

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

National service bill approved

The House passed President Clinton's national service plan on July 28, but as a result of an amendment attached to the bill by Republicans, it reduced the tuition money college students would get in return for community service. The plan would allow college students to "work off" their tuition by doing community service, and reduced the amount of tuition money college students could get in return for this community service.

A Republican filibuster in the Senate was broken on July 30 when William Cohen (R-Me.) and Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) broke ranks to give the Democrats the necessary 60 votes to invoke cloture on debate. The Republicans were hoping to cut down the tuition amount even more. The measure also bans political activities by those participating in the program.

Clinton had originally proposed \$10 billion for a program which would provide grants of \$10,000 per year. In the final legislation, \$1.5 billion was authorized over a three-year period to be used for living costs, health care, and educational assistance at the level of \$4,725 per student per year. In exchange for this, college students would have to work for a total of two years in community service programs.

Anti-immigrant bills deluge Congress

The plummeting U.S. economy has given impetus to anti-immigrant hysteria within the U.S. Congress. Several pieces of legislation introduced before the August recess would put severe restrictions on immigration into the United States.

Perhaps the most far-reaching is a proposal introduced by Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) on Aug. 2 entitled the

Immigration Stabilization Act of 1993. This legislation would reform political asylum laws, making it more difficult for people to enter the country on asylum requests; expand the list of felonies considered "aggravated," which require exclusion and deportation of criminal aliens; reduce annual legal immigration from 800,000 admissions per year to 300,000 per year; and change existing law to ensure that a person born in the United States to an alien mother who is not a lawful resident would not automatically become a U.S. citizen.

Reid wants to increase border security and patrol officers from 5,000 full-time positions to 9,900. "Our borders have overflowed with illegal immigrants placing tremendous burdens on our criminal justice system, schools, and social programs," he said. "Our federal wallet is stretched to the limit by illegal aliens getting welfare, food stamps, medical care and other benefits, often without paying taxes."

Legislation introduced by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) would put 4,000 of California's 22,000 National Guard troops on border patrol. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), together with Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), has proposed charging a fee for those crossing the overland Mexican and Canadian borders.

House resolution congratulates ADL

On Aug. 5, the House passed a resolution by a voice vote congratulating the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) on its 80th anniversary. The resolution was supported on the floor by Reps. Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.) and John Porter (R-Ill.).

The ADL is now being investigated in California and elsewhere for

spying on individuals, which information is suspected to have been provided to foreign governments. The ADL is a masonic organization which defends the drug trade and Satanism, but which purports to represent the Jewish community.

Gilman said that "it is with a great deal of confidence in man's inner good that I commend the ADL on 80 years of diligent devotion to brotherhood." Porter called the ADL "one of the nation's oldest civil rights and human relations organizations," and said that the ADL has been "the leader in fighting anti-Semitism, prejudice, and bigotry and, in the process, has developed groundbreaking educational materials and programs."

The "groundbreaking educational materials" that Porter mentioned, the notorious "World of Difference" program, has come under fire from outraged parents throughout the country.

Republicans push for tougher crime bill

At a press conference on Aug. 4, Republicans introduced an anti-crime initiative which would appropriate \$7.5 billion to build more prisons and put more police on the streets. The package also calls for stricter mandatory prison sentences, expanded use of the death penalty, and speedier executions. The legislation is aimed particularly at the Clinton administration's attempts to curtail mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent offenders, a measure which Attorney General Janet Reno has said she wants in order to create more prison space.

"America needs a tourniquet, a short-term plan to stop the bleeding on our streets and restore the order that the American people deserve," said Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.), who is angling for the 1996

GOP presidential nomination.

Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), another sponsor of the bill and a person whose every move is oriented toward a possible 1996 presidential run, complained that "the President's bill will be more of a 'blame society' approach."

Democrats also have draconian anti-crime legislation in the works. It is expected to include the Brady bill which mandates a five-day wait on handgun purchases.

Biden calls for military action to secure Sarajevo

In floor remarks on Aug. 3, Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) proposed a two-phase plan to end the fighting around Sarajevo and stop the humanitarian disaster that is now shaping up in Bosnia's capital. The first phase of establishing control of access to Sarajevo consists of the following:

- The Serbs must withdraw all heavy weaponry and ground combat forces to specified locations away from the city. Any forces and weapons that are not moved within 48 hours after the ultimatum is issued should be destroyed by air assets already in place.

- Once the pullback is accomplished, Unprofor (U.N. military forces) should take full control of Sarajevo Airport and roadways leading into the city, and the U.N. should determine what constitutes humanitarian cargo, not the Serbs.

- A detachment of Unprofor should position itself on the hills around Sarajevo, between the Serbian forces and the Bosnian Army, to establish a positive control area (PCA) wide enough to keep heavy weapons from bombarding Sarajevo, and to keep the Bosnian Army from taking military advantage of the Serb pull-

back. In the second phase, Unprofor would establish control over all utilities in the immediate vicinity of Sarajevo to support relief agencies operating in the city, and require the Serbs and Croatian forces to cooperate in the delivery of coal to prepare for the coming winter. This phase also calls for a major airlift of supplies of food and other humanitarian supplies.

Other voices were raised in support of air strikes on Serb positions. Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-N.M.) warned that "the international community, including the United States, must come to grips with the armed aggression which has brought the people of Bosnia and Hercegovina to the edge of this abyss. . . . The international community's lack of resolve in the face of naked aggression and genocide in Bosnia-Hercegovina has sealed the fate of tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. We have stood by and allowed this senseless slaughter to continue." He concluded, "We should not fool ourselves, the legacy of Bosnia and Hercegovina will be with us for many years to come."

Television violence target of new bills

In July, the nation's broadcasters were brought to Capitol Hill to explain at hearings what they were going to do to curb violence on television. They were told they had 60 days to make some changes in programming or else Congress would act on its own. Since then, the mood in Congress has been moving decisively toward formulating legislation curbing TV violence, no longer leaving it to broadcasters' "self-policing."

On Aug. 4, Rep. John Bryant (D-Tex.) introduced a bill under which TV broadcasters would face modest fines and a loss of their broadcast li-

censes for failing to edit out offensive violence.

On Aug. 5, Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) introduced a bill which would require television sets to include circuitry allowing parents to block violent programming. Television manufacturers would simply modify circuitry in the computer chip which is already required in new televisions to decode captioning for the hearing-impaired. Although much more dependent on the need for parents to monitor what their children are watching, the Markey bill raises fewer "freedom of speech" objections and has broader support on Capitol Hill.

Somalia role questioned after U.S. deaths

The killing of four U.S. soldiers by a land mine in Mogadishu on Aug. 8 provoked comments from Capitol Hill. Interviewed on "Meet the Press," Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said that the United States should "reassess" its mission in the destroyed African nation. Although Congress will be out of session for another 30 days, Dole felt that "there'll be some pressure on the President" to get the remaining U.S. troops out of Somalia.

House Speaker Tom Foley (D-Wash.), who thought it "tragic" if the peacekeeping troops were pulled out of Somalia, admitted on CNN's "Newsmaker Sunday" that the recent killings of American soldiers, the first ones in Somalia, "will spark a heightened debate" on Capitol Hill.

What began as a peacekeeping mission has degenerated into an unsuccessful witchhunt for Somali leader Gen. Mohamed Farah Aideed. U.S. bombings in the area, which were aimed at killing Aideed, have provoked a strong anti-U.S. feeling in the country.