

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda

Senate approves AIDS testing for immigrants

By an overwhelming 96-0 vote, the Senate acted on June 2 to add the AIDS virus to the list of dangerous contagious diseases for which immigrants to the United States are tested.

The vote was on an amendment to the FY87 Supplemental Appropriations bill, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.).

A similar amendment offered by Helms, which also mandated AIDS testing by states for marriage licenses, had been defeated 63-32.

The measure directs the President to act by Aug. 31 to begin testing, including those illegal immigrants applying for legal status under the immigration reform program. Testing positive for the AIDS virus will now be grounds for exclusion from the country.

"The people of the United States will hold this Congress responsible if we don't do something about it," Helms said.

Sen. John Danforth (R-Mo.) said that the testing provision was "beyond dispute." He had voted against the earlier Helms amendment.

Cost had emerged as the major stumbling block to a broader testing program, in the May 21 debate. Sen. Pete Wilson (R-Calif.), who voted against Helms, objected to testing of marriage license applicants for AIDS unless the applicant bore the cost.

Senator Danforth asked whether spending to meet the AIDS threat would be open-ended. "How can we say that we are not concerned about the cost?" he asked. "Is there an unlimited claim on the health care dollar? Is it absolutely unlimited? Is the position of the Congress of the U.S.

that there is no cap? Send the bill."

Senator Brock Adams (D-Wash.), who also voted against the first Helms amendment, said he had "no philosophical objection to testing these groups, but I do have a practical problem." "Given limited resources," Adams said he wanted to test higher-risk groups first.

Technology could solve nuclear waste problem

Senator Chic Hecht (R-Nev.) introduced S. 1211 on May 15, the "Nuclear Waste Reprocessing Study Act of 1987," in an attempt to reassert a technological alternative to burying the nation's nuclear wastes.

"My bill would give the National Academy of Sciences until October 1989 to report to the Congress on the economic and environmental feasibility of a reprocessing program in the U.S.," Hecht said. "In the past, it has been argued that reprocessing was too expensive. But this was before we started to add up the bills for deep geologic disposal of nuclear waste. This approach is likely to cost our citizens more than \$30 billion. . . . In comparison, I am willing to bet that the price tag on reprocessing will turn out to be very reasonable."

Besides saving money, Hecht said it would "allow the country to reconsider an opportunity to make fuller and more efficient use of our limited energy resources." "I have recently returned from a trip to Europe," Hecht said, "where I saw first-hand a successful French program able to remove so much of the dangerous plutonium from the spent fuel, that only one ten-millionth of the original ma-

terial remains."

Hecht pointed out that such a technological solution would end the divisive national conflict over where to bury high-level waste. Energy and Natural Resources chairman Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-La.) recently offered to pay \$150 million per year to a state which accepted such waste.

Although Democrats are sensitive on the reprocessing issue because the Carter administration ended this technology, Hecht hopes to get hearings in Johnston's committee.

Kennedy introduces AIDS education bill

Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, introduced S. 1220 on May 15, the "AIDS Education, Information, Risk Reduction, Prevention, Treatment, Care, and Research Act."

Kennedy promised on May 15 that he and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), who has jurisdiction as chairman of the Health subcommittee in the House, would shortly introduce a second bill on AIDS testing, expected to emphasize voluntary testing and strict confidentiality.

This second bill, however, has not been introduced, and those who stress civil rights for AIDS victims and reject public health measures, are coming under pressure to consider testing measures. Not only has the Senate approved testing for immigrants, but an amendment mandating AIDS tests for immigrants and those seeking marriage licenses, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), was supported by nine Democratic senators, including

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.V.), and Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.), David Boren (D-Okla.), James Exon (D-Neb.), Wendell Ford (D-Ky.), Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Jay Rockefeller (D-W.V.), and Richard Shelby (D-Ala.).

One senator suggested that Kennedy would have to now negotiate with the White House on testing.

Kennedy described S. 1220 as a bill which would "educate all Americans about AIDS risks and enable them to make informed choices to protect themselves; develop care and treatment networks for people with AIDS that are more economical and appropriate; and accelerate the search for AIDS vaccines and cures by putting federal funds to work faster." Kennedy said federal spending in these areas would double in FY88 to \$900 million.

The bill would also set up a national AIDS coordinator in the National Institutes of Health, and an AIDS advisory board whose composition would have to include an AIDS-infected person. Any AIDS research funding request would have to be responded to within six months.

Moratorium proposed on hostile takeovers

Spurred by a foreign hostile takeover attempt against Burlington Industries, Sen. Terry Sanford (D-N.C.) and Rep. Howard Coble (R-N.C.) have introduced the Hostile Foreign Takeover Moratorium Act, to halt such takeover attempts for six months while the Congress considers a more permanent solution.

Introduced as S. 1264 in the Sen-

ate and H.R. 2514 in the House, the proposed moratorium would apply only if the takeover attempt "is financed by a loan, a borrowing, or some other form of debt." It would not affect takeovers which are not hostile and have been approved by the directors of the American corporation.

Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) had scheduled hearings to examine the attempted takeover of Burlington, but the takeover artists refused to come. "I think the arrogance of these people is going to make it easier to sell" legislation, Sanford said.

"I think once again in history investment bankers and their allies are galloping wild and out of control," Sanford said. "In the 1920s, this same crowd of people pretty well wrecked America. Now again they are getting out of hand. They are wrecking the economy. They are destroying communities. They have and are abolishing jobs all across the nation. They are changing the great enterprise of equity to one of debt, contrary to the traditions of the United States. They are weakening the corporate world by substituting debt for equity, modernization, and the capacity for research. Our total national capacity for competitiveness is at risk because of this kind of greed. And for what?"

Congress cuts arms aid to Turkey

Turkey, a NATO ally which is increasingly hard-pressed by the Soviet Union, is being given shabby treatment by the U.S. Congress.

Despite Turkey's military modernization program, and a Reagan

administration request for \$913.5 million in assistance to Turkey, the House Foreign Affairs Committee cut this to \$569.5 million, of which \$490 million is military assistance, a freeze at FY87 levels. The committee has refused to abandon its so-called traditional 7 to 10 ratio in military assistance to Greece and Turkey.

An amendment by Reps. William Broomfield (R-Mich.) and Gus Yatron (D-Pa.) further restricts the use of U.S.-supplied military hardware on Cyprus, and the Post Office and Civil Service Committee passed H.J. Res. 132, commemorating April 24 as a day of national mourning for the Turkish massacre of 1.5 million Armenians during World War I.

Turkey has suspended the ratification process of U.S. use of bases on its territory.

The House cuts in foreign assistance are included in a bill which is \$500 million over the budget previously passed. The Senate's budget is another \$550 million below the House level. Republicans on the committee have offered an alternative budget cutting \$465 million from African development and various U.N. programs, and putting the money into assistance for countries that have U.S. bases. While the Foreign Affairs Committee has marked up the bill, Democrats are hesitating to take the bill to the House floor.

The budget-cutting at Turkey's expense came under fire by Rep. Jim Courter (R-N.J.), who also complained on May 27 that the State Department is cozying up to the Bulgarian regime, which is being accused of genocide against a half-million Turks in Bulgaria, while Turkey is being relatively ignored.