

Reagan signs landmark housing bias legislation

WASHINGTON — President Reagan signed legislation Tuesday putting new enforcement teeth in the open-housing law Congress passed in the wake of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 assassination.

Standing with members of Congress in the White House Rose Garden, Reagan hailed the newly enacted bill as "the most important civil rights legislation in 20 years."

Singling out Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., who had accompanied King to Washington for the civil rights leader's "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963, the president said the legislation "has brought us one step closer to

realizing Martin Luther King's dream."

The measure, which was passed overwhelmingly by the House and Senate, extends anti-discrimination protections to the handicapped and to families with children. It also empowers the federal government — for the first time — to seek fines of up to \$100,000 against individuals or organizations found to have engaged in a pattern of housing discrimination.

Under the open-housing provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the government was given only a mediating role in housing discrimination

disputes.

Reagan said that while the 1968 law was well-intentioned, "it lacked teeth. Its conciliation provisions were ineffective when used."

Reagan said that he and Housing Secretary Samuel Pierce had "devoted eight years" to seeking improvements in the 1968 law, "to redress the absence of penalties and the inability of the government to initiate actions except when 'a pattern of discrimination could be proven.'"

Under the bill he signed Tuesday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development will have authority to initiate enforcement actions and to

seek penalties against individuals, businesses or organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex or national origin in the sale, rental or financing of housing.

It authorizes civil penalties, which could be recommended following an agency administrative enforcement process, of up to \$10,000 or a first offense, \$25,000 for a second and up to \$50,000 for a third.

In instances where a pattern of discrimination has been alleged, the government could seek up to \$50,000 for a first offense and as much as \$100,000 for subsequent offenses.

Besides strengthening existing provisions in law dealing with racial discrimination, the measure protects the handicapped against housing bias. For instance, a landlord could be considered to be in violation if he refused to make reasonable modifications in premises to accommodate the handicapped.

Under the section protecting families with children from discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing, buildings that are now "adult only" could exclude children only if the managers or owners of these structures adopted a policy to rent or sell to the elderly only.

Chambers probably to run for legislature

LINCOLN — State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha said Tuesday he'll run for the Legislature and not the U.S. Senate — probably.

Chambers had sought to be on the ballot both as the New Alliance Party candidate for the U.S. Senate and for the seat he's held in the Legislature for 18 years.

But Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice William Hastings issued an opinion last week that Chambers couldn't do both. He gave Chambers until 5 p.m. Wednesday to decide which office he will seek.

At a news conference Tuesday, Chambers copied an Academy Awards presentation as he announced that he would more likely try to keep his legislative seat rather than run for the Senate seat.

"It's like an Oscar ceremony when you have two nominations made, and the man says, 'the envelope please,'" he said as an aide handed him an envelope.

"And the winner is," he said as he drew a sheet of paper from a large envelope and held it up for the audience.

The word Legislature was written on the paper. In small print, in parentheses below, was the word "probably."

"And what does the word probably mean? It means that I'm leaning more one way than another. It means one attracts more than another," Chambers said.

Chambers had asked Chief Justice Hastings to extend the deadline he set for Chambers to decide on which office he would seek. Hastings also turned down Chambers' request for partial reconsideration of his ruling.

He said Hastings was "wrong and unfair in view of how long he sat on the opinion." The hearing on Chambers' arguments in the state Supreme Court was August 23. The opinion was issued Sept. 8.

"He wrote law," Chambers said, adding that Hastings knew that he (Chambers) wouldn't have enough time to appeal to the full state Supreme Court or a federal court.

"It's a white judge in the case of a black man," Chambers said, stopping short of saying the opinion was racist.

"If I was a white man this thing wouldn't have gotten this far," he said.

The Associated Press called for Hastings late Tuesday afternoon but did not receive a return phone call.

Last week, Chambers said his ultimate aim was to be on the ballot for both the U.S. Senate seat and the

Legislature.

He acknowledged again Tuesday that he could accept the U.S. Senate bid and easily mount a successful write-in campaign for his legislative seat. There is no other candidate for the seat and, even in years when he was opposed, Chambers overwhelmed other candidates.

Under the deadline set by the chief justice, Chambers must officially withdraw his name from the U.S. Senate race by contacting Secretary of State Allen Beermann.

Chambers was nominated for the U.S. Senate seat at the New Alliance Party convention in July. The convention followed weeks of confusion in the wake of the primary. The State Board of Canvassers first said Chambers had won the New Alliance nomination in the May balloting. The board reversed that decision and said a recount showed former Gov. Bob Kerrey won the nomination. Kerrey declined the New Alliance nomination and stayed on as the Democratic Party nominee.

Beermann, acting on an opinion from Attorney General Robert Spire, ordered Chambers off the U.S. Senate ballot, saying he wasn't eligible for the post. That led to Chambers appeal to the state Supreme Court.

U.S. calls for investigation of Iraqi chemical warfare

UNITED NATIONS — America, Japan, Britain and West Germany called on the United Nations to investigate claims that Iraq used poison gas to crush the Kurdish rebellion, a U.S. official said Tuesday.

Herbert S. Okun, the second-ranking diplomat at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, made the request Monday to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar. Okun acted on behalf of America, Britain, Japan and West Germany, said a spokeswoman for the U.S. mission, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iraq has denied charges that it used gas against Kurdish guerrillas who have long waged a guerrilla war seeking a separate homeland in northern Iraq.

Iraq acknowledged on July 1 that it used chemical weapons during its 8-year-old war with Iran, but claimed the Iranians had used them first.

A U.N. investigation over the summer found that "chemical weapons continue to be used on an intensive scale against Iranian

forces," according to a report on the probe issued Aug. 1.

In March, Iran claimed the Iraqi air force dropped cyanide and mustard gas bombs on three Kurdish towns in Iraq, killing 5,000 Kurds and injuring 5,000. The towns targeted by the attack had been captured by Iran.

Baghdad would have to invite a U.N. team to enter Iraq to investigate the latest charges, but a refusal would appear extremely suspicious. Iraq previously has said it might cooperate with an impartial inquiry.

In Geneva, about 150 Kurds demonstrated outside the U.N. office Tuesday, calling for the world body to investigate alleged poison gas attacks and shouting "Saddam, assassin," a reference to Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

In Beijing on Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Vernon A. Walters said America "is extremely concerned about chemical warfare," and he noted that a recent U.N. Security Council resolution condemned its use.

Reagan releases U.S. dues

WASHINGTON — President Reagan has authorized the release of \$188 million in U.S. dues payments to the United Nations and has directed the State Department to work on a plan for settling all past debts, the White House announced Tuesday.

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater told reporters in a late afternoon briefing that Reagan told the State Department to work out "a multi-year plan" for paying a grand total of \$520 million in current and late U.S. dues payments to the world body. The U.S. also has \$111.8 million in past due payments separately to the U.N. peacekeeping fund.

Fitzwater said the United Nations "has reformed its operations to the point" where Reagan felt he could act.

"The president will release \$44 million, which was withheld in fiscal 1988, and \$144 million which was withheld in fiscal 1989. He will re-

quest full funding of the United Nations' in Fiscal 1990, which amounts to approximately \$476 million," he said.

The \$44 million will be released immediately, Fitzwater said, while the \$144 million that had been earmarked in Fiscal 1989, beginning Oct. 1, will be set free as funds become available.

Fitzwater noted that Congress required the president to determine that the United Nations had made reforms, "including cutbacks in the (U.N.) secretariat, the hiring of temporary employees" and improved budgeting procedures.

Fitzwater said Reagan was convinced that the United Nations had made progress in instituting reforms and that the president noted the increasing peacekeeping role of the world body in such hot spots as Afghanistan, Namibia and the Persian Gulf.

Killer storm roars toward Mexican coast

Hurricane Gilbert, one of the strongest storms in history, roared toward Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Tuesday with 160 mph winds and torrential rains after lashing the tiny, low-lying Cayman Islands.

The hurricane, traveling westward across the Caribbean Sea, was upgraded Tuesday to Category 5, the strongest and most deadly type of hurricane. Such storms have winds greater than 155 mph and cause catastrophic damage.

Gilbert, which devastated Jamaica and the Dominican Republic with flash floods and mudslides, has killed at least five people.

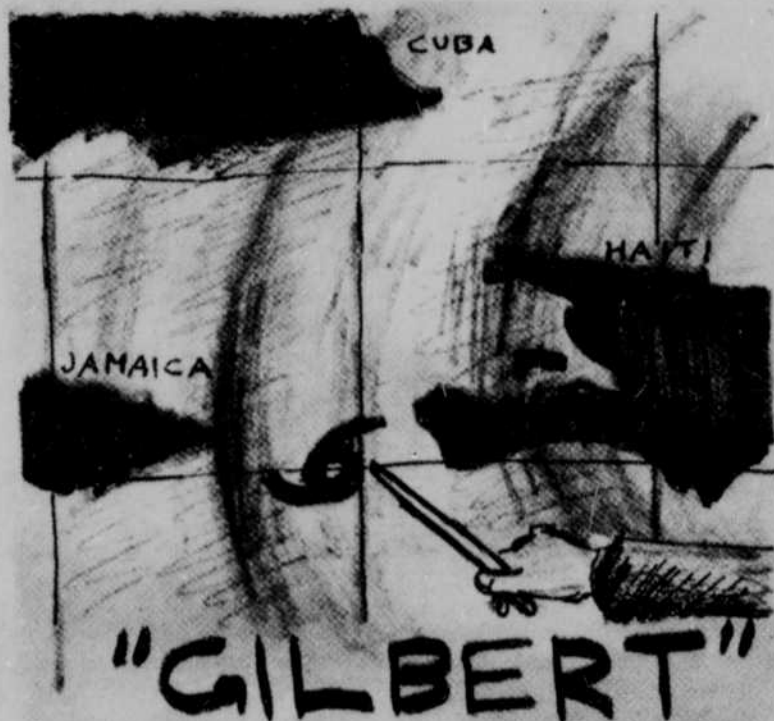
Bob Sheets, director of the National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, Fla., described Gilbert as "a great hurricane" that is "in the top 10 percent (historically) as far as intensity, size and destructive potential."

He compared its intensity to that of Hurricane Allen, which killed 2,000 people in the Dominican Republic in 1979.

Only two Category 5 hurricanes have hit the United States—a 1935 storm that killed 600 people in Florida, and Hurricane Camille, which devastated the Mississippi coast in 1969 and killed 256 people.

"The people who need to be concerned now are those people over on the Yucatan Peninsula—Cancun, Cozumel, that whole area," Sheets said.

The storm later knocked out all



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

telephone service to the Cayman Islands, a British dependency of 23,000 people that was expecting 12-foot tides.

At 3 p.m. EDT, the U.S. National Weather Service said Gilbert was centered near latitude 19.3 north, longitude 82.8 west, just southwest of Grand Cayman and 280 miles from the Mexican resort island of Cozumel. It was moving west to west-northwest at about 15 mph with maximum sustained winds of 160 mph.

The Cuban news agency Prensa Latina said 40,000 people, many of them foreign vacationers and students, were evacuated Tuesday from the Isle of Youth off the

southwestern coast as the hurricane passed 200 miles to the south. There were no immediate reports of damage there.

The death toll from the Hurricane Gilbert was expected to rise.

There were unconfirmed reports that at least 30 people died Monday when Gilbert struck Jamaica. Civil defense officials said the storm killed five people Sunday in the Dominican Republic.

In New York City, a ham radio operator who was monitoring amateur radio communications in Jamaica said Tuesday, "Kingston is devastated, Montego Bay is hit hard and Ocho Rios is flooded."

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