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House OKs family-planning funds

Vote is seen as new Congress' first opinion on abortion.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Overcoming opposition from anti-abortion lawmakers, the House Wednesday approved the release of funds for international family planning programs.

In the first abortion test vote of the new Congress, the House voted 220-209 in approving a resolution to begin providing \$385 million in over-

seas family-planning funds on March 1. The Senate is to take up the measure soon.

Supporters of the bill won over many moderate Republicans by stressing that increased family-planning aid could prevent millions of abortions.

"Indeed, the delay (in providing the aid) undermines U.S. efforts to promote child survival and actually increases the number of abortions worldwide," said Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Anti-abortion forces fought back

later in the day when the House passed, by 231-194, a separate bill that ties the release of the funds to tighter restrictions on abortion.

But that bill, sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., has little chance of surviving the Senate and would face a presidential veto.

Smith would restore the policy, in effect during the Reagan and Bush administrations, that bars money for groups that perform or promote abortion. It was revoked early in President Clinton's first term.

Defection turns into tense drama

BEIJING (AP) — The highest-ranking official ever to defect from North Korea hid out under South Korean Embassy protection today, and Seoul said he asked for asylum because he wants to help reconcile the two Koreas.

Unarmed Chinese police ringed the Beijing building where Hwang Jang Yop was presumed to be staying. South Korea asked for beefed-up security after up to 10 North Koreans tried forcing their way in Wednesday night, presumably to try to get Hwang.

North Korea insists that Hwang must have been kidnapped by South Koreans, calling his defection "inconceivable and impossible."

North Korean diplomats challenged the Chinese police again today. After watching the building for hours without making a move, about a dozen North Koreans walked up to police lines tonight and were turned away when they tried to go past, witnesses said.

Chinese police immediately widened the security zone, ordering reporters and the North Koreans in embassy cars to park a block away.

Wednesday night, a carload of North Koreans chased two South Korean diplomats driving home, prompting them to double back and sleep at the embassy overnight.

A top South Korean diplomat ar-

rived in Beijing today to try to resolve how to get Hwang, a close associate of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, out of China.

China appeared caught between its longtime loyalties to communist North Korea and its new economic ties with the rival government in South Korea.

Hwang, in a three-page statement released in Seoul by the South Korean government, said "after a long period of agonizing deliberation" he decided to defect to help reconcile the two Koreas and to discuss with Seoul how "to save our nation from misery."

Hwang said he did not believe North Korea would collapse, despite widespread food shortages.

Mississippi is 17th state to ban homosexual marriages

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Gov. Kirk Fordice signed a law banning homosexual marriages in Mississippi, denouncing same-sex relationships as "perverse."

"For too long in this freedom-loving land, cultural subversives have engaged in trench warfare on traditional family values," Fordice said Wednesday, as Mississippi became the 17th state in a year to outlaw such marriages.

State Rep. Jim Evans, one of three lawmakers to oppose the bill, said the governor should be "giving it a second thought before he begins to moralize right now."

Fordice is recovering from injuries suffered in a car accident 14 weeks ago while returning from lunch with an unidentified woman in Memphis, Tenn. His wife Pat was out of town. The governor said he has no memory of that day.

"Hypocrites love to talk about family values, but if they search deep down and do a truth analysis, they wish their own families were different," Evans said.

Mississippi's law denies recognition of homosexual marriages performed in other states. Fordice said the law would ensure that gay couples do not enjoy benefits of marriage such as health insurance.

"Insurance benefits for dependents were never intended for perverse relationships such

"Insurance benefits for dependents were never intended for perverse relationships such as the same-sex marriage."

KIRK FORDICE
Mississippi governor

as the same-sex marriage," he said.

Mississippi lawmakers were responding in part to a case in Hawaii, which is appealing a judge's ruling that the state must grant marriage licenses to gay couples.

The American Civil Liberties Union is considering challenging some state laws banning gay marriage, said Mississippi ACLU executive director David Ingebretsen.

"It's just another expression of intolerance," Ingebretsen said.

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