

News Digest

By The Associated Press

House votes fatter grants for needy college students

WASHINGTON — Spurning a Republican cost-cutting drive, the House proposed \$10.6 billion for college aid next year, including financial help for a new generation of older, "non-traditional" students such as mothers returning to school.

A five-year extension of a variety of federal aid programs for students, colleges and universities through fiscal 1991 was passed and sent to the Senate on a 350-67 roll-call vote Wednesday night.

Action by the Senate on its own version of the spending authorization is expected early next year.

The House bill contained a plan to increase the maximum Pell Grant award,

the primary source of financial aid for 2.8 million low-income students, from the current \$2,100 a year to \$2,300 for the 1987-88 school year. Maximum grants would rise gradually to \$3,100 by the 1991-92 school year.

This feature rebuffed President Reagan's proposal, outlined in his fiscal 1986 budget plan, to slash federal aid to college students by 25 percent and to eliminate Pell Grants for more than 800,000 needy students.

While the House increased the level of the Pell Grants, it also voted to tighten rules for obtaining federally subsidized student loans in an effort to discourage needless borrowing and

avoid producing "a class of indentured students in bondage to their educational debts."

Partly by requiring proof of need from every student borrower — not just those from families with incomes of more than \$30,000 — and by tightening procedures for collecting defaulted loans, the House shaved the spending ceiling for college aid from \$11.9 billion this year to \$10.6 billion in fiscal 1987, the first year covered by the new bill.

In another major departure, the House voted to make most students attending school less than half-time eligible for most student aid programs.

Congress begins work on Farm Bill

WASHINGTON — House and Senate conferees began negotiations on the 1985 farm bill Thursday under a Reagan administration threat to veto the legislation if they don't rein in the cost of agriculture subsidies.

In a letter from Agriculture Secretary John Block and budget director James C. Miller III, Congress was put on notice that President Reagan will stick to his allowance of \$50 billion for crop programs during the next three years.

The House version of the farm bill has been estimated to cost \$56 billion through 1988 for commodity subsidies, the Senate bill \$58 billion. Both are far above the \$34.8 billion spending guideline Congress set for itself earlier this year, and could mean at least near-record farm spending for the near future.

While saying both bills make some progress toward the administration goal of a more "market-oriented" farm sector, Block and Miller said the legislation repeats some of the past failures of farm policy.

"There is little disagreement that our present farm policies have failed," they wrote. "In the past five years, net farm income has stagnated, farm debt has risen and farm exports have declined. At the same time, federal outlays for our farm programs have more than quadrupled."

Among "fundamental reforms" Reagan will demand before signing a farm bill, the officials said, are cuts in farm income subsidies beginning in 1987, instead of the two- and five-year subsidy freezes called for in the Senate and House bills, respectively.

Farm-state lawmakers who have

defended the subsidy freezes have argued that while a more market-dependent agriculture might be ultimately desirable, the severe depression in some rural areas, particularly the Midwest, makes this the wrong time to seek any reduction of farming's safety net.

In Lincoln, a directory listing services to help financially strapped farmers is being distributed to Lancaster County farm families and to organizations and businesses that serve farmers.

The farm crisis directory is a condensed version of a directory of community services prepared by the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department.

It lists services directed at struggling farmers, such as health, vocational training, legal and financial assistance and governmental.

Newsmakers

A roundup of the day's happenings

William F. Buckley Jr. invited 700 of his friends, including President Reagan and Charlton Heston, to share chicken potpie Thursday and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the National Review, the conservative magazine he founded.

Former Nebraska Democratic Party Chairwoman DiAnna Schimek says she might seek her party's nomination for state treasurer next year and intends to leave her job as executive director of the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union by January 1986.

The first copies of "The Simple Chinese Bible" in Chinese and English are due from a printer in Peking on March 1, 1986, with a 200,000-copy first press run.

French Premier Laurent Fabius' comment that he was "personally troubled" by President Francois Mitterrand's meeting with Polish leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski drew sharp criticism from the conservative French newspaper Le Figaro. A premier doesn't have the right to be "personally troubled in the face of a initiative of the

president," the paper wrote. "He must either shut up, or approve it, or resign."

Walter Pleate, the nation's oldest military veteran at 109, and who fought in the Spanish-American War, died in Lebanon, Pa.

Violinist Isaac Stern has been named Musician of The Year by the Musical America International Directory of the Performing Arts.

A horse-drawn wagon carted a 20-foot Fraser fir to the steps of the White House, where Nancy Reagan accepted it as this year's White House Christmas tree.

His classmates say he's a gentle Goliath, but 315-pound high school wrestler Lyle "Pooh" Burrell of Mount Clemons, Mich., is being kept off the mats for fear he might hurt an opponent. Burrell weighed 5 pounds, 10 ounces at birth but he grew "because he likes to eat," says his mom. He's nicknamed "Pooh" because when he was born, she said, "This is my little Winnie the Pooh,"

In Brief

Britain to withdraw from UNESCO

LONDON — Britain announced Thursday it is withdrawing from UNESCO because it said the 160-nation organization is inefficient, spend-thrift and "harmfully politicized."

Timothy Raison, Foreign Office minister for overseas development, said Britain's membership in the 160-nation agency will end as of Dec. 31.

Britain was one of the founding members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, created in London in 1945. Raison said Britain plans to retain observer status in the organization.

He said Britain would put the money it would have contributed to UNESCO into bilateral programs going to the Third World, particularly members of the Commonwealth, the association of Britain and its former colonies.

Broken Bow bank closes

LINCOLN — The Security State Bank in Broken Bow, damaged by a poor farm economy and "liberal lending policies," was closed Thursday by the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance.

In a news release, State Banking Director James C. Barbee said the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. has been appointed receiver.

Security State became the 10th state-chartered commercial bank to be closed by the department this year. It was the first bank closed since Barbee became banking director in late September.

Barbee said his department was left with no choice but to close the bank after the firm's board of directors was unable to secure a recapitalization of the bank.

A recent bank examination disclosed losses in the institution's agricultural and commercial loan portfolios, which led to its insolvency, Barbee said.

Cancer Institute flooded by calls

WASHINGTON — News of a promising new cancer treatment at the National Cancer Institute prompted a flood of calls to the federal center Thursday from people desperate for a cure.

"What they're saying is, our mother, our brother, our sister is dying at this very moment. We have nothing to lose. We want to be a candidate," said Carol Case, the institute's chief of public inquiries.

The callers want information about a new treatment, called adoptive immunotherapy, that turns ordinary white blood cells into "killer cells" that attack malignant tumors. The treatment was announced Wednesday in an article in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Government resumes disability reviews

WASHINGTON — Still smarting from the bruising it took in its first attempt, the government said Thursday it will resume culling Social Security disability rolls of people who have become physically able to hold jobs.

But it said it will use a scalpel, not a meat cleaver, in its new approach to evaluating the medical condition of some 2.6 million people now classified as physically disabled and unable to work. The program begins next month.

New federal regulations will require proof of medical improvement before disability benefit checks can be cut off.

Pollard documents on Arab defense

WASHINGTON — The classified documents Navy analyst Jonathan Jay Pollard is accused of selling to Israel included information on the radar-jamming techniques and electronic capabilities of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and other moderate Arab governments, according to an informed U.S. official.

Some of the material dealt with counterterrorism, but the concentration was on electronic equipment as well as the overall military postures of the "friendly" countries, the official said Wednesday.

While the United States shares counterintelligence information on Libya and other radical regimes with Israel under the strategic cooperation and other agreements, it withholds data on technical equipment provided to Arab countries considered to be pro-American.

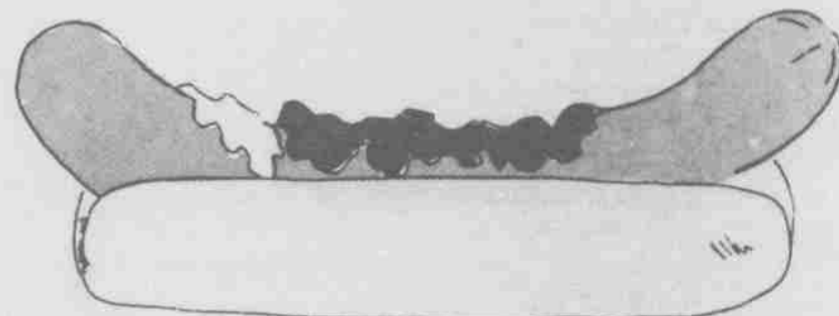
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