News Watch

On the Hill

FDA Checks Parents. House Commerce Committee Chairman Thomas J. Bliley (R-Va.) recently held hearings into why the FDA refuses to allow the marketing of an Atlanta mother's drug testing kit to parents who want to test their children. FDA regulations label the kit (a plastic cup and a shipping box) as a "Class III" medical device, equivalent to an MRI or pacemaker. Even though businesses and athletic teams use the same kit, the FDA claims it "is concerned about issues such as anonymity, confidentiality, coercion, and family discord." Will the same considerations govern FDA rulings on RU-486?

Hope for Homosexuals. On Oct. 10, FRC co-sponsored a press conference for the Second Annual Coming Out of Homosexuality Day (Oct. 11) and the new support group, Parents, Family and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX). Hosted by Michael Johnston, a former homosexual who is HIV-positive, the event was taped for C-SPAN. FRC Cultural Studies Director Bob Knight also spoke, along with *Lambda Report* editor Peter LaBarbera, the Philadelphia Family Policy Council's Bill Devlin, Tom and Ann Taylor, who have a homosexual son, and ex-homosexuals Anthony Falzarano and Jane Boyer.

Refuge for Abortion Victims. Several immigration provisions were rolled into the FY 1997 Omnibus Appropriations package, including a humanitarian measure which allows people fleeing from coercive abortion policies to seek asylum in the United States. Effective immediately, asylum may be granted for up to 1,000 people per year who have been forcibly aborted or involuntarily sterilized, or have a well-founded fear of persecution under coercive population control policies. This restores a similar policy which was effective under the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Immigrants and AIDS Treatment. Congress dropped a provision in its immigration legislation preventing taxpayer-funding of HIV-AIDS treatment for legal and illegal aliens. Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), chairmen of House and Senate immigration subcommittees, said the change could encourage "thousands of HIV-infected aliens to seek asylum in the U.S." Despite a 1993 law barring admission of HIV-positive immigrants, earlier this year the White House directed the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to consider granting asylum to HIV-positive individuals.

Around Town

Elders on Drugs. As Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders called for a drug legalization study, favored giving needles to addicts and advocated marijuana as medicine. On Oct. 9, she blamed the new teenage drug epidemic on easy-to-get marijuana and then said pot "probably causes very little problem to anyone." Marijuana can be addictive, damages the immune system, causes respiratory diseases and mental disorders, and impairs coordination and judgment.

Gagging Chaplains. Air Force Reserve chaplain Fr. Vincent Rigdon has filed a federal lawsuit against the Secretary of Defense (*Rigdon v. Perry*) for interfering with his religious liberty and free speech by issuing a "gag order" that bars religious leaders from discussing specific legislation in sermons or counseling. In June, a Pentagon directive to Catholic military chaplains prohibited them from "participating or urging others to participate" in a nationwide postcard mailing to Congress which supported a vote to override the veto of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Bork's Beatitudes. Will America survive? Not without strong churches, says Robert Bork, respected jurist and author of the controversial new book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline.* Bork contends that the loss of reliable standards of right and wrong has resulted in a "loss of nerve, which means the community cannot summon the will to suppress" many social ills such as pornography and crime. "The Church which ought to be shaping and influencing culture is instead being influenced by culture," Bork says.

Across the Nation

Insulting Hispanics. Apparently, the Enola Gay controversy taught the Smithsonian Institute little. Hispanic Heritage Month, which ended on Oct. 15, featured Andres Serrano, best known for vulgar and anti-Christian art. (His creations include a crucifix immersed in a jar of urine.) The Hispanic community lacks not for serious artists. Selecting Serrano "because of the body of his work" reveals the politically correct values of the Smithsonian. Such art merits no taxpayer money. The real irony is that Serrano would receive no support if his works glorified Christian symbols.

PX Porn Challenge. Now that the sale of pornographic materials at military stores has been prohibited, *Penthouse* publisher Bob Guccione is challenging the 1997 Defense Authorization Bill, claiming it is unconstitutional. Guccione's magazine alone earned $1.16 of the $4.6 million in 1995 sales at the Pentagon's worldwide chain of tax-supported stores. Mr. Guccione's real gripe with the new law may be its threat to his revenues. Getting the U.S. government out of the porn business has been an accomplishment 10 years in the making.

BULLETIN—In education news, the CAREERS bill (H.R. 1617) died with the closing of the 104th Congress. The issue of job training reform will most likely be raised again in the 105th Congress next year.

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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. Publication order line: 1-800-225-4008 (toll-free). Internet address: **http://www.frc.org.**

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Policy Update

Katy Bar the Schoolhouse Door to Parents

Parents effectively lose their right to direct the upbringing of their children when they drop them off at school, according to one federal court judge. Earlier this year, Judge Melinda Harmon, appointed by President Bush, ruled that Katy Independent School District in Texas did not violate parents' rights by allowing Child Protective Services to interrogate a student without notifying his parents, nor by instructing him to lie to his parents about the incident.

Take, for example, the case of 6-year-old Jonathan Prevette, who last month kissed a classmate in Lexington, N.C. Such incidents have a long history in schoolyards across America and, until now, were brushed off as childhood innocence, or reprimanded by teachers and principals after discussing the situation with parents. But this time it was called "sexual harassment." The "culprit" was suspended for a misdemeanor he can't even spell.

What prompted such a response? Perhaps it was a nudge from the U.S. Education Department, which this summer distributed guidelines urging schools to set up sexual harassment policies. Schools were warned that under Title IX "gender equity" provisions for federally funded programs, they may be held liable for letting "sexual harassment" among students go unnoticed.

With even admiring looks now considered "sexual harassment," it is no wonder a school would seek cover from lawsuits by laying down a blanket prohibition against anything remotely affectionate. Ironically, the very same federal Education Department has promoted sex education schemes that push condoms and the like on boys and girls at even younger ages.

Such cold, heavy-handed responses to children like Jonathan Prevette will continue if federal court decisions shut parents out and let a remote and liberal federal education bureaucracy hand down one-size-fits-all policies. Embracing parents, on the other hand, would result in the improved discipline and academics many schools now seek in vain.

Court Watch

A Duty to Die?

The Supreme Court has accepted two important cases concerning doctor-aided suicide. In *Glucksburg v. Washington*, the Ninth Circuit federal court "found" a constitutional "liberty" right for terminally-ill patients to be killed by their doctors. Judge Stephen Reinhardt explained that his reasoning is "identical" to the Supreme Court abortion cases of *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. These poisonous precedents live on, defending the destruction of life.

The other case creates a constitutional right to be killed by a doctor, not based on "liberty" but "equality." The Second Circuit federal court in *Vacco v. Quill* declared that the New York law against causing or assisting suicide was unconstitutional because it discriminates among terminally-ill people. According to the court, refusing artificial life support and getting a lethal injection are equivalent, and since the former is permitted, the latter may not be prohibited.

If these decisions are not overturned by the high court, a "right to die" may soon become a "duty to die" for those most in need.

A recent report on the Netherlands euthanasia experience by Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla.) provides a compelling context for the current debate on doctor-assisted suicide in America. Euthanasia of the terminally ill in the Netherlands has been expanded since its inception in 1973 to permit the killing of healthy people experiencing psychological distress. Voluntary euthanasia has given way to involuntary euthanasia, called "termination of the patient without explicit request." In 1990, 1,000 people in the Netherlands were killed without their consent, 140 of whom were fully competent.

FRC is part of a broad coalition of groups urging the Court to overturn the lower rulings, drafting *amicus* briefs detailing the right of society to forbid euthanasia, and recounting the tragedy of pre-Nazi Germany, where mercy killing was thought to be the compassionate response to the plight of physically or mentally disabled people, "life unworthy of life." Germany has learned from its horrific mistakes, and now calls mercy killing a crime against humanity. Pray that the Supreme Court will not sacrifice the lives of the infirm as they have done the lives of the unborn.

Bulletin Board

- **Gary Bauer on the Road**

Oct. 28–29-Addresses Bethany Christian Services in Myrtle Beach and Greenville, S.C.

Nov. 18-Addresses Faith Christian School, Sterling, Va.

- **FRC on Air**

Nov. 6-FRC's Director of Government Relations Marty Dannenfelser will do a post-election analysis interview on WQCK radio in Baton Rouge, La.

- **FRC in Action**

Sept. 30–Oct. 3-Senior Policy Analyst Robert Maginnis hosted a Swiss anti-drug delegation. The delegation explained Switzerland's drug legalization initiatives and the pending referendum to the White House drug czar's staff, key Congressional personnel and State Department officials.

October 1996-Congratulations to FRC's William R. Mattox, Jr., who was recently asked by *USA Today* to be a regular opinion writer as a member of their Board of Contributors.

Oct. 11-National Coming Out of Homosexuality Day organizers hosted a time of testimonials, sharing and outreach. The event was geared to practicing homosexuals about chances to change, and was held simultaneously with AIDS quilt activities in Washington, D.C.

Oct. 11-Special Assistant to the President Robert G. Morrison participated in an Election Forum in Seattle, Wash., cosponsored by Seattle Pacific University. Morrison addressed key issues facing the nation and the family in the coming year.

Oct. 14, 15-Mattox participated in the Minneapolis, Minn. conference, "Summit on Fatherhood," sponsored by the National Fatherhood Initiative and the Center for the American Experience, which are planning a book on fatherhood and families. Mattox will be contributing a chapter on divorce reform.

Oct. 16–21-Maginnis attended the Second International Meeting on Drug Addiction in San Patrignano, Italy. The conference included leading cultural and media personalities, scientists and addiction experts.

Nov. 8-Dannenfelser addresses the Christian business organization, "First Friday Group," in Arlington, Va. to review the 1996 elections.