News Watch

On the Hill

In the Balance. Before the end of January, both Houses of Congress are expected to vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The new House Republican leadership moved the amendment to the starting gate, convening subcommittee hearings on Jan. 9. Opponents of the amendment, which must have the support of two-thirds of each chamber to clear Congress, are focusing fire on its alleged impact on popular and difficult-to-cut programs. FRC supports the amendment as the only effective means to reverse the encroachment of big government on American families.

Disabusing Child Abuse. The new Congress may be willing to look at the problem of abusive practices occurring under the banner of "child abuse prevention." The Mondale Act, passed in 1974, gives massive federal grants to state child protection agencies, with strings attached. Not only do these programs often violate family rights, but there is also growing consensus that the federal strings are part of the problem. The solution: zero-fund the Mondale Act and give states a string-free block grant. Hearings are expected in the House Economic and Educational Opportunity Committee (formerly Education and Labor) in late January.

GLOBE Spinning. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) has introduced a bill to roll back Clinton Administration policy on homosexuality. S. 25 would keep programs such as "Diversity Day 94" (see *Washington Watch* Oct. 14, 1994) and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Commission's diversity recruitment support team from promoting homosexuality. The bill would also stop taxpayer money from funding such groups as the Gay Lesbian or Bisexual Employees (GLOBE) in federal agencies. Sen. Helms has also introduced S. 23 to protect the free speech rights of federal employees who object to promotion of the homosexual lifestyle.

Around Town

Embryonically Pro-Life. President Clinton decided in early December to limit federal funding of embryo research. The President directed the National Institutes of Health to withhold funding from any experiments that would involve the deliberate creation of human life ***in vitro*** solely for research purposes. Federal funding of research on "excess" embryos obtained from couples attempting to achieve pregnancy at *in vitro* centers can, however, go forward. The White House also announced plans to establish a National Bioethics Advisory Commission to deal with embryo research and other issues.

Outed. To Planned Parenthood, Joycelyn Elders "brought to Washington a welcome dose of real-world wisdom that raised the stature of the office." But to Bill Clinton, she brought nothing but headaches. On Dec. 9 he ousted her as Surgeon General. Clinton's move came in response to Elders' statement at the United Nations on World AIDS Day that schools should consider teaching masturbation as part of comprehensive sexuality education. *Newsweek* magazine reported on Jan. 9 that a group of moderate Democrats met with Clinton after the election and urged jettisoning Joycelyn (and policy guru Ira Magaziner) as a move toward the political center.

Signal Guide. The Media Research Center, based in Alexandria, Va., has released its 1994-95 *Parents' Guide to Prime Time Television*. The guide reviews all major program offerings from ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX in the 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. time slot and offers advice to parents in a convenient format. Parents will want to obtain a second opinion, and reviews of past programs are no proof of future trends, but the useful guide ($7.95) is available from the Center by calling 1-800-MRC-1423.

Across the Nation

PRA Now. The move to secure the "rights" of parents under law is gaining momentum. A new group, Of the People, helped introduce the Parental Rights Amendment (PRA) last year in seven states. The simple amendment reads, "The right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." At least twelve additional states are certain to introduce this important amendment in 1995, with efforts for sponsors under way in 27 more. Watch for it in your state during the "National Week of Introduction," Jan. 16-20.

Yes, Virginia. The Old Dominion's Gov. George Allen (R) seems determined to move out boldly on education reform. His Commission on Champion Schools recommended Nov. 29 that Virginia join the growing movement toward charter schools (public schools which benefit from decentralized administration and parental choice). Allen also wants to make the state's Family Life Education curriculum optional for local school districts and to require parental approval *before* enrolling students in the often controversial offerings.

Compelling Condoms. Planned Parenthood and the ACLU are suing the Hemet, California school system over its abstinence-based sex education program. The curriculum promotes delayed sex instead of "safe sex" and acknowledges that parents have primary responsibility for sex education. The liberal groups' suit claims that the program is medically inaccurate, "racist" and "gender-biased" and that students are being denied "lifesaving" information. People for the American Way, another liberal group, contends that the program is part of a nationwide push by "right-wing" groups to displace comprehensive (condom-promoting) sex-ed programs.

Washington Watch is published by Family Research Council. For more information, contact Family Research Council, 700 13th St., N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202-393-2100. FAX: 202-393-2134. Legislative information line (toll call): 202-783-HOME. President: Gary L. Bauer. Editor: Charles A. Donovan, Sr. Contributors: Cathy Deeds; Amy Dixon; Sheila T. Ervin; Anne N. Fitzpatrick; Meghan R. Flaherty; Dan Garcia; Kristi S. Hamrick; Gracie Hsu; Robert H. Knight; Elizabeth Kepley Law; Lt. Col. Robert L. Maginnis (USA, Ret.); William R. Mattox, Jr.; Robert G. Morrison; Anne Redd; William T. Spont; Valerie Stambaugh; David M. Wagner, Esq.; Tammy Watkins. Designer: Sherry Nicolai Russell.

Family Research Council is exempt from taxation under IRC 501(c)(3). Contributions to FRC are tax-deductible.

© 1995 Family Research Council. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. Family Research Council and *Washington Watch* are trademarks of the Family Research Council, Inc.

Court Watch

Casey Casualties

Two constitutional lawsuits are currently going forward on the issue of euthanasia. In one, pro-life forces are on the offensive, arguing that an assisted suicide statute unconstitutionally discriminates against the infirm. In the other, the offensive is from the other side, which argues that states are constitutionally required to allow assisted suicide.

The suits begin with the fact that two Northwestern states voted different ways on the issue. In a 1991 referendum, voters in Washington state rejected an assisted suicide law. But last November, voters in Oregon enacted one.

In *Lee v. State of Oregon*, a federal judge on Dec. 7 issued a temporary restraining order against enforcement of the statute. At trial, the plaintiffs — a group that includes disabled persons with terminal illnesses — will argue that the statute discriminates against them by withdrawing from them the legal protection that prevents others from dangling the suicide option in their faces at a time of emotional vulnerability.

Meanwhile, in Washington state, the voters' decision not to allow assisted suicide is being challenged by a pro-euthanasia group called Compassion in Dying. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is reviewing a trial court opinion that assisted suicide is a *constitutional right*. That opinion represents the first of many additional harms that are flowing from the Supreme Court's *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision, of 1992. In *Casey*, the Court defended an expansive abortion right as part of the "liberty" protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, saying that liberty means the "right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of life."

Judge Barbara Rothstein concluded that this language means assisted suicide must be legal. At the appeals level, the state of Washington argued that the *Casey* language is inapplicable outside the abortion context. The appeals court may agree. But the Rothstein opinion shows how the Supreme Court's embarrassing essay in amateur philosophy can be used to further the anti-life agenda in our courts, over the wishes of the people.

Policy Update

A Talent for Reform

Welfare reform will be one of the highest legislative priorities for the 104th Congress. That much is clear. But far less clear is what direction the Congressional debate will take.

Virtually everyone recognizes that the current system is broken. But consensus on reform is still lacking. Some want the debate to center around getting people off the welfare rolls by requiring recipients to work for their benefits. Others (including FRC) believe at least as much attention needs to be given to strategies that would address America's burgeoning illegitimacy problem (which is the top reason people have to go on welfare in the first place).

Congressman Jim Talent (R-MO) and Senator Lauch Faircloth (R-NC) are leading efforts to put serious anti-illegitimacy provisions into any welfare reform initiative considered by the Congress. Specifically, they want to change welfare eligibility rules so that in the future welfare assistance will not be offered to women under age 21 who bear children out of wedlock.

In addition, Talent and Faircloth have called for creating a $1,000 tax credit for married couples to address the serious bias against marriage in welfare and tax policy. They have suggested that work requirements should focus initially on recipients with school-age children instead of those with preschool children. Recent studies show that workfare programs targeted at young mothers have far less success than those targeted at mothers of older children. Moreover, programs targeted at older children do not invite a massive new federal day care initiative.

In early December, the Congressional Budget Office issued an estimate of the cost of the Clinton welfare program that exceeded the Administration's projection by $2.5 billion. Most of the difference stems from CBO's estimates of costs for child care, required by the Clinton plan's inclusion of provisions to require young mothers to work. The CBO also estimated that the Clinton plan would reduce the number of recipients of cash welfare benefits by 70,000 over five years — a caseload reduction of 1.3 percent. Republicans estimate their own welfare reform bill would produce $40 billion in savings over the same period.

Bulletin Board

- **Gary Bauer on Air**

"Washington Watch," Gary Bauer's 90-second daily radio commentary, is now heard on 110 radio stations nationwide. To find out if the broadcast is available in your area, call the 1-800 number below and request a program listing. If you would like your favorite local station to carry "Gary Bauer's Washington Watch," call or write the station and urge them to offer this unique daily look at breaking events affecting your family in Washington, D.C. Information about the commentary is available from Briargate Media at (719) 531-3400.

- **Gary Bauer on the Road**

Jan 22.-Addresses general session at March for Life conference, Hyatt Regency-Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

Jan. 23-Addresses Georgia Right to Life memorial service and march at State Capitol, Atlanta, Georgia.

Feb. 2-Addresses "Celebration of Life" dinner, Omaha, Neb.

Feb. 23-Addresses crisis pregnancy center dinner, Memphis, Tenn.

March 7-Addresses crisis pregnancy center event, Auburn, Ala.

- **Staff in Action**

Jan.-Article on the Clinton Administration and military morale by policy analyst Bob Maginnis in *The World & I.*

Jan. 4-Maginnis paper, entitled "Federal Government Promotes Homosexuality Using 'Diversity' Cover" *(Item Code IS94L2HS)*, was placed in *The Congressional Record.*

Jan 20.-Article on divorce rates by Vice President for Policy Bill Mattox appears in *Chronicles* magazine.

Jan. 21-New government liaison staff member Cathy Deeds addresses American Collegians for Life Conference in Washington, D.C.

Copies of all FRC papers/articles mentioned in "Bulletin Board" or elsewhere in *Washington Watch* are available on request. Just dial 1-800-225-4008.