

## **Congressional Closeup** by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

### **Farm credit bail-out action postponed**

The House and Senate subcommittee hearings on the crisis in farm credit scheduled to begin Oct. 15 were postponed, for the third time, until later in the month. The reason given is to allow time for the release of the Farm Credit System's third-quarter report, and proposals by the FCS of what kind of federal bail-out is required. The FCS holds up to \$80 billion, or almost one-third, of the total national \$213 billion agriculture debt. Whole sections of the FCS system are going under in the farmbelt, because of the collapse of farm income, the debt, and world food trade decline.

Governor Terry Branstad of Iowa—where the crisis is particularly severe—came to Washington, D.C. on Oct. 17 to appeal to President Reagan for congressional farm-relief action, in addition to the new five-year farm bill now being enacted. Branstad had declared a state moratorium on farm foreclosures earlier in the month, to try to prevent the mass dispossession of Iowa farm families.

Branstad, a Reagan fundraiser, asked the President not to campaign on his behalf in Iowa next year because of the hatred in the state over the inaction of the White House on the farm question. He reported to Reagan on the rate of farmer suicides.

Both the administration and Congress have been avoiding emergency measures to secure the national food supply and stabilize the farm sector. Instead, they are pursuing policies on behalf of food cartel interests, that will lower price supports and farm incomes in the name of making U.S. farm exports "more competitive" on the world markets.

Congress has heard testimony of

advocates for this view. On Oct. 8, a House subcommittee heard a request by Continental Co., one of the five largest world grain-cartel companies, that the Soviet Union should receive discount grain, subsidized by U.S. taxpayers, or else the Soviets will turn to Western Europe for their grain (which the same cartel companies broker).

On Oct. 16, a House banking subcommittee heard testimony from Export-Import Bank President William Draper, who called for congressional approval of a \$300 million credit fund to help "exporters" (meaning the grain-cartel companies). The money would be given by the U.S. government to cartel company client nations, which would then give the money to Continental, Cargill, or one of the other exporters. The U.S. farmer would continue to receive the low prices from the cartels that are now destroying the U.S. food capacity, perhaps forever.

### **Budget-balancing act becomes more perilous**

The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings so-called budget-balancing amendment to the Senate version of the debt-ceiling extension sailed through the Senate by a 75-24 margin—but then ran into big trouble. Not only are House Democrats, led by Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-Mass.), taking pot shots at it, but there are even sounds from the Republican cloak room which indicate that Republicans too are taking a second look at it.

So report columnists Evans and Novak: "... heavy doubts have infiltrated the West Wing and the House Republican cloakroom. Silent dissenters are hoping that the Democrats will

somehow derail the deficit-reduction juggernaut, signifying that the political budget budget game has gone full circle."

The bill is now in the Senate-House conference, where at last count 57 lawmakers would have a crack at it. But the main reason that the rug may pulled out from under Phil Gramm and his cronies is that the Reaganites are only now waking up to warnings from Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger that the bill would devastate the defense budget for fiscal 1987, perhaps to the tune of \$25 billion. For the moment, the bet is that the amendment will pass in some altered version, because heavy defense cuts sit very well with Senate majority leader Bob Dole (R-Kans.).

### **Action against AIDS now under way?**

Republican Congressman William Dannemeyer of California is now in the process of drafting legislation for immediate introduction into Congress to deal with the AIDS crisis, his staff reports.

Dannemeyer's legislation would 1) make it a felony for a person in an AIDS high-risk group to donate blood; 2) allow health workers to wear protective garments when treating AIDS patients; 3) prohibit people with AIDS from practicing in health-care professions; 4) deny federal funding to any city which refuses to shut down its "gay" bathhouses; 5) bar students with AIDS from attending school.

The only previous congressional action of any note on the AIDS issue occurred when Rep. Robert Dornan of California offered and successfully passed an amendment to the appropri-

ations bill which provided that the surgeon general of the United States could use funds appropriated under the bill "for closing or quarantining as a public health hazard any bathhouse or massage parlor which in his judgment pursuant to law can be determined to facilitate the transmission or spread of the AIDS epidemic.

Dornan's measure was attacked in debate by leading members of the congressional homosexual and AIDS lobby, notably Ted Weiss (D) of New York and Henry Waxman (D) of California, who urged that the surgeon general rely on the judgement of local health officials. The amendment passed overwhelmingly, when even AIDS lobby Democrats voted for it, arguing that "it did not really change anything."

Voting against the bill were Congressmen William Clay (D-Mo.), John Conyers (D-Mich.), Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), Stewart McKinney (R-Conn.), Edward Roybal (D-Calif.), Mervyn Dymally (D-Calif.), William Green (R-N.Y.), and George Crockett (D-Mich.).

A second amendment by Representative Dannemeyer, to correct the scandal of health workers being prohibited from taking precautions against contracting AIDS from patients, was defeated without a vote, and will be taken up again when the Dannemeyer AIDS package comes before the Congress.

## Lord appointment is still on hold

As of this writing Winston Lord, ambassador-designate to the People's Republic of China, is still waiting to have the "designate" removed. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), that *bête-noir*

of the foreign-policy establishment, has led a conservative rebellion against the appointment.

Helms has sent a letter to the White House protesting Lord's attitude on funding for China's forced-abortion policy. But behind Helms's opposition is the conservatives' outrage that the Reagan administration, following State Department advice, chose to appoint Lord, who was the director of the Council on Foreign Relations and was once chief assistant to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, to the post.

In an effort to remove the Senate block, President Reagan has now replied to Senator Helms, calling Lord, "extraordinarily well-qualified" for the appointment. These remarks not only echo White House pronouncements during the fight over the appointment of Richard Burt as ambassador to West Germany, but eerily recall former Secretary of State Dean Acheson's remarks concerning the "Old China Hand" Gang.

As to the abortion issue, Sen. Robert Dole, the Senate majority leader, said that Reagan had told him that the White House and not the ambassador in Peking would determine how much American aid China would get for its social programs.

## The Congress Is Not Always Awful Department

Here is long-awaited proof that the Congress is not always doing stupid or awful things, which would offend the moral instincts of the American people.

Charles P. Wylie (R-Ohio) recently wrote to a constituent the following letter, which the latter thoughtfully passed on to this column:

"This is to acknowledge receipt of

your letter of July 17 expressing support for my amendment to delete funding for free distribution of *Playboy* in Braille.

"I appreciate knowing your support for my position on this issue. Fortunately, a majority of House members shared our views."

## Fascell appeased by turn on ABM Treaty

House Armed Services Committee chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) was one of the first members of Congress to publicly assail National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane's Oct. 6 announcement that the United States has adopted a more liberal reading of the ABM Treaty, which would allow research, testing, and development of defense technologies based on "new physical principles."

In a statement Oct. 9, Fascell denounced the Reagan administration's new interpretation as "incredible," a "fundamental decision" with "serious and far-reaching implications" that "jeopardizes arms control as embodied in the ABM Treaty" and "would legitimize" the Soviets' own strategic defense program.

Fascell announced that he wanted Secretary of State George Shultz to appear before his committee to answer questions on why the policy had been changed, and proceeded to set up hearings for Oct. 22.

But now that Shultz has managed to convince President Reagan, at least temporarily, to revert to a "conservative interpretation," Fascell is all smiles. He praised Shultz to the skies on Oct. 17 for having successfully beaten back McFarlane's challenge to an arms-control treaty which the Soviets have repeatedly violated.