. view" of the flooding in their country. Jones detailed the importance of replicating the success of the Tennessee Valley Authority in China's own Three Gorges Dam, as the key to avoiding future devastation.

FBI DIRECTOR Louis Freeh cut short his trip to Africa, after the U.S. air attack on Sudan and Afghanistan. He was investigating the Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings. In Kenya, there was a joint FBI/Kenyan raid on the Mercy International Relief Agency, an allegedly Saudi charity, in connection with the embassy bombings investigation.

THE AFL-CIO has called for Washington to revoke Cambodia's special trade status under the Generalized System of Preferences, after buying into the charges of Sam Rainsy, a "human rights" darling of the GOP's International Republican Institute. The IRI is a component of the National Endowment for Democracy, which gained notoriety during the investigation of the George Bush/Oliver North Iran-Contra scandal.

PRISON GUARDS plan to demonstrate against the private prison firm Corrections Corp. of America, (CCA), *EIR* was told by Lance Corcoran, vice president of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association. The march will be on Oct. 15-16 in front of the Nashville headquarters of CCA, as part of a nationwide campaign against prison privatization.

GEOFFREY FIEGER, Jack Ke-vorkian's attorney, who won Michigan's Democratic gubernatorial primary, while trying to distance himself from his client "Dr. Death," is winning support from "Merian's Friends," a pro-euthanasia group backing an "assisted-suicide" initiative for the November ballot. However, Fieger is having problems rustling up a running mate for the lieutenant governor post.

ing slot-machines at the state's racetracks, on the pretext of "funding education." Although Rehrman withdrew from the race, two of her leading supporters, Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke (who also backs drug legalization) and Prince George's County Executive Wayne Curry, continue to bash the Governor.

Democratic organizations are continuing to invite the Marylanders for Justice to their candidates forums, and several have said they intend to complain to party officials about the memorandum's "divisive nature."

USWA blasts IMF, but backs some conditions

In a speech which makes clear the AFL-CIO's mixed stance on the international financial crisis, USWA President George Becker, speaking to 3,000 steelworkers at their national convention on Aug. 10 in Las Vegas, denounced the International Monetary Fund's austerity policies and called for enforcement of "labor, human rights and environmental" standards in the recipient countries.

In his keynote address, Becker said that the IMF's plan to solve the crisis in Asia is "by shipping it here in a flood of cheap imports. Here's how the scheme works. Instead of stimulating demand and putting people to work in the Asian countries, the IMF insists that, in return for recovery assistance, these countries must adopt what are called 'austerity measures' and currency devaluation policies that together drive down the price of their export products. The aim is for them to export their way out of the mess and get dollars in exchange for their products so they can repay their loans.

"These policies are a disaster for Asian workers—some of whom have already taken to the streets—and it's a disaster for workers in the U.S. and Canada. Economists are forecasting a \$100 billion increase in the U.S. trade deficit. We are already seeing the signs. That increase translates into the loss of 1.1 million jobs, the vast majority in the manufacturing sector.

"Well then, what is the solution? Many hold the view that U.S. taxpayers ought not

to contribute any more to this bailout. Why insulate bankers and speculators from the consequences of their own bad decisions? Isn't that what the so-called 'free market' is all about?"

Becker said that any further U.S. funding of the IMF should be "conditioned on a commitment by recipient nations to vigorously enforce international labor, human rights and environmental standards. . . . If we can't get these conditions, we must fight repriming the IMF pump with taxpayer dollars. Why should our members finance the destruction of our own jobs?"

Prison budgets outpace states' education funding

State prison budgets are growing twice as fast as spending on public colleges and universities, a recent ABC News analysis has found. Texas leads the nation with increases in prison spending. During 1977-95, Texas prison funding grew 5.7 times faster than spending on higher education. Arizona was second, tripling the growth of its corrections spending over increases for higher education. California prison funding grew 794%, while higher education funding grew 296%, or 2.68 times faster. Nationally, spending on state prison systems increased by an average of 823% over that period, according to Census Bureau data, while budgets for higher education increased by 374%.

A 1998 study found that over the last seven years, Maryland has spent \$147 million more on jailing people and \$29 million less on higher education. During the 1990s in Maryland, more African-Americans entered the prison system than entered full-time, undergraduate public universities.

According to various reports put out by the Education vs. Incarceration Clearinghouse, 1995 was the first year in which states collectively spent more to construct prisons than universities. In fact, there was almost a dollar-for-dollar trade-off that year, with prison construction funds increasing by \$926 million (to \$2.6 billion), while university construction funding dropped by \$945 million (to \$2.5 billion).