

# News Digest

By The Associated Press

## Study links religion, democracy

NEW YORK — A study by a noted "think tank," the Brookings Institution, has concluded that the stability and future strength of American democracy depends on the underpinnings of religion.

After three years of examination and analysis of basic ingredients holding society together, the report concludes that secular value systems fail "to meet the test of intellectual credibility" for doing the job.

Representative government "depends for its health on values that over the not-so-long run must come from religion," the report says.

Through religion, "human rights are rooted in the moral worth with which a loving Creator has endowed each human soul, and social authority is legitimized by making it

answerable to a transcendent moral law," the report says.

The report advocates allowing a "moment of silence" that could be used for voluntary prayer in public schools, making school facilities available for student religious meetings, and giving tax credits for tuition paid to religious schools.

Rejecting arguments of strict church-state separationists that barring all expressions or symbols of religion from public life would mean government neutrality about religion, the report says:

"A society that excludes religion totally from its public life, that seems to regard religion as something against which public life must be protected, is bound to foster the impression that religion is either irrelevant or harmful."

## Playing 'the float' House considering check-hold bill

WASHINGTON — The head of the House Banking Committee asked his colleagues on Thursday to approve a bill to shorten the time banks can hold deposited checks and thus curtail an "outlandish policy" that allows banks to profit from the so-called "float."

The House bill would force financial institutions to give customers access to their money under a set timetable—in some cases quicker than they do now.

House Banking Committee Chairman Fernand J. St Germain, D.R.I., said banks now play "the float" game with customers' money to earn billions of dollars through interest and fees on checks inadvertently bounced by depositors.

"Millions of hard-working Americans carry their paychecks down to the bank every week in anticipation that they can use the funds to buy groceries, pay the rent, buy clothes and other necessities," said St Germain.

"In all too many cases, depositors don't have access to the money they have earned. It is tied up by banking policies—check hold policies—that say the customer has to wait days and days, and sometimes, weeks and weeks, before the bank says the money is available," he said.

It was not clear when the measure, up for debate Thursday, would come to a vote.

Rep. Norman Shumway, R-Calif.,

## Chasm between blacks, whites widening, Urban League says

WASHINGTON — The National Urban League on Wednesday called the Reagan administration "a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains" and said its economic policies have left black Americans struggling to survive.

The chasm between blacks and whites widened even more in 1985, as most whites enjoyed economic recovery while blacks "slipped further and further to the rear of the parade," league president John E. Jacob said in issuing the organization's 11th annual assessment of black America.

"The signs of a nation moving toward a state of being permanently divided between the haves and the have-nots were plain to see over the past months," he said.

Jacob noted that unemployment among whites was 5.9 percent at the end of last year, while 14.9 percent of

the nation's 27.9 million blacks were out of a job. "If whites had such a high unemployment rate, it would be called a depression," he said.

Jacob was particularly harsh on the Justice Department's efforts to revise a presidential executive order signed by

**'If whites had such a high unemployment rate, it would be called a depression.'**

Lyndon Johnson in 1965, which authorized the government to set numerical hiring goals and timetables for firms holding government contracts.

"Black people today have jobs and opportunities they would not have had without the executive order," said

Jacob.

"If there is any single message we want to send to the president today it is this: 'Hands off affirmative action.' If the administration wants to be a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains, it should not pretend that its efforts are good for black citizens or that they reflect the color-blind society we have yet to become."

Economically, blacks still are reeling from the recession of 1981-82 while most whites have recovered, Jacob said.

The report said median family income for blacks in 1984, the most recent figure available, was \$15,432. In constant dollars, that was \$540 less than in 1980 and almost \$1,500 less than in 1970, according to an economic summary by David Swinton, director of public policy studies at Clark College.

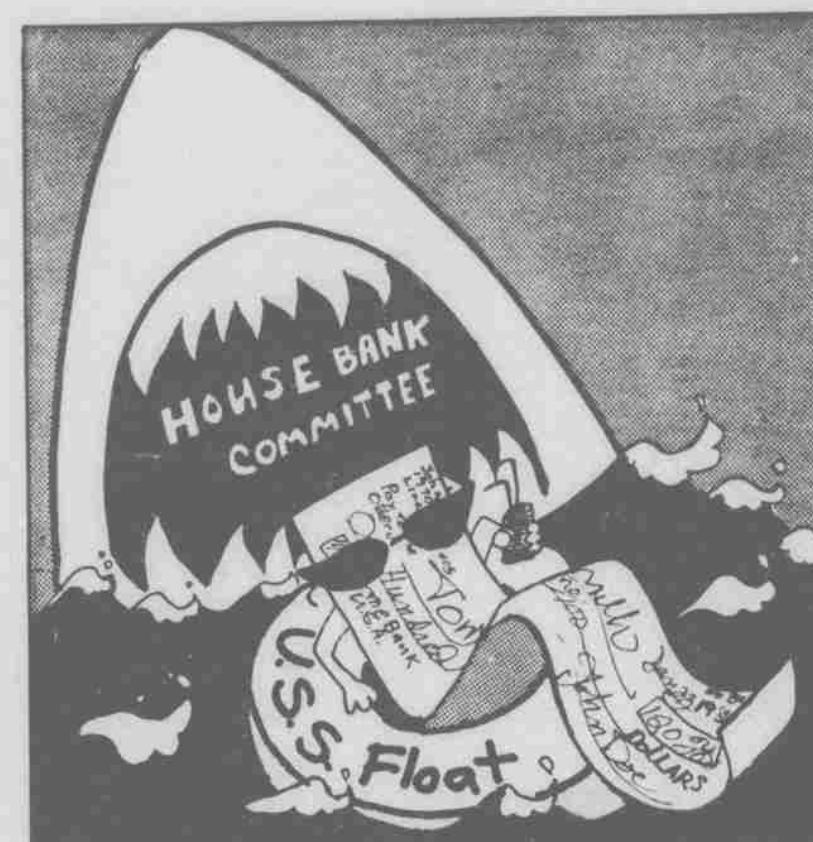
because of check kiting, fraud or bankruptcy.

St Germain opposed the so-called "good faith" clause, saying it would give bank tellers authority to reject checks "if you are from the wrong side of the tracks, speak with a foreign accent, or a certain color."

Anyway, he said, it is not needed because more than 99 percent of all checks written are paid the first time through the collection process and half the 350 million checks returned unpaid each year go through the second time.

The banking industry has said in congressional hearings that the purpose of holding customer checks was not to reap interest or fees on the "float" created by those funds, but rather to protect them from check "kites" and bad checks.

But St Germain said, "my heart can't bleed for an industry" that makes \$290 million a year by using the money in the float period, and another \$3.5 billion a year from returned check fees.



Carol Wagener/Daily Nebraskan

offered an amendment that would allow financial institutions to hold

## Asbestos ban proposed

WASHINGTON — The government moved Thursday for the first time to ban deadly asbestos, a widely used substance that officials say causes up to 12,000 cancer cases annually in the United States.

Under a two-phased attack, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed an "immediate" ban in five product categories, mostly in the construction area. During the next decade, EPA said, it wants to cleanse the environment of all products containing the known carcinogen.

The decision, attacked by an industry group as "unwarranted," culminated more than six years of regulatory

soul-searching within the government and months of infighting between EPA and the Office of Management and Budget.

EPA Administrator Lee M. Thomas said human health — not monetary cost — was EPA's foremost concern.

Thomas said it would take about one year for the agency to complete public hearings and administrative review of the proposed asbestos rule, which has been in the works since late 1979.

The ban, when fully implemented, will avert as many as 1,900 deaths from asbestos-related lung cancer over the next 15 years, Thomas said.

## Cancer misdiagnosis common, doctor says

OMAHA — Physicians are writing off as hopeless a number of treatable lung cancer cases and undertreating others, a Creighton University researcher said.

Dr. Tom DeMeester, chairman of surgery for the Creighton University School of Medicine, said the deaths of at least 14,000 Americans each year from lung cancer could be prevented with better diagnosis.

DeMeester based his comments on his experiences as former chief of thoracic surgery at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, where he headed a 10-year study of 180 lung cancer patients.

Medical experts for years have assumed that the larger the tumor, the less likely the cancer patient's chances for survival. DeMeester said his research

indicates the opposite may be true in many cases.

"Traditionally, we thought of tumors as going from stage one to stage two to stage three in a nice continuum," he said. Stage one is the first phase of cancer growth, and stage three is the most advanced stage.

"We didn't take into account the different growth patterns of tumors," he said.

The traditional thinking has caused physicians to misdiagnose as untreatable some patients with large but self-contained tumors, DeMeester said.

The traditional thinking also had led to the undertreatment of some smaller tumors, he said.

Lung cancer took the lives of 126,000 Americans in 1985, the American Cancer Society estimates, making it the most deadly of all cancers.

## In Brief

### U.S. operations held off Libyan coast

WASHINGTON — The United States, in what appears to be a thinly veiled warning to Libya, has notified civilian air traffic officials that fighter planes from Navy aircraft carriers will be conducting flight operations off the Libyan coast during the next week, sources said Thursday.

The sources, all of whom agreed to discuss the matter only if not identified, confirmed the U.S. 6th Fleet had used international notification procedures on Wednesday to inform the air traffic control facility at Tripoli, Libya, of "carrier flight operations" within its area of control.

### Rural families offered help

LINCOLN — Rural families forced off the farm by economic problems can find temporary refuge through a model program launched by three Lincoln agencies.

Tabitha Inc., Lutheran Family and Social Services and Cedars Home for Children are cooperating to provide shelter, food, spiritual support, job referral, counseling and child care for families forced by bad times to abandon their homes and communities. The Lutheran Church in America's Nebraska Synod is serving as a fourth sponsor by using its network of churches to locate families in need.

Families would be housed for up to three months in the old parsonage on the Tabitha campus in Lincoln.

### Record number of bills introduced

LINCOLN — Nebraska lawmakers have set a 90-day session record for the number of bills introduced this year in the Legislature.

As the deadline for individual senators to introduce came and went at noon Wednesday, a total of 519 bills had been introduced, 107 of them on Wednesday.

During last year's 90-day session, 728 bills were introduced and a record 332 were carried over for consideration this year.

The number of bills means the Legislature will probably devote its afternoons to public hearings until the first week in March, leaving only five weeks in the session for full days of floor debate.

### Cambridge's Addie Wagy, 107, dies

CAMBRIDGE — Funeral services will be today for Addie Wagy, one of Nebraska's oldest residents, who died Tuesday. She was 107.

Wagy died at the long-term care unit at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, where she had lived since 1972.

She was born Nov. 23, 1878, in a dugout 3½ miles northwest of Cambridge in Furnas County. She was an 1897 graduate of Cambridge High School.

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