On the Hill

Senate to vote on RLPA in September – In 1990 the Supreme Court weakened protections for religious exercise and today, some state and local laws burden religious expression unnecessarily. Consider: A small church in Florida was ordered to stop its ministry of feeding the homeless. Prison officials are prohibiting the use of sacramental wine in communion services. Local zoning boards are treating churches no differently than junkyards. The *Religious Liberty Protection Act* (RLPA), supported by more than 80 religious groups and civil rights organizations, would reestablish the general rule that state or local officials may not substantially burden religious exercise without a compelling reason such as public health or safety. – *JRL*

Maybe All Crimes Are "Hate Crimes" – On August 4, the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), held a hearing on the federal response to "hate crimes." Testimony given articulated the dangers to freedom of religion, speech, and thought which would accompany so-called "hate crimes" legislation. Many of the witnesses spoke to the importance of upholding the fundamental principle of our American republic, "equal protection under the law," instituted to protect all citizens against injustice. One witness wondered if all crimes were not "hate crimes." In late July, the Senate included "hate crimes" wording as part of the *Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations* bill. FRC is working to ensure that this "hate crime" provisions are removed from the final bill agreed to by the House and Senate. – *SMM*

Juvenile Justice Bill – This fall, conferees from the House and Senate will iron out the differences between their two versions of the *Juvenile Justice* bill (H.R. 1501) in conference committee. Family Research Council will urge conferees to preserve two amendments that passed as part of the House bill. The *Ten Commandments Defense* amendment, introduced by Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.), would allow states to display the Ten Commandments in public places. The *Children's Internet Protection* amendment, introduced by Rep. Bob Franks (R-NJ), requires all public, federally-funded school and library computers to have internet filters to protect children from pornography, obscenity, and other harmful content. – *JJW*

Government Funding or Not – Drugs, Abortion, and Education In the *D.C. Appropriations* bill, the House passed (241-187) an amendment offered by Rep. Tiahrt (R-Kansas) to prevent federal funding of needle exchange programs in Washington, D.C. The House passed, by voice vote, an amendment offered by Rep. Bob Barr (R-Ga.), to prevent D.C. from legalizing marijuana for medical purposes. An amendment offered by Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) to the *Foreign Operations Appropriations* bill passed (228-200) and would prohibit U.S. taxpayer funding of international organizations that promote abortion. Congress will next consider the *Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations* bill, which addresses taxpayer funding of abortion, health service clinics (Title X), Goals 2000, and Internet filters. – *AMR & JJW*

EDUCATION *at Century's End*

(Continued from cover)

ment on local education authority. It is fitting that it be reconsidered at the close of the century in which it so significantly defined the course of education.

At $12 billion and nearly 1,000 pages, ESEA already has significant influence on local schools. The Clinton administration seeks to solve perceived educational problems through even greater federal direction using the coming reauthorization. Though evaluations of ESEA have failed to show increased academic achievement under the act, the president's proposal for the reauthorization largely maintains the existing system, while adding an accountability section that would prescribe to states how they should run their individually created systems of standards and assessments.

Some members of Congress, meanwhile, seek to strengthen the hands of parents and locally elected officials through other proposals such as the *Academic Achievement for All Act* (Straight "A"s; H.R. 2300, S. 1266), the *Dollars to the Classroom Act* (H.R. 1494), and education savings accounts. The Straight "A"s Act would allow states to opt-out of federal mandates and paperwork under most ESEA programs. Participating states could make their own decisions concerning the taxpayer dollars allotted under ESEA, provided they show increased academic achievement. The Straight "A"s Act should begin moving in the House during September.

The *Dollars to the Classroom Act* would underwrite local control by sending 95 cents of every dollar spent on 31 federal education programs to the local level. Locally elected officials and school personnel would have the authority to spend funds at their discretion without federal prescription. Sponsored by Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.), the *Dollars to the Classroom Act* is expected to be considered later in this Congress.

This past summer Congress approved education savings accounts as part of its tax relief package. This provision in the tax bill (to be sent to the president in September) would allow parents and other individuals to contribute up to $2,000 per year to a child's tax-free education savings account. Withdrawals of principal and accrued interest for education expenses at public, private or home schools would be tax-exempt. This is an important step toward recognition in public policy that parents should be the directors of their children's education.

As this philosophy threatens the status quo, the education establishment will seek to take new ideas hostage. The Clinton administration, for example, has been unable to hold back the clamor for parental choice in education. As a result, it has affirmed its support for educational choice – but only for public schools. Tactics such as these ensure that the clash of educational philosophies will not be settled by the end of this school year or in the immediate future. From the current signs, however, it looks like the bridge to the 21st century in education may lead to a much different end than the author of that phrase intended. WW

Cox Report

Continued from cover

informed in early 1998. Then, subsequent to the Report's formal transmittal to the White House and mere days before the Report's public release in May of this year, it revised its story to state that Clinton was first informed in July 1997. No written records of briefings in either case were produced, however.

Clinton's Downplaying of China's Vast Technology Gathering Network: In deconstructing the mere unclassified outlines of China's almost unbelievably huge network of government agencies, corporate entities, front companies and personnel engaged in U.S.-targeted technology gathering, the Cox Report illuminates some amazing facts about the Chinese Communist government that the Clinton administration either overlooked, or turned a blind eye to, in pursuit of its "engagement" policies with that country.

Clinton's Downplaying of China's Arms Control Violations: The Cox Report cites numerous instances in which China's proliferation of prohibited military technology to countries like Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Libya, and Egypt-requiring U.S. sanctions-were either ignored or downplayed, in order to further the Clinton administration's "see-no-evil" engagement policy.

Clinton's Ending of COCOM: The Cox Report concludes that the Clinton administration was wrong in 1993 to put an end to the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM) which had worked throughout the Cold War to assure U.S. friends and allies of a unified approach to the export of security-sensitive high technology items to countries like China. This action by the Clinton administration precipitated a wild scramble to sell such technology to China without regard to security. For example, over 600 U.S. supercomputers were sold to China, some of which are now being used in military-related applications.

Clinton's Relaxing of Trade Restrictions: The Cox Report chronicles how the Clinton administration consistently relaxed security-based trade restrictions on military-related high technology. This included, but was not limited to, the easing of restrictions on satellite transfers. The Cox Report unequivocally concludes that two U.S. aerospace companies, Loral and Hughes, made use of relaxed restrictions to transfer technology that improved the accuracy and reliability of China's military rockets, some of which are aimed at the United States.

Clinton's Decision Not to Declassify Further Embarrassing Evidence: The Cox Report includes no less than 15 separate instances in which it reports that information and evidence on specific matters are being withheld from public view, not because the bipartisan Committee saw a need to protect security, but because the Clinton administration has unilaterally determined that the material should not be made public.

Taken together, these actions by the Clinton administration (and others too numerous to mention) have worked to the detriment of U.S. national security and to the furtherance of a self-serving cover-up. This is the inescapable conclusion of any objective reading of the Cox Report.

There remains much to be learned about what has happened and what is still happening. Whether the motives to take these actions included naive notions about how to improve international relations or whether legal and illegal campaign contributions played a role, it matters not to the bottom line effect on our security.

The Clinton administration bears major responsibility for an unprecedented national security debacle. The administration is also responsible for furthering a cover-up of the consequences of its actions. As a result, many Americans have a false sense of security about our nation's position in the post cold war world. I urge every American to read the Cox Report in its entirety. It is available from many sources including http://inhofe.senate.gov. WW

SPANNING THE GLOBE

Standing Up for What America Stands For

by William Saunders

Christians suffer more desperately in Sudan than in any other country. This fall, American Christians will have a chance to help. In its first fall episode (probably September 26), "Touched by an Angel" (TBAA) will focus on suffering and slavery in Sudan. November 14 will mark the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, which this year focuses on Sudan and 3 other African countries. The time between these two dates affords a "season" for prayer and action. Please gather family, friends, and church members to watch this TBAA episode. Let your senator know that it is time for the persecution and brutality to cease. Ask them to support the *Sudan Peace Act*. Introduced in August by Senators Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), this bill will require the U.S. to help bring a just peace to this troubled land. Don't forget to pray for our brothers and sisters who carry the cross in Sudan.

On another front, Congress voted in July to continue "normal trade relations" or NTR with China for one more year despite the opposition of pro-family groups. Many observers expect President Clinton to invite China to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) this fall. The debate over NTR offers a yearly chance to review China's human rights behavior. Allowing China into the WTO would first require granting China permanent NTR status. That would be bad news because the yearly review of China's human rights record would come to an end thereby eliminating the sole spotlight on China's persecution of Chinese Christians. What can you do? Call the White House at (202) 456-1111 and your Congressman at (202) 224-3121 and let them know that now is not the time for China to be admitted to the WTO. WW