

an international convention to deal with alleged "global warming." In a letter to the President, Sen. John Chafee (R-R.I.) said that such a convention proposal, which is supported by both the EPA and the State Department, could be one of the "bold new initiatives" that could "bolster your reputation as an environmental President."

The idea of the Bush administration taking the initiative on the issue was initially rejected by White House Chief of Staff John Sununu as premature.

In a separate letter, circulated by Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) and signed by 12 Democrats and one Republican, Sen. John Heinz of Pennsylvania, the administration was urged to join other Western powers in supporting a global warming convention. Administration sources said that the proposal was strongly opposed by the Energy Department and other agencies that fear it will result in restrictions on fossil fuels, which release carbon dioxide.

The whole issue was highlighted when it was revealed on May 8 that the written testimony of James E. Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, had been changed by the Office of Management and Budget in order to make it conform to administration views. The Hansen testimony, which helped fuel the debate about the "greenhouse effect," had been augmented by a paragraph which weakened Hansen's conclusions by calling current computer models unreliable. "My only objection [to that alteration]," said Hansen, "is being forced to change the science."

This gave rise to caustic comments from congressmen on administration policy. Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-Colo.), one of the authors of a "green-

house" bill, commented, "George Bush said in the campaign he wanted to fight the greenhouse effect with the White House effect. We may be getting a little bit of the whitewash effect."

Apparently succumbing to the pressure, President Bush on May 11 offered to host a "global workshop" in Washington in the fall to prepare for later negotiations on an international treaty to limit the alleged problem (see *National News*).

## **N**egotiators agree on \$1.17 trillion budget

Senate and House negotiators agreed on May 11 on a \$1.17 trillion budget for Fiscal Year 1990, a spending plan that puts serious constraints on Pentagon spending, among other things. The budget claims to leave a deficit of \$99.7 billion.

In one of the many compromises on the budget, the Senate agreed to drop a provision that would have guaranteed \$1.1 billion for public housing subsidies. The spending plan allows \$299.2 billion in defense spending, which is \$44.2 billion less than the amount needed to keep up with inflation. An additional \$17 billion would be spent on foreign aid.

Both houses are expected to give final approval to the document next week.

## **H**ouse approves minimum wage bill

On May 11, the House approved 247 to 172 legislation raising the hourly minimum wage from \$3.35 to \$4.55 by 1991. This threatens to bring the

first major domestic policy showdown with President Bush, who has threatened to veto the measure. The vote followed brief debate.

"What we consider today is a matter of elemental fairness," said House Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.). "It goes to the heart of what our country is all about." House Democrats who have been pushing the \$4.55 figure against the objections of the administration, which doesn't want it to surpass \$4.25, probably do not have the two-thirds vote necessary to override the inevitable veto.

Both sides are working to draft post-veto battle plans.

## **B**urton warns millions could die of AIDS

Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) commented in the House floor debate on May 4 that millions of Americans will die, if the present rate of increase of AIDS cases continues unabated.

"In 1989 so far we have had 10,452 new cases in the first three months alone," said the congressman, "which means that if that percentage continues through the end of the year, we will have seen more than a doubling of the people dead or dying of AIDS since 1987."

Burton called for a routine testing program to find out exactly how serious the problem is. "We have no idea how many people are infected with the disease today. There are many people that think it is transmitted in ways that have not yet been admitted to by the CDC. Those things need to be uncovered. We need to find that out, and we are not going to be able to find it out until we have a testing program," he said.