

# Independent Counsel Act on last leg, most predict

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers from both parties saw almost no chance Sunday for survival of the Independent Counsel Act, which provided the framework for Kenneth Starr's investigation of President Clinton, when it comes up for renewal this year.

"This law needs to terminate. I don't want it to be amended. I want it to be ended," Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said on CNN's "Late Edition."

The act passed in 1978 as the post-Watergate Congress sought a means to ensure that politics did not interfere when the president, his cabinet and other senior officials are investigated for wrongdoing. It expires June 30 unless Congress and the president approve its reauthorization.

Attorney General Janet Reno, at the urging of Republicans, has seven times asked for the naming of an independent counsel to investigate administration officials, most notably Starr who has pursued President Clinton's connections to Whitewater, Travelgate, the FBI files and finally his affair with Monica Lewinsky, which led to Clinton's impeachment.

Democrats contend that Starr abused the almost unlimited powers the act gives an independent counsel, while Republicans have joined Democrats in protesting the amount of money spent.

Starr has spent more than \$40 million over more than four years investigating the president. Another independent counsel, Donald Smaltz, took four years and \$17 million looking into corruption charges against former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, who was acquitted.

Republicans also are unhappy about past independent counsel activities during GOP administrations and about Reno's decisions not to seek independent counsels for possible Democratic campaign fund-raising violations.

"One thing we can do in this Congress is not extend the life of the independent counsel statute. It was a post-Watergate liberal notion, and it was a disaster," said Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"It's either going to be rewritten significantly, or it will be allowed to lapse. In all likelihood the latter," agreed Sen. Don Nickles of Oklahoma, Republican whip in the Senate, on ABC's "This Week."

White House Chief of Staff John Podesta, also on NBC, said that while the White House has taken no final position, "It's virtually hopeless to try to fix it, I think, without some major, major revisions."

The American Bar Association, which helped craft the Independent

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SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL  
R-Ky.

Counsel Act two decades ago, last week voted 384-49 to end its support for the law.

"It was designed to remove politics from the investigation of public officials," said Philip Anderson, who heads the 400,000-member group. "The majority of Americans would say that politics has not been removed."

Congress is likely to hold hearings on the future of the act in the coming weeks, but McConnell said in the end lawmakers could kill it just by failing to act on its renewal.

He noted that the country handled its two biggest scandals, Teapot Dome in the 1920s and Watergate in the 1970s, without an independent counsel. "I think the existing system can handle scandal quite well," he said.

## World and Nation DATELINES

### California Majority of Americans agree with decision to acquit

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A majority of Americans think the Senate was right to acquit President Clinton of impeachment charges and believe Republicans pursued the matter for political reasons, according to a Los Angeles Times poll released Sunday.

Sixty-five percent of those surveyed after Friday's vote supported the acquittal, while 30 percent thought Clinton should have been removed from office.

### United Kingdom Gadhafi may seek acquittal of Pan Am bombing suspects

LONDON (AP) — Pressured to send two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jetliner to face trial before Scottish judges, Libya's Col. Moammar Gadhafi may be heading for a double victory: an end to U.N. sanctions and an acquittal of the suspects.

Legal experts believe it will be tough to prove that the men actually built and planted the radio bomb that blew up Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. A total of 270 people, including 198 Americans, were killed.

Saudi Arabian diplomats told U.N. officials Friday in New York that Libya — under U.N. sanctions for refusing to extradite the suspects — has agreed to

bring Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah to The Netherlands, where a Scottish panel of judges will sit in a special court.

### France Kosovo peace talks extended to allow time to consider plan

PARIS (AP) — Despite a conclusion that "nothing has really been solved," the United States and five other nations gave rival Serbs and ethnic Albanians another week to consider their plan for ending yearlong conflict in Kosovo.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, intervening directly, brought the two sides together Sunday, face-to-face, for the first time. She reported afterward that the Albanians, at least, thought the plan that would give them self-rule but not independence was a "fair deal."

### Iran Edict against Rushdie declared valid and in effect

TEHRAN (AP) — On the 10th anniversary of the edict against British writer Salman Rushdie, an Iranian foundation that has put a price on his head said Sunday that it remained valid and would be carried out.

"The idea of Rushdie's annihilation is still very much alive and seeks only the right moment," Ayatollah Hassan Saneii said in a statement published in the hard-line Jomhuri Islami daily.

Saneii's Khordad Foundation, a semi-official charity organization, has offered a \$2.8 million reward to anyone who kills Rushdie, the author of "The Satanic Verses."

## Valentine traditions please, peeve some

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"The consensus is Valentine's Day sucks," said Tara Doescher, a UNL sophomore psychology and English major.

Doescher and her roommate, Megan Piepho, a UNL junior fine arts major, said high school popularity contests made them dislike the holiday.

Piepho said her South Sioux City high school would call out names over the intercom on Valentine's Day. The girls who heard their names would return from the office with flowers delivered to the school.

Doescher said her Smith Residence Hall front desk reminded her of this.

"I think everyone's dream is to go down to the front desk and see flowers and a card with your name on it," she said.

Mary Swoboda, a clinical social worker at the University Health Center, said Valentine's Day can be depressing.

"It's a time of year where you can feel worse by comparison," she said.

Swoboda said students should focus on the friendships they already have and try not to have pity parties.

Ruben Parra, a fourth-year UNL graduate student in chemistry, said his home country of Colombia's "Day of Love and Friendship," celebrated in September, emphasized friendships as well as romantic love.

Parra said he liked Colombia's "El Dia de Amor y Amistad" better than the U.S. holiday because he and his friends exchanged candy and T-shirts and didn't have to worry as much about finding a romantic relationship.

Michael and Lisa Moore were happy to celebrate a traditional Valentine's Day this year.

The couple, who married less than a month ago, spent the day eating a special meal and attending the Lied Center for Performing Arts' "Romantic Rhapsody."

Lisa Moore said she wanted to give her husband, a senior biological systems engineering major, a surprise dinner of a "tropical chicken medley."

Moore, who graduated last May with a communication studies degree, said she and her husband would remember this year's Valentine's Day.

"It's our first being married, and we're doing a lot of memorable things."

## Relief among acquittal reactions

ACQUITTAL from page 1

Jack Lehman, a senior accounting major, said he watched Friday's vote on television. Earlier in the investigation, Lehman said, he was concerned acquittal would set a bad precedent and encourage misconduct by future presidents.

"At first, I thought if Clinton could do these things, then it would be hard to ever convict another president," he said.

Lehman said he was now convinced impeachment was a partisan process, and the fate of future presidents would depend above all on the makeup and political mood of the Senate.

Lehman said he was unsure how he would have voted if he were a member of the Senate. He said he did not follow the investigation closely and lost interest as it progressed.

Joslen Wigert, a junior business administration major, said she was disappointed by Clinton's acquittal. She worried the verdict would mean the president was above the law.

"I thought for the leader of this nation to have gotten off this easily would not be good," she said.

Although Clinton was attempting to conceal private sexual behavior, his deceit was a matter of public

concern, Wigert said.

Ayca Ariyuruk, a junior international affairs major from Turkey, said she was confused by the scandal and thought it could have been handled more efficiently.

"Generally I don't see too much trouble with the effect of his private life on his public life," she said.

Clinton's scandal has made the president the butt of jokes around the world, touching on everything from his cigars to his taste in women, Ariyuruk said with a laugh.

"I think he represents the social decline and degeneration in the United States," she said.

Tim Rye, a senior biology major, said he thought Clinton's acquittal was the best outcome for the country.

Rye said he would have voted to acquit the president. The House managers' charges, particularly obstruction of justice, may have warranted Clinton's removal, but Rye said he did not believe the managers proved their case.

But he said the allegations against Clinton were serious enough to warrant the impeachment inquiry.

"It was justifiable to find out if there was any wrongdoing," he said.

Rye blamed Clinton for not preventing the crisis by telling the truth

to the American public and the grand jury in the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit.

Christa Vieyra, a freshman business administration major, and Tracy O'Donnell, a freshman general studies major, were somewhat ambivalent about the Clinton verdict.

O'Donnell said she would have voted to convict Clinton, while Vieyra was unsure how she would have voted.

The president was guilty as charged and should not be above the law, O'Donnell said. Yet she said she was uncomfortable with public probing into politicians' private lives.

"In a way it wasn't anyone's business," she said. "But even if you are the president, what he did was wrong."

Vieyra said Clinton's actions were not just a private matter. Because of Clinton's status as the nation's leader, the public had a right to know about his private misbehavior, she said especially when he attempted to conceal it in a legal proceeding.

Asked how the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal had affected their perception of American politics, O'Donnell and Vieyra exclaimed simultaneously, "I hate politics!"

## Report projects demand for teachers to rise

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hear about the possibility of a teaching shortage.

"Three years ago, we didn't see it at all," O'Hanlon said. "Now we are experiencing it first-hand."

O'Hanlon said he believed the main reason for the possible shortage was early teacher retirement plans.

"It's enviable," O'Hanlon said. "Ultimately it comes down to the law of supply and demand."

Under the early retirement plan, which has been called the "rule of 85," full retirement pensions are granted to employees whose age and years of service total 85. Employees must be at least 55 years old to be eligible.

The plan was passed last year by the Legislature. Because of the plan,

more than 4,000 teachers could retire by 2008, leaving the state with 4,163 unfilled teaching positions, Britten said.

Savage said that to help retain teachers, the state should consider eliminating the plan.

But State Education Commissioner Doug Christensen defended the retirement plan, saying it allows schools to deal with cost issues while giving a break to teachers.

"When I saw teachers who spend 30 to 35 years teaching, their last few years were miserable," Christensen said. "They hung on until age 55 so they didn't get a retirement penalty, and they leave teaching bitter."

Britten said the report did not account for teachers that Nebraska potentially could gain, or for possible

increases or decreases in student enrollment over the next four to nine years.

"These factors may increase supply. They may decrease supply. I don't know," Britten said.

O'Hanlon said over the past 10 years, the number of teaching certificates granted by UNL has decreased.

In 1997-98, 329 teachers graduated from UNL, compared with 486 in the 1987-88 school year.

O'Hanlon said the college has developed extensive recruiting plans and has redesigned its transfer level programs to encourage more students to seek a teaching degree.

"People aren't dumb. They want to go where the jobs are," he said. "But I think for the next two to three years, we have our work cut out for us."

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