News Watch

On the Hill

Border Order. H.R. 2202 by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Tex.), and two competing Senate bills, Alan Simpson's (R-Wyo.) S. 1394 and Spencer Abraham's (R-Mich.) S. 1535, each seek to reform immigration policy. FRC deplores nativist rhetoric and supports provisions which reflect the following principles: (1) Illegal immigration must be halted; America should not reward those whose first act in this country is to break the law, and (2) America must remain a country that welcomes legal immigrants, with appropriate safeguards for our national sovereignty.

Red Letter. President Clinton went on record in a Feb. 28 letter to Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), saying he will veto the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act when it reaches his desk. Mr. Clinton claims the legislation is unacceptable because it does not protect a woman's life or "health." FRC responded by saying, "That President Clinton would veto a ban on a procedure characterized as four-fifths infanticide and one-fifth abortion shows his clear disregard for the value of human life."

Gambling Gambit. On March 5, the House of Representatives passed legislation to establish the National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission. The nine-member commission would conduct a two-year study and report its findings to states, Congress and the president. "[T]his legislation creates no new regulations and imposes no new mandates on gambling or state and local governments," said its sponsor, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.). The sole purpose, he added, is to help communities make informed decisions on gambling questions. Senate consideration is next.

Healthy Debate. On April 18-19 the Senate will debate a health insurance reform bill sponsored by Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.). The bill, which President Clinton supports, does *not* contain medical savings accounts (MSA's), and would give Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala the power to ensure that state health insurance plans conform with the "goals" of the bill, including "comprehensive coverage." A related House bill, sponsored by Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), is expected to contain MSA's, no new taxes, and no defined comprehensive benefits package.

Around Town

Teens and AIDS. A new study released by the White House advocates more efforts to reduce the spread of AIDS among teenagers. Twenty-five percent of Americans infected with AIDS each year are under the age of 20. The report calls for more explicit AIDS education and HIV testing without parental notice. Meanwhile, a House-Senate conference committee on the Ryan White Care Act reauthorization is deadlocked over an amendment by Reps. Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-Okla.) and Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) to require AIDS testing of newborns. The Clinton administration opposes the requirement. FRC supports it.

Wing and a Prayer. The Department of Transportation is at odds with a DOT employees' group over whether a prayer and fellowship group can label homosexual behavior a sin. The 50-member Christian organization has waited more than 14 months for official status because it rejects a "nondiscrimination" clause that includes sexual orientation. Group leaders say they welcome homosexuals, but cannot agree to give them leadership positions or sanction actions they consider sinful. Meanwhile, DOT has already given preferential treatment to GLOBE, the Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees group.

Across the Nation

Court-Assisted Suicide. The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled March 7 that Washington state's ban on assisted suicide is unconstitutional. The next day, a Michigan jury acquitted Dr. Jack Kevorkian on charges of assisting in the suicide of two individuals, the second time he has been exonerated. Judge Stephen Reinhardt, writing for the Ninth Circuit's 8-3 majority, directly linked the ruling with *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 case that established abortion on demand. Decision by Washington state officials on an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is pending.

Damsels in Distress. A new Population Reference Bureau study confirms what Massachusetts and California have already found: about two-thirds of births to teenage girls are fathered by men age 20 or older. In addition, a 1994 Alan Guttmacher Institute report found that six of 10 girls who had sex before age 15 were coerced by males an average of six years their senior. As more girls grow up without fathers to protect their honor, their search for a father figure leaves them more vulnerable to predatory males.

Grave But Stable? Another Population Reference Bureau report reveals both positive and negative trends among U.S. families. Good news is that the divorce rate has leveled off, the growth rate of single-parent families has been halved, and more two-parent families with children have formed. However, the report also shows that the U.S. still has the world's highest divorce rate and that single-parent families are increasing three percent annually. Census reports such as these sometimes reflect only a change in demographics, not a genuine attitudinal shift.

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Court Watch

FRC Soldiers On

FRC's Military Readiness Project (MRP) was present on March 4 in Seattle, Washington when the ACLU and the Clinton Justice Department once again misrepresented the military's homosexual law. In the case of *Philips v. Perry* which involves a homosexual sailor who admitted to misconduct, Justice's attorney told a three-judge appeals court panel that what the military has is a "homosexual accommodation law." In fact, it has always had an exclusion policy.

The government cited as evidence the fiction that some homosexual service members have successfully convinced administrative boards that being homosexual does not mean that they will engage in illicit conduct. At the hearing the ACLU asserted that homosexuals can legally serve, and then argued that the *Philips* case was really about discrimination. Unbelievably, it took a judge (a Bush-appointee) to highlight the fact that Philips had admitted to homosexual sex with "a dozen" men.

The MRP has participated in five federal appeals court cases. Most recently, on March 15, it joined the *Richtenberg v. Perry* case which involves an Air Force captain who declared himself a homosexual. Like the others, he seeks to invalidate the law and the Pentagon's regulations. This case may present another opportunity for the MRP to make oral arguments, as it did last December in *Thomasson v. Perry*. The MRP will defend the underlying law, and the Clinton Justice Department will defend the faulty "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" implementing regulations.

Two cases soon to be decided, *Abel v. U.S.A.* and *Thomasson*, are competing for the attention of the Supreme Court. Decisions in both cases are expected this spring, and one of them will be appealed to the high court this summer with oral arguments likely during the court's next term.

Meanwhile, a new administration could discard Clinton's faulty "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" regulations and require the Justice Department to defend the law before the Supreme Court. In any event, major news on this issue is only months away.

Policy Update

Rx for the Drug War

On Feb. 15, FRC hosted a national drug abuse prevention strategy meeting. Nationally known experts from diverse backgrounds and regions came together to develop an eight-part action plan. The participants agreed: the drug scourge is getting worse, and something must be done to reignite grass-roots anti-drug efforts.

The strategy has a two-part prevention focus: use of mind/mood-altering drugs is dangerous to the individual and society, and comprehensive community-based prevention is the most viable solution to the drug crisis.

Drug education must begin at home. The strategy calls for drug education resources to be tied to accountability. Drug abuse messages must be congruent and consistently broadcast through every educational setting (homes, schools, workplaces, communities and media).

Law enforcement must identify all users and impose consequences on abuse. It must also create systematic accountability for funding and success rates. Key to the strategy is leadership. Leaders at all levels must speak clearly and serve as role models.

Grass-roots citizen action is vital. Accountability for drug abuse prevention must be locally based, and citizen groups must have power over funds to make their programs work. The media must stop glamorizing drugs and provide truthful alternative messages. The strategy calls for an annual report on media handling of the drug prevention message.

Treatment for abusers should be delivered at the point of need with accountability. This includes providing appropriate long-term treatment. Finally, the strategy calls for reallocating available drug funds with strict standards. This year the federal government will spread $13 billion across 140 programs with little accountability.

FRC wants the strategy to influence each political party's presidential platform and all future drug-related legislation. It provides a federal model for the drug war that focuses the government on supply interdiction and passes responsibility and fiscal authority for prevention and treatment to local communities.

FRC's short-term goal is to have drug abuse recognized as a national crisis. America must aim to cut current abuse levels at least in half by the year 2000. The long-term goal is the eradication of drug abuse.

Bulletin Board

- **Gary Bauer on the Road**

Mar. 28-Addresses Evangelical Child and Family Agency banquet, Racine, Wis.

Mar. 29-Addresses crisis pregnancy center event, Hampton, Va.

Apr. 11-Addresses Sav-A-Life event, Huntsville, Ala.

Apr. 16-Addresses crisis pregnancy center event, Elmira, N.Y.

Apr. 25-Addresses Albermarle crisis pregnancy center event, Elizabeth City, N.C.

- **FRC on Air**

Mar. 5-Kristi Hamrick appears on CNN debating school prayer with Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Mar. 6-Gary Bauer appears on Jim Lehrer's *Newshour*. Topic: the 1996 presidential primaries.

Mar. 22-Director of Legal Studies Cathleen A. Cleaver debates computer pornography on PBS' *Firing Line* with Arianna Huffington, Ira Glasser, Michael Kinsley and host William F. Buckley, Jr.

- **FRC in Action**

Mar. 12-15-FRC Vice President for Policy William R. Mattox, Jr., attended an international family meeting in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The event was designed to lay plans for an international conference of family advocates to issue a proclamation on the importance of strengthening families worldwide.

April 19-20-Mattox addresses "Reclaiming America's Moral and Cultural Heritage" symposium, Clearwater, Fla., sponsored by the James Madison Institute. Topic: "The Fraying of Our Social Fabric: How Big Government Is Weakening Family and Community Ties."

- **Notice to Readers**

Receiving too much mail from FRC? Want to give us feedback on our policies and publications? Next month's issue of Washington Watch will give you an opportunity to let us know how we're doing. Tailoring our publications to your needs will help FRC maintain careful stewardship of our limited resources — and serve you better. Look for a special reply card next month — and let us hear from you!