

Gov. Orr says drug proposal misinterpreted

LINCOLN - The Orr administration says a top aide to the governor screwed up the explanation of an anti-drug proposal that would have suspended students at public colleges for any drug-related offense.

Gary Rex, director of the Policy Research Office, took the blame Wednesday for what he said was a misunderstanding of what Gov. Kay Orr wanted in the measure.

Sen. Tim Hall of Omaha said he was skeptical about the explanation and Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha said he didn't believe it.

The proposal, sharply criticized by some lawmakers and others, was first described as requiring that students at public colleges lose state aid

and be suspended for any first-offense involving drugs, including misdemeanors; it also required a pre-admission pledge to stay drug-free.

In the wake of the criticism, the administration said the written materials that explained the plan were wrong and that Rex, an attorney who holds three supervisory roles in the administration, misunderstood Orr.

Chambers flatly said he didn't believe there was a misunderstanding and said Rex was "obviously taking the heat for the governor."

"Based on my knowledge of Gary Rex, his professional experience and background, I will tell you that there is no way he could have screwed up and misrepresented a position of the

governor in the way that she alleges," Chambers said. "All this shows is that she will do any sort of thing and sacrifice anyone to avoid the political embarrassment she so richly deserves."

Hall, a sharp critic of the plan, said "the new version is still ridiculous... what you have here is the governor trying to get off the hook. I'm skeptical about the whole thing."

Rex said Wednesday the governor wants a bill that would suspend a student only after a second drug-related offense. A first offense would simply require the student to take a rehabilitation course, he said. Readmission after a second offense would require a second course, he said.

"And it wasn't supposed to be a

pledge or some sort of loyalty oath or promise to stay drug-free," Rex said.

"It would simply be a written acknowledgment that a student would face certain penalties and requirements if they had a drug offense... the governor was aghast at the talk of 'loyalty oaths' that was going around."

Hall said the governor was still off base.

"She has previously vetoed programs aimed at the drug problem but this year it's the 'in' thing so she is going with the polls," Hall said. "She still doesn't understand what she is talking about; you don't take education away from people in the circumstances she is talking about."

Administration spokesmen previ-

ously acknowledged that, under Orr's proposal, a student convicted of a drug infraction could be suspended from school while someone convicted of violent crimes wouldn't face such a penalty.

The controversial proposal was only one of measures the governor is supporting in an effort to fight illegal drug peddling and abuse.

Sen. Lowell Johnson of North Bend on Tuesday introduced LB1091, a measure that would create a series of separate felony offenses for drug crimes involving children.

The measure would apply to those who employ those under 18 in any capacity in connection with a drug crime.



Enzyme allows men to drink more

BOSTON - Scientists believe they have solved one of the enduring mysteries of the sexes - why men can drink more alcohol than women.

Many believe that women typically get drunk more quickly than men, even when their smaller size is taken into account, and they are more likely to suffer liver damage from alcohol abuse.

The researchers say the difference is all in the stomach.

They found that men make far higher amounts of a protective

stomach enzyme that breaks down alcohol before it hits the bloodstream. The result: They don't get as tipsy as women on the same number of drinks.

"The implication of this is that when it comes to social drinking, women should be more careful than men for a given amount of alcohol when driving or operating equipment," said Dr. Charles Lieber, a co-author of the study and director of the Alcohol Research and Treatment Center at the Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Among the study's findings:

- Women absorb about one-third more alcohol into their blood than men do, even when they are the same size and drink the same amount.
- The enzyme, called alcohol dehydrogenase, works better when people have a full stomach. This explains why folks handle their liquor better if they drink after eating.
- Alcoholics make less of the protective enzyme than social drinkers do.

Lithuanians protest Soviet rule as Gorbachev awaits meetings with workers, party activists

VILNIUS, U.S.S.R. - Lithuanian demonstrators chanting "Freedom" rallied to demand independence Wednesday before Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's visit to the republic to try to halt its defiance of Moscow.

Banners displayed among 20,000 protesters in central Cathedral Square ranged from one polite welcome to more blunt calls for Gorbachev to go home and take the Soviet army with him.

"We didn't join the Soviet Union, you grabbed us!" read one banner, referring to the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic republic in 1940.

Gorbachev is expected today for three days of meetings with factory workers, collective farmers, members of ethnic minorities and Communist Party activists. He'll be trying to reverse the Lithuanian Communist Party's decision Dec. 20 to split from the national party and support independence for the republic.

It was the first such break since the Communists took power in Moscow in 1917. The Soviet leader has consistently and sharply criticized Lithuanian Communist leaders for the move for independence.

Leaders of Sajudis, a grass-roots Lithuanian political movement, hope to draw 1 million of Lithuania's 3.7 million people to Vilnius Thursday to show Gorbachev the extent of support for independence.

A spokesman for Sajudis, Rimantas Kanapienis, said the organization rejected a call by Kremlin ideology chief Vadim A. Medvedev, sent to Lithuania in advance of Gorbachev's visit, to call off the rally Wednesday.

Medvedev indicated Tuesday that the Moscow leadership favors granting Lithuanians more autonomy as part of the union but remains opposed to Lithuanian secession.

Demonstrators, waving the red, yellow and green flag of independent Lithuania, made it clear they felt it is too late for Gorbachev to change the course for independence.

"Lithuania has already decided," said one sign.

Lithuania was recognized as an independent country by Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin, but Josef Stalin annexed it in 1940 as part of a secret Nazi-Soviet treaty.

One sign read: "Lenin recognized Lithuania. Stalin took away its independence, and Gorbachev?"

Supreme Court overturns fines on Yonkers councilmen

WASHINGTON - A sharply divided Supreme Court Wednesday overturned contempt fines imposed against four Yonkers, N.Y., city councilmen who defied a federal judge's order to adopt a housing desegregation plan.

By a 5-4 vote, the court said the judge who imposed the fines exceeded his authority.

Dissenting justices said the ruling could hamper civil rights progress and hamstring federal judges in dealing with public officials who defy anti-discrimination court orders.

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, writing for the court, said U.S. District Judge Leonard Sand acted too hastily in holding the councilmen in contempt.

The judge should have waited to see whether a contempt order against the city that threatened to bankrupt it succeeded in forcing compliance with Sand's desegregation order, Rehnquist said.

Only if that failed, the chief justice said, should contempt sanctions against the individual council members even have been considered.

"The imposition of sanctions on individual legislators is designed to cause them to vote, not with a view to the interest of their constituents or of the city, but with a view solely to their own personal interests," Rehnquist said.

Justice William J. Brennan, in a dissenting opinion, said the ruling may intimidate judges and give public officials more reason to defy reasonable court orders.

"I worry that the court's message will have the unintended effect of emboldening recalcitrant officials

continually to test the ultimate reach of the remedial authority of the federal courts," he said.

The end result could be the delaying of civil rights progress, Brennan said.

He was joined by Justices Thurgood Marshall, Harry A. Blackmun and John Paul Stevens.

Joining Rehnquist were Justices

Byron R. White, Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony M. Kennedy and Antonin Scalia.

Councilman Edward Fagan, one of the four, said, "It's a great vindication. It proved the things I did were justified. It adds a whole new impetus to continue the fight against the housing."

Cambodian officials acknowledge attacks, claim guerrillas exaggerated effectiveness

BANGKOK, Thailand - Official Cambodian reports Wednesday acknowledged that guerrilla attacks have occurred in Phnom Penh and near Cambodia's second-largest city but said rebel claims about their success were exaggerated.

Khmer Rouge guerrillas said they attacked the Cambodian capital with grenades Saturday night, forcing the leadership of the Communist government to flee toward Vietnam. The

guerrilla radio Wednesday said the rebel force held the provincial capital of Batiambang for four hours over the weekend.

Khieu Kanharith, editor of the government-sponsored weekly newspaper "Kampuchea," said four or five plastic explosives went off in the streets of Phnom Penh on Friday and Saturday night, causing no injuries or damage.

"There weren't even any broken windows," he said by telephone.

Omaha Sens. Goodrich, Lynch propose bill to undo Indian skeletal remains reburial law

LINCOLN - Two Omaha senators who opposed last year's passage of a bill to force the Nebraska Historical Society to give skeletal remains and artifacts back to the American Indians, introduced a bill Wednesday to undo that measure.

Sens. Glenn Goodrich and Dan Lynch co-sponsored LB1097, which would allow the historical society or any other entity "which receives funding or official recognition from the state or any of its political subdivisions" to retain possession or control of any "burial goods of American Indian origin disinterred on or before Aug. 25, 1989."

However, the measure says that any items unearthed after Aug. 25,

1989 that are reasonable as to familial or tribal origin should be returned to the relative or Indian tribe for reburial, upon request of such relative or Indian tribe.

"We're talking about the artifacts that have nothing to do with their religion," Goodrich said.

"The Spanish medallions, for instance. Why bury them and let them deteriorate? This is one of only three in existence and it should be in a museum where everybody can see it, Indians and non-Indians alike," he said.

During debate last year, historical society officials mentioned a rare Spanish medallion that was among Indian burial goods as an example of

historical items the society would lose if all of the burial goods were returned.

Sen. Dennis Baack of Kimball, a participant in the negotiations between the state historical society and attorneys for the Pawnee Tribe that led to the bill's passage, said he would oppose the new measure vigorously.

"This totally undoes what we accomplished in hours of compromise on LB340 (last year's measure)," said Baack, chairman of the Legislature's Government Committee.

"This should have come up a year ago," Baack said. "That's when we were discussing this matter and that's when we could have done something about it."

Daily Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions. Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Pam Hein, 472-2588. Subscription price is \$45 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE. ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1990 DAILY NEBRASKAN