

Anti-gay law faces legal challenge



DENVER (AP)

— Homosexuals will be "victimized merely because of who they are" under Colorado's anti-gay-protection amendment, opponents told a judge Monday.

Opponents asked the judge to keep Amendment 2 from taking effect as scheduled Friday. They said it violates homosexuals' constitutional rights to equal protection under the law.

Colorado voters approved the measure 54 percent to 46 percent Nov. 3.

"Constitutional rights never have been and, I hope, never will be decided by a popular vote," said Greg Eurich, who represented opponents at the hearing.

John Dailey, an assistant attorney general, said the amendment should be upheld because it is "the rule of the majority."

Dailey contended the measure doesn't strip away civil rights protections from homosexuals. "All it did was remove an added layer of protection,"

'Now (gays) have the right to be victimized merely because of who they are.'

— Greg Eurich, opponents' representative

he said.

The measure forbids passage of any laws protecting gays from discrimination and voids such laws already adopted by Denver, Aspen and Boulder.

The Colorado Legal Initiatives Project and other opponents have sued to void Amendment 2. They asked Denver District Judge Jeffrey Bayless to block the amendment from taking effect until the lawsuit is decided.

With dozens of witnesses scheduled to testify, the hearing on that request could last through Wednesday, attorneys

said.

Eurich said homosexuals in Colorado should have the constitutional right to be treated the same as everyone else. "Now, (gays) have the right to be victimized merely because of who they are."

He said Amendment 2 was written and promoted by Colorado for Family Values to target gays for discrimination. He said that to win support for the measure, the group spread "myths" about homosexuals, including that they're responsible for a high incidence of sex crimes and that they choose their lifestyle.

Dailey asked Bayless not to base his decision on the intentions of Amendment 2's sponsors but on the voters' intent, which he said was to resist providing "special protections" to another minority.

"Colorado is not the 'hate state' it has been made out to be," Dailey said.

Bush considers taking action to oppose Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House accused Saddam Hussein on Monday of "trying to cheat wherever possible" on Iraq's cease-fire obligations and considered the options of military and diplomatic action against Baghdad.

With just nine days left in George Bush's presidency, spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the United States would look to the United Nations Security Council to decide what actions may be necessary in the wake of what he called Iraq's latest "raid" into Kuwait.

But he also said the United States stood ready to act "without warning" to force Baghdad back into compliance.

Bush met Monday with his national security advisers. Some 200 Iraqis in civilian clothes crossed the Kuwait border Sunday and again Monday to reclaim equipment and raze warehouses left behind at the end of the Gulf War.

The Iraqis claim they had U.N. permission to recover their equipment from the demilitarized zone, but U.N. observers tried and failed to stop them from seizing explosives and four Chinese-built Silkworm missiles.

"This is clearly an infringement of the cease-fire regulations," Fitzwater said.

"It's clear from this raid into Kuwait that Saddam Hussein is continuing his pattern of trying to cheat wherever possible, continuing to challenge the U.N. resolutions," Fitzwater told reporters.


President-elect Bill Clinton signaled strong support for Bush's stance toward Baghdad.

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