

# News Digest

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## High court to hear case on marijuana

■ The justices will decide whether it's OK to use the drug for medical reasons.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court entered the debate over medical marijuana Monday, agreeing to decide whether the drug can be provided to patients out of "medical necessity" even though federal law makes its distribution a crime.

The justices said they will hear the Clinton administration's effort to bar a California group from providing the drug to seriously ill patients for pain and nausea relief.

A lower court decision allowing the Oakland Cannabis Buyers' Cooperative to distribute the drug "threatens the government's ability to enforce the federal drug laws," government lawyers said.

But the California group says that for some patients, marijuana is "the only medicine that has proven effective in relieving their conditions or symptoms."

The group's lawyer, Annette P. Carnegie, said Monday the federal Controlled Substances Act does not prohibit the distribution of marijuana for medical reasons.

"Those choices, we believe, are best made by physicians and not by the government," she said.

Marijuana has been effective in relieving nausea in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, weight loss in HIV-positive patients and pain, she said.

Eight states in addition to California have medical-marijuana laws in place or approved by voters: Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Maine, Oregon, Washington, Nevada and Colorado.

Residents of Washington, D.C., voted in 1998 to allow the medical use of marijuana, but Congress blocked the measure from becoming law.

Justice Department lawyers said Congress has decided that marijuana has "no currently accepted medical use."

In August, the Supreme Court barred the California organization from distributing marijuana while the government pursued its appeal.

Justice Stephen G. Breyer did not participate in the case. His brother, Charles, a federal trial judge in San Francisco, previously barred distribution of marijuana only to have his decision reversed by a federal appeals court.

California's law, passed by the voters in 1996, authorizes the possession and use of marijuana for medical purposes upon a doctor's recommendation.

The Oakland group said its goal is "to provide seriously ill patients with safe access to necessary medicine so that these individuals do not have to resort to the streets."

But the federal Controlled Substances Act includes marijuana among the drugs whose manufacture and distribution are illegal. In January 1998, the federal government sued the Oakland club, asking a judge to ban it from providing marijuana.

Judge Charles Breyer issued a preliminary order imposing such a ban. But the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed, saying the government did not disprove the club's evidence that the drug was "the only effective treatment for a large group of seriously ill individuals."

Last May, Breyer issued a new order allowing the Oakland group to provide marijuana to patients who needed it.

In the appeal granted Supreme Court review, Justice Department lawyers said the appeals court "seriously erred" in deciding the federal law allowed a medical-necessity defense.



Republican vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney makes a statement Monday in Washington, D.C. Texas Gov. George W. Bush has named vice presidential running mate Dick Cheney the key man in his transition team after Florida reported Bush won its count.

## Bush sets up shop; Gore protests

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Gore insisted "there are more than enough votes" to reverse Florida's make-or-break election results, ignoring GOP demands that he bow out even as George W. Bush plunged Monday into the work of building a new government.

Democratic leaders rallied behind their vice president, though the party's rank and file raised scattered voices of dissent.

A day after Bush summoned TV cameras to press for Gore's concession, the vice president prepared a prime-time address to the nation — perhaps his last, best chance to explain why the closest presidential election in 124 years didn't end Sunday night when Florida's top elections officer, a GOP partisan, certified Bush the winner by 537 votes out of 6 million cast.

Gore contested the case in a Florida state court Monday, where attorneys for both sides wrestled over schedules and got little accomplished in their first session. The state case was assigned to Judge N. Sanders Sauls, a jurist with broad authority under Florida law to "correct any alleged wrong and to provide any relief appropriate."

The U.S. Supreme Court is set to hear GOP argument against recounts Friday. The stakes could hardly be higher.

"The integrity of our democracy depends upon the consent of the governed, freely expressed in an election where every vote counts," Gore told Democratic leaders before his brief TV address.

With the agonizingly close election stretching into its fourth week, neither side appeared ready to give way in a fierce struggle that has entangled the judiciary in the business of presidential politics, threatening to spill past the Dec.

*"The integrity of our democracy depends upon the consent of the governed, freely expressed in an election."*

Al Gore  
Democratic presidential candidate

12 deadline for selecting state electors.

Bush moved quickly to take on the work, if not the title, of president-elect. Running mate Dick Cheney criticized the Clinton-Gore administration for refusing Bush access to \$5.3 million in government transition funds and a federal office building set aside for the presidential changeover. He announced the Bush team would raise money to finance its own operation.

"This is regrettable because we believe the government has an obligation to honor the certifiable results of an election," Cheney said at a Washington news conference. Cheney also named an executive director and press secretary for the transition team at that time.

He took a swipe at Gore for not dropping out, as the Bush team sought to rush the vice president from the race before the courts have an opportunity to renew recounts.

Gore is "still unwilling to accept the outcome."

That is unfortunate in light of the penalty that may have to be paid at some future date if the next administration is not allowed to prepare to take the reins of government," Cheney said.

Cheney's appearance was part of a fierce public relations fight as the Gore camp tried to show Democratic solidarity and the Bush team attempted to discredit the vice president's challenge of the Florida certification.

Bush's brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush,

quietly signed the paperwork required by federal law to certify Bush the winner of Florida's 25 electoral votes. That would put him one vote over the 270 required to become the nation's 43rd president — if courts uphold Jeb Bush's verdict.

High-minded principles aside, Gore said the issue was also personal: If state or federal courts re-open hand counts that concluded Sunday, Bush's 537-vote edge would be at risk. "There are more than enough votes to change the outcome," Gore said, "and that's an important factor as well."

But the vice president was handed a heavy burden when a Florida Supreme Court deadline expired Sunday night, freeing Secretary of State Katherine Harris to declare her political ally the winner of Florida's election and America's White House.

Gore's lawyers protested results from Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Nassau counties and asked the judge to "certify that the true and accurate result of the 2000 presidential election in Florida is that the electors of Al Gore and Joe Lieberman received the majority of the votes cast in the election."

Gore said he believes he would overtake Bush if the final tally would include recounted ballots that were rejected by Harris — minus the 174 votes added to Bush's lead during what Democrats claim was an illegal, eleventh-hour scramble for GOP ballots, including military votes from overseas.

## Opposition claims winner not valid in Haiti election

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Opposition parties that boycotted Haiti's presidential vote claimed Monday that near-certain victor Jean-Bertrand Aristide has no mandate to govern because most Haitians did not vote.

Opposition leader Herve Denis said the coalition of all major opposition parties that urged voters to shun the polls would create "a peaceful alternative" to the government of Aristide and his Lavalas Family party.

Denis, a former ally of Aristide, refused to elaborate. But it seemed Haiti's floundering democracy could remain locked in a fight for power that has stymied development and foreign aid and left many Haitians as poor and hungry as ever.

The electoral council, which opponents charge is loaded with Aristide supporters, disputed claims of a low turnout and said 60.5 percent of more than 4 million registered voters participated. In some areas, they said, every registered voter participated.

"They are hallucinating," Denis countered.

"The election was illegitimate. Aristide does not have a mandate to govern. The people's abstention means they refuse to be governed by Lavalas."

One of Aristide's supporters

*"We want peace. We want the opposition to have peace of mind. We need them. Things are going to get better now."*

Michael Odin  
rally leader

offered an olive branch to opponents.

"We want peace. We want the opposition to have peace of mind. We need them. Things are going to get better now," said Michel Odin, leading about 100 revelers in a victory celebration.

Haiti's traditional aid donors — the United States, France, Canada, the European Union and the Organization of American States — have warned that a disputed presidential election could raise questions about the legitimacy of Aristide's government. Donors threatened to cut aid after a hotly disputed vote count in legislative elections in May.

But in a sign the international community was prepared to give Aristide a chance, United Nations spokesman Fred Eckhard said Monday: "We're glad (the elections) went ahead as planned and that there was relatively little violence."

## White House featured in book by Hillary Clinton

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Hillary Rodham Clinton, who will soon vault from the White House to the U.S. Senate, pays farewell to her life as first lady in a new book that is a gilt-edged tribute to White House history, glamour and her own personal style.

"An Invitation to the White House, At Home With History" — with Mrs. Clinton's sales proceeds assigned to the White House Historical Association — makes a case for the first lady as a keeper of tradition.

It shows her as interior decorator, arts patron, presidential hostess, entertainment impresario, menu overseer and temporary custodian of a national treasure, the most visited residence of a chief of state in the world.

Quite a contrast to Hillary Clinton's usual public image as an aggressive influencer of national policy and, more recently, indefatigable campaigner.

The closest this book comes to policy debate is a description of the intense inner-circle deliberations on picking exactly the right shade of deep-sapphire blue for the Blue Room's new look.

"I remember how vibrant this new blue color looked when I first walked into the room," she writes. "But, as White House historian Bill Seale and I looked around, something was still not quite right."

The fool-the-eye wallpaper swag draped at ceiling level needed to look, well, more like drapery, she decided.

"So I suggested taking a small sample of the wallpaper and cutting a moon-shaped sliver out of it," she says. "It worked. We did the same thing around the entire border which provided the finishing touch."

There was more: New red carpets for the cross hall and the grand staircase, a renovated State Dining Room, the acquisition of a painting by Henry Tanner, the first black painter to be represented in the White House collection; and an oil by Georgia O'Keeffe.

## World/Nation

The Associated Press

### Uganda

#### Ebola virus spreads beyond origin; 145 have died

KAMPALA — Ugandan officials recorded another death from the deadly Ebola virus in the southwest of the country Monday. Fourteen others died from the highly contagious virus in the north, health officials said.

The Ebola outbreak — Uganda's first — originated in the town of Gulu, 225 miles north of Kampala, with the first of hundreds of victims showing symptoms in September. Seventeen new cases were reported Monday, said Francis Omaswa, director general of health services.

In all, 145 people have now died of the disease.

Authorities had hoped to keep the disease from spreading beyond Gulu. But since Nov. 12, four people have died in the town of Masindi, southwest of Gulu, including one death Saturday, said Dr. Imaan Mutyaba, a medical supervisor.

Four others have died of Ebola in the town of Mbarara.

### Connecticut

#### Lego Systems to scale down U.S. castle by 94 jobs

ENFIELD — Toy maker Lego Systems Inc. said Monday it would close its molding and processing operations in Connecticut as part of a global restructuring.

The move will mean the elimination of 94 jobs at Lego Systems, the North American and Latin American operations of Swedish toy maker Lego Co. which employs just under 1,100 people.

The full restructuring, to be announced Tuesday, will call for the elimination of about 300 jobs worldwide, said Katherine Lee, a company spokeswoman. The company employs about 9,000 people.

### Texas

#### Lawmakers push to give man life without parole

AUSTIN — As the U.S. Supreme Court prepares to hear the appeal of a Texas death row inmate whose lawyers say he is mentally retarded, a group of state lawmakers said Monday juries should be allowed to sentence killers to life in prison without parole.

Current law allows Texas juries two options for capital murder convictions: death or a "life" sentence that allows for parole after 40 years.

"I think we should give them as many options as possible," said Democratic Sen. Eddie Lucio. He is sponsoring a bill to create a life-without-parole sentence.

The Legislature convenes in January.

Lucio said 33 other states, the federal government and the military have the death penalty with an option for life without parole. Such a sentence might appeal to jurors who fear that a convicted killer could go free or who cannot decide whether to give a death sentence, Lucio said.

### New Jersey

#### Report: Troopers stop minorities disproportionately

TRENTON — Nearly 100,000 pages of documents made public Monday show that New Jersey state troopers stopped overwhelmingly disproportionate numbers of minorities in searches for drugs, the state's attorney general said.

However, no evidence has been found that New Jersey worked to hide evidence that troopers searched minority motorists based solely on the color of their skin, he said.

The records were made available Monday at a reading room in the state's Hughes Justice Complex.

New Jersey is committed to ending racial profiling, Gov. Christie Whitman said in a statement Monday.

**Weather**

<b>TODAY</b>	<b>TOMORROW</b>
Some rain and snow high 44, low 31	Sunny high 43, low 23

**Daily Nebraskan**

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