News Watch

On the Hill

Wretched Refusal. Over 50 members of Congress wrote to Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary of State Warren Christopher asking them to expedite the request of a pregnant Chinese woman for admission to the United States. Jihong Liu was the wife of a permanent resident of the United States and had already been approved for an American visa, but sought early entry to escape the coerced abortion of her unborn child. After a long delay, the Clinton Administration rejected the request, forcing Jihong, who had been in hiding, to surrender to Chinese authorities. The abortion was carried out on April 29.

Family Doctors. Thousands of physicians have cosigned a letter to Congress telling members to protect the family from harms associated with the Clinton health care bill. Dr. Rick Kiovsky, Chairman of the Physicians' Resource Council of Focus on the Family, commented, "Congress needs to know that many physicians worry about health impacts beyond fee schedules. Health care reform should not be the vehicle for transforming the moral foundations of the family." The Council provides health policy advice to Focus, which is in regular contact with nearly one-tenth of active U.S. physicians.

Felonious FACE. The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) bill passed final votes in the Senate (69-30) and House (241-174) and was signed by President Clinton on May 26. FACE singles out demonstrators at medical (read "abortion") clinics and churches (read "ACT-UP activists"). Violent first-time offenders face felony charges with penalties up to $100,000 in fines and one year in federal prison. Nonviolent first-timers risk $10,000 fines and six months' jail time. Said Rep. Jim Bunning (R-Ky.), "[FACE] is designed not to prevent violence, but to discourage pro-life protestors."

Around Town

Bitter Pills. Pressured by a deadline imposed by the Clinton Administration, Roussel-Uclaf, the French pharmaceutical manufacturer that held the patent to the abortion pill RU-486, surrendered all rights to the drug to the New York-based Population Council on May 16. That action sets in motion a process of medical trials that could bring RU-486 to the U.S. drug market by 1996. Right to life advocates immediately threatened a boycott of any U.S. manufacturer and other actions to halt final Food and Drug Administration approval. Abortion supporters hailed the Administration's intervention.

Court Order. Judge Susan C. Holmes Winfield ruled April 20 that no unmarried couple may adopt a child in the District of Columbia. The conservative ruling in the liberal District dismayed homosexual activists, who have used adoption system weaknesses to promote acceptance of homosexual "families." The decision, in a case of two homosexual men who wanted to adopt a three-year-old girl, also bars unmarried heterosexuals from adopting. The judge said that changing the law would open the door to group adoption. Regrettably, the ruling affirmed the suitability of single homosexuals to adopt children.

Monopolizing Time. The U.S. Education Department released in May a new report entitled "Prisoners of Time," which argues that America's children are not spending enough time in the classroom. The report relies on cross-country comparisons, noting that U.S. students spend less than half the time on core subjects that students in Japan and Germany do. Rather than blame the recent expansion of nonacademic subjects (e.g., sex education) and a funding monopoly that makes children prisoners of a failing system, the report calls for a longer school day and school year—answers which, coincidentally, would demand a significant increase in education spending.

Across the Nation

False Start. A new Carnegie Foundation report entitled "Starting Points" laments the fact that parents today "have less time to spend with their children." Yet its central recommendation is to broaden the array of day care programs available to young children. If that seems like a disconnect, welcome to the world of wrongway policy wonking, where family-supplanting programs are almost always pitched as the solution to family decline. When will a blue-ribbon commission take a page from FRC's *Free to Be Family* report and agree that you cannot relieve children of their problems by relieving parents of their duties?

Victory for Marriage. Austin, Texas, made history May 7 when it became the first city whose electorate voted to overturn a "domestic partnership" law. The City Council had extended "spousal" insurance benefits to unmarried partners of city employees, both heterosexual and homosexual. Austin voters nixed the benefits, 62-38%. Of the pairs registering under the law, 69 out of 98 were opposite-sex couples. Observers see the vote in liberal Austin as a major setback for homosexual activists, but also as an affirmation of marriage over cohabitation.

Hurting Healing. The American Psychiatric Association, meeting in Philadelphia, voted to defer consideration of a statement fashioned by the Gay and Lesbian Caucus which declares that the Association "does not endorse" therapy for those struggling to change their homosexuality to heterosexuality. If adopted by the APA membership, this would effectively "outlaw" the therapy, says Dr. Charles Socarides, a practitioner of gender reparative therapy and a leading opponent of the policy change. The statement was referred to the APA Council on Minorities and National Affairs for reworking.

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Court Watch

Steffan: Panning a Panel?

On May 10, the entire U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit assembled to hear rearguments in *Steffan v. Cheney*, a homosexual sailor's challenge to his discharge from the Naval Academy. The situation was most unusual: last year, a three-judge panel of the same court ruled that the military's policy on homosexuals had no "rational basis," the most lenient standard of judicial review. The policy, they said, was based solely on prejudice. Strangely enough, that panel consisted of the three most liberal members of the court, including Chief Judge Abner Mikva.

The Clinton Administration was torn between its institutional duty to defend the Academy and the law under which Steffan was discharged, and its policy in favor of jettisoning that law. As it happened, the full Circuit Court took the decision out of the Administration's hands; on its own initiative, the court, still dominated by Reagan and Bush appointees, voted to rehear the case en banc—that is, will all of its judges participating.

At the rehearing, Judge Harry Edwards, a member of the original panel, badgered government attorney Mark Levy for "data" on the correlation between homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior. Commenting afterwards, FRC analyst Robert Maginnis faulted Levy for failing to note that Steffan's own admitted conduct is powerful "data" on that point. Nor did Levy explain, when asked, the concept of unit cohesion, appearing not to know that the Pentagon had examined thousands of homosexual cases and found that homosexuals damage morale.

With the Administration ideologically opposed to the policy it was nominally defending, some of the stronger arguments for it came from the bench rather than from the counsel's lectern. For instance, Judge A. Raymond Randolph suggested an analogy to the CIA dismissing an avowed Communist, or a government day care center dismissing a self-described pedophile.

Few doubt that the liberal panel's ruling will be reversed by the full court. The question is, what rationale will the majority adopt, and will the case eventually go to what the D.C. Circuit likes to call "Higher Authority"—the U.S. Supreme Court?

Policy Update

Flying Moose

Children of the TV generation fondly remember the adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle, tales of a heroic squirrel who regularly flew to the rescue of his buddy, an amiable but bumbling moose. As the health care reform debate moves into full swing, similar rescue operations are underway, but the rescuers more closely resemble moose than squirrels.

The adventure begins with President Clinton's health care plan in serious trouble. Public opinion polls have consistently shown that while 80 percent of Americans are satisfied with their own health insurance, they favor systemic reform. But an April poll found that 63 percent of Americans reject the central idea of the President's plan, mandatory universal coverage. Then, in May, a *New York Times*/CBS poll of the nation's top executives, found that 71 percent now believe his plan will damage the U.S. health care system, not improve it.

But one Bullwinkle is only attracting others. In the House, the Education and Labor Committee performed cosmetic surgery on the Clinton bill, basically retaining its jobs-destroying mandate on employers to provide health insurance. The Energy and Commerce Committee has delayed action as key members encounter constituent dissatisfaction with the White House plan. Meanwhile, the Ways and Means Committee is struggling with the dreaded "T" word: tax hikes to pay for the expanded coverage.

In the Senate, Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) has introduced a reform package that drops the President's mandatory health care alliances, but still imposes new burdens on businesses and funds elective abortions. Meanwhile, two key Democrats, David Boren (Okla.) and Bob Kerrey (Neb.), have endorsed Republican John Chafee's (R.I.) alternative, which has neither an employer mandate nor mandatory alliances. The Chafee plan has been opposed by conservatives who object to its costly, federally defined benefit package and abortion coverage. Republican failure to coalesce behind a single set of reform principles mirrors the Democrats' own disunity.

Is there a Rocky in this mix? Not if the polls are accurate. But for now a flock of flying moose is making an impressive sight over the Capitol.

Bulletin Board

• Gary Bauer on the Road

June 9-Addresses fund-raising banquet of Cornerstone Christian School, New York, NY.

June 20-Addresses clergy dinner sponsored by Dayton (Ohio) Right to Life, followed by appearance at Far Hills Baptist Church, Kettering. For information, call (513) 461-3625.

July 3-Addresses morning event sponsored by Central Wesleyan Church of Holland, Mich.; evening event sponsored by First Reformed Church, Zeeland, Mich.

• Gary Bauer in the News

May 3-Bauer editorial, "Family fears over health care," appears in *The Washington Times*.

Late May-Scripps Howard newspapers to carry Bauer column criticizing proposed Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines on "religious harassment" in the workplace.

• FRC Program Notes

May-Focus on the Family magazine features story on FRC's fatherhood advertising and public information campaign.

May 15-Gary Bauer's "Washington Watch" daily radio commentary moves to permanent home on Focus on the Family satellite network. FRC extends its appreciation to the Salem Radio Network and KKLA (Los Angeles) for their assistance in launching this new feature. Consult future editions of this newsletter for listing information or contact your local stations.

• Staff in Action

April 28-Editorial by Bill Mattox, "A Lesson for Allison," appears in *The Wall Street Journal*. Subject: the MS Foundation's "Take Our Daughters to Work Day." Radio host Rush Limbaugh features article on that same day's radio and television broadcasts.

May 10-Government Relations Director Elizabeth Law takes part in CNN & Co. panel on contrasting reaction of feminist groups to sexual harassment charges against Clarence Thomas and Bill Clinton.

May 11-Policy analyst Robert Maginnis on NBC Nightly News discussing Clinton Administration lawyer's handling of the *Steffan* case (*see "Courtwatch," this page*).

May 16-Press Secretary Kristi Hamrick comments on RU-486 (see *"Newswatch," opposite*) for CNN World News Tonight.

May 17-Charmaine Yoest debates RU-486 on CNN's Crossfire and CNBC's "Inside Washington."

May 25-Editorial on RU-486 by Charmaine Yoest in *The Wall Street Journal*.

June 11-Health and Ethics Director Scott Daniels to address Massachusetts Family Institute on health care reform. Call the Institute at (617) 928-0800 for more information.

Note: Copies of editorials and articles mentioned in Bulletin Board are available on request. Dial FRC's toll-free line to order: 1-800-225-4008.