

Clinton's school plan gets approval

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted overwhelmingly Wednesday in favor of President Clinton's \$420 million school improvement plan, which would establish voluntary national teaching standards.

The 307-118 approval came after supporters, addressing concerns that the federal government would assume too great a role in local school decisions, stressed that the bill's provisions are voluntary.

Democrats and the House's only independent favored the proposal by a 249-2 margin. The majority included 57 Republicans, while 116 GOP members opposed it.

The Senate still must act on the measure.

Rep. Thomas Sawyer, D-Ohio, said it "will provide states and local communities with models that they can adopt and, more importantly, adapt to their own educational needs as they define them."

"This bill does very little to set goals for American education and even less to make those goals achievable for the states," argued Rep. Cass Ballenger, R-N.C. "In reality, the bill creates new and more cumbersome layers of bureaucracy."

Clinton's "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" would establish voluntary national standards for schools.

It provides broad criteria for what students should learn in English, mathematics and other subjects and whether schools have qualified teachers and suitable textbooks.

States would submit their proposed standards to a national panel for approval. Existing plans could also be considered.

Another national board would identify essential occupational skills and create a voluntary system of setting standards and certifica-

tion procedures for job training programs.

The legislation represents a "major departure from the way the federal government has assisted education in the past," said Rep. Dale Kildee, D-Mich., who managed the bill on the House floor.

The bill was adopted by the House Education and Labor Committee without any Republican backing.

"This is not the bill that was approved by the Education and Labor Committee," said Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Wis.

"Everything is voluntary," said Rep. Bill Goodling of Pennsylvania, the ranking Republican on the Education and Labor Committee. "If states want to adopt goals that have been prepared by experts in the field ... then they can, but they don't have to."

Goodling said the sponsors had allayed his fear that Congress would be setting standards that would force states to spend billions of dollars to meet.

The House defeated, 300-130, a proposal to refocus the legislation and allow parents to pay for private and parochial schools with tax money. Proponents said the proposal would provide needed competition for public schools, but opponents said it would undermine them.

Rep. Peter Hoekstra, R-Mich., said the proposal would "encourage, lest we forget the term, competition" among schools.

Goodling said if the federal government spends money on private schools, it will eventually "determine what you do in your schools and then you are going to have no purpose for being."



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Kiley Timperley/DN

Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck talks Wednesday morning at Nebraska Union to a group of students and coaches about gender equity issues.

Beck

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1972, women's participation in sports had increased. But she said the number of women in coaching and administrative positions had declined.

The amendment, Title IX, is designed to put an end to gender discrimination in the classroom and on the athletic field in schools that receive federal funds.

Since 1972, the number of females participating in high school athletics has increased more than threefold, Beck said. The increase reflects the

growing opportunities offered in athletics for women.

The gender equity report also states that benefits and resources available to women athletes, coaches and administrators should be equal.

Despite the apparent inequity of Nebraska athletics, Beck said, UNL's athletic department is making progress toward a more balanced system.

"In terms of coaching and academic services offered to female athletes at UNL, women receive exactly the same benefits as men," Beck said. "I think that is one thing that UNL is a front-runner in."

Beck said women athletes were

treated the same as men in terms of practice time, travel allowances, housing and dining facilities, training opportunities and equipment and supplies.

But Beck said conditions were not equal for men and women at UNL.

"I am grateful for what they have provided, but I am not stupid enough to say it is equal," she said.

"I would never say we are treated equal because I'm not stupid enough to say that we are equal, but we are treated better than most other programs and are on equal ground in academic services."

Booth

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As Republicans talked amongst themselves and occasionally enticed passers-by to kiss them, about six students arrived nearby wearing pink triangle "safeplace" stickers and holding a sign that read "Queers Approve of P.D.A."

One of them, Scott Roewer, a jun-

ior music education major, said he and his friends supported the College Republicans' public puckering.

"We're just showing that we approve of them displaying their sexuality," he said.

Christopher Becerra, sign in hand, said he agreed with Roewer. But Homecoming Week should include homosexuals, the general studies freshman said.

"They said heterosexuality is pushed aside during Coming Out Week," he said. "But homosexuality is pushed away all the time."

Most students walking through Broyhill Plaza seemed to pay little attention to either group. Freshman Dave Weisser, sitting on the edge of Broyhill Fountain with a friend, took it all in.

"I think it's kind of funny," he said. "Ah, college."

Welfare

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Children, Food Stamps and Low Income Energy Assistance programs — be discontinued.

Current welfare monies should be used to support a new procedure that would focus on the transition to self-sufficiency as well as ongoing assistance and support, the report said.

The first aspect of the plan had three objectives:

- Order a contract between welfare recipients and the state that would get recipients off ADC within two years.
- Enhance individual responsibility by "cashing out" all benefits, including food stamps, and approach

the implementation of electronic debit cards.

● Combine services and decrease the number of case workers assigned to each welfare recipient.

The plan's second aspect is aimed at assuring long-term services for the disabled and others who require continuing social services.

Task force member Mary Dean Harvey, director of the Department of Social Services, said the proposed changes might be difficult to adjust to at first. But if the current system isn't fixed, she said, it would end up costing more in the long run.

"There are a lot of things we can be doing differently," Harvey said. "We're not talking about reinvention and invention, we're talking about

redirection."

Harvey said she'd never talked to a welfare recipient who wouldn't rather be working.

"When you expect great things from people, they tend to live up to them," Harvey said. "If you expect little from them, they live down to it."

The answer, Harvey said, is to put more responsibility on the recipient not to rely on government as a safety net.

"Some people may say 'Why do I have to stand if I can fall and I know you'll catch me?' We need to get away from that," Harvey said.

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