
National News

Clinton argues for patients' rights bill

President Clinton said that the first priority for Congress should be to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, after meeting with House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), and Vice President Al Gore on Nov. 4. Clinton told reporters: "The American people sent us a message that would break the eardrums of anyone who was listening. They want their business tended to." He continued, "We all agree that the message from the American people in the last election is clear—that they want us to pursue progress over partisanship and to enjoy unity over division. . . . We believe the best way to start is by taking up the Patients' Bill of Rights—legislation that would guarantee quality health care to Americans without regard to whether they are in managed care plans or not and would assure that medical decisions are made by doctors, not by accountants."

Sizing up the political chances of passing HMO reforms, the President said, "In the last session of Congress that bill lost by only five votes in the House, and we now have five more Democrats coming to the House. It came very close to passing in the United States Senate. It need not be a partisan issue; indeed, a co-sponsor of the Patients' Bill of Rights in the House is Congressman Greg Ganske from Iowa, a Republican physician who has spoken very eloquently about the need for this legislation."

Alarming spread of AIDS among African-Americans

The spread of AIDS prompted the Alameda County, California Board of Supervisors to declare a state of emergency in the African-American community on Nov. 6, according to the *Oakland Tribune*. The unanimous declaration by the Supervisors will qualify the county, which includes Oakland, to receive emergency funds from the Federal government. Only one week earlier, the Clinton administration, at the urging of the Congress-

sional Black Caucus, released \$156 million to combat the AIDS epidemic.

According to Public Health officer Dr. Arthur Chen, the AIDS rate for African-Americans in Alameda County is 85.4 cases per 100,000 residents. African-Americans make up 40% of all males with AIDS and 60% of all females with AIDS in the county, whereas African-Americans constitute only 18% of the county's population. Nationally, African-Americans have accounted for 35% of all AIDS cases to date, and make up more than 40% of new cases, with a national incidence rate of 83.4 cases per 100,000.

The Supervisors acted after the personal intervention of U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.).

LaRouche prisoners renew fight for habeas

Imprisoned LaRouche associates Laurence Hecht, Paul Gallagher, and Anita Gallagher filed a motion with Federal Judge Jackson Kiser on Nov. 2, calling on him to reconsider his erroneous decision to dismiss their Federal *habeas corpus* decision. The three, with sentences, respectively, of 33, 34, and 39 years, have been political prisoners in the state of Virginia since Nov. 4, 1993.

In his October decision dismissing the *habeas* petitions, Kiser failed to adhere to longstanding U.S. Supreme Court precedents concerning the requirements for constitutional due process in criminal cases. Kiser sustained Virginia Supreme Court decisions which held that the LaRouche prisoners could be convicted for securities violations, despite the facts: that no one knew political loans would or could ever be construed as securities; that the criminal proceedings themselves were the first indication that Virginia authorities would hold the securities laws applied to political loans; that the State Corporation Commission admitted that this application of the law was completely novel; and, that Virginia courts, prior to the 1987 indictments, had held that these types of loans were not securities.

Judge Kiser also held that, while he was troubled by the prosecutorial misconduct in the case, it would not have made a difference in the result, since the credibility of witnesses concerning their motivations for

making loans was not an issue. The *habeas* petitions, however, demonstrate case after case of deliberate elicitation of false testimony and perjury by prosecutors which, under U.S. Supreme Court precedent, mandates reversal of the convictions.

The motion also points out that Judge Kiser could not have read the trial record, when he made his decision that lender motivations were not important to the outcome of the case. The jury had been instructed that they could not find the defendants guilty if they found that lenders had provided funds because of political motivations rather than financial motivations. The *habeas* petitions show, in case after case, that witnesses told prosecutors in pre-trial interviews that their motives for providing funds were purely *political*, but then later testified that they were motivated by the interest rates they could obtain on their loans. The inconsistent pre-trial statements were never produced to the defense, although the U.S. Constitution requires such production.

Portraits by Goya on exhibit at Fed

Three portrait paintings by the great Spanish master Francesco Goya (1746-1828), are now on display through Dec. 4, at the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, D.C. The paintings, which are part of an exhibit of 13 works by Goya and his contemporaries, are on loan from the Bank of Spain, and date from the period just after the American Revolution. In one portrait, that of "venture capitalist" Francisco de Cabarris, who provided the 300 million reales to found the Bank of Spain, Goya "borrowed" the composition and pose of the subject from an earlier portrait by Velázquez; however, Velázquez's portrait is that of the court clown.

A far different attitude is struck in Goya's portrait of the Count of Floridablanca, the King's first minister, who is leaning against a table showing his ambitious project to construct the Canal of Aragon in northeast Spain. Floridablanca is described in the Fed's brochure as the architect of many great projects for the nation, in agriculture, industry, and trade. Goya includes himself in this portrait, shown humbly presenting his painting to the great man.