

Military muscle

For two years, Reps. Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.) and Richard Pombo (R-Calif.) have been drafting legislation to ban federal grants and contracts to colleges that ban the Reserve Officer Training Corps or military recruiters because of discrimination based on sexual orientation, reports the *Army Times*. This year, the two have succeeded in attaching amendments to three 1997 appropriations bills, already passed by the House, for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education; Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development; and Energy and Water Development.

Similar restrictions apply to Defense Department appropriations. The new bills are of particular concern because they would prevent the schools from receiving aid for students as well as prohibit research grants.

In a letter to Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Robert Atwell, president of the American Council on Education, said, "We find it very troubling that funding for research and student aid



would be made contingent upon governmental review of institutional policies that are unrelated to science or education."

Reps. Solomon and Pombo have also toughened the language of their proposals to retroactively deny appropriations to schools that are considered anti-ROTC and to include all of a college even if only one of its branches enforces a ban on recruiters.

The Senate versions of the bills in question do not include the amendments. Assuming the bills pass, the fate of these provisions will be decided by the House-Senate conference committees that meet to iron out the differences between the House and Senate bills.

Freedom medal at last

Civil rights heroine Rosa Parks received the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Sept. 14 at the age of 83. Parks is remembered for refusing to surrender her seat, as required by law, to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955. She was arrested and jailed, prompting a yearlong boycott of the city bus system by African Americans and their supporters, which eventually resulted in the integration of buses and other public facilities in Alabama.

Parks now lives in Detroit, where she remains an active force in the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development, an organization that promotes leadership and civil rights awareness among young people.

Human chain to surround Capitol for AIDS event

While the 45,000-panel AIDS Memorial Quilt is on display in Washington, D.C., thousands of concerned citizens will gather for Hands Around the Capitol, an event organized to raise awareness, commemorate loss and demonstrate commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. The event is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 12, and begins with a celebrity kick-off at the Capitol Building at 1:30 pm.

"Hands Around the Capitol will be a human chain of concern and remembrance for the 320,000

American lives already claimed by the epidemic, and a reminder to our elected officials that we remember, we care and we vote," says Fred Miller of AIDS Action Council.

ADAPs face funding crisis

Results of a survey conducted by the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors show astronomical increases in costs for state AIDS drug assistance programs, according to a Reuter story. The assistance programs are meant to subsidize care for patients who are too poor to pay for treatments themselves, but not poor enough to qualify for Medicare. The rising cost of AIDS therapies is forcing at least 22 state ADAPs to enact restrictions such as waiting lists, lotteries and temporary limits on new cases, the study found.

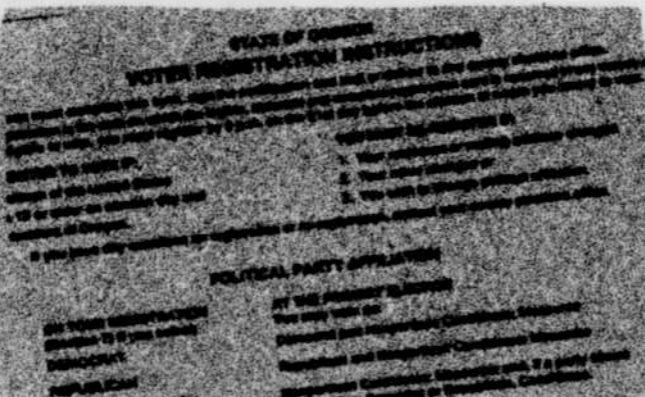


The introduction of protease inhibitors has increased the cost of treatment to about \$10,000 to \$13,000 per patient per year, according to recent estimates. Furthermore, this new treatment is not, as with earlier medications, reserved for those with full-blown AIDS. Because protease inhibitors work well in the earliest stages of infection, their use has vastly increased the pool of potential patients—and the total budget of drug assistance programs.

In response to the survey, activists and doctors are calling on the federal government to increase funding beyond the \$52 million granted earlier this year.

"We're queer, we vote," survey says

The first national, statistically valid poll of self-identified lesbian and gay men in the United States, conducted for the Human Rights Campaign, indicates that two-thirds of respondents plan to vote in November and 75 percent will vote for President Clinton.



According to HRC, the survey shows that, like most everyone, gay men and lesbians are most concerned about crime, the economy, education and health care.

Among the poll's other findings are statistics on education level, income, population distribution and relationship status: Less than half of self-identified gay men and lesbians are college graduates; 40 percent earn less than \$25,000 a year; about a third live in the South, a quarter in the West and Northeast, and about a fifth in the Midwest; and 46 percent are currently involved in a long-term monogamous relationship.

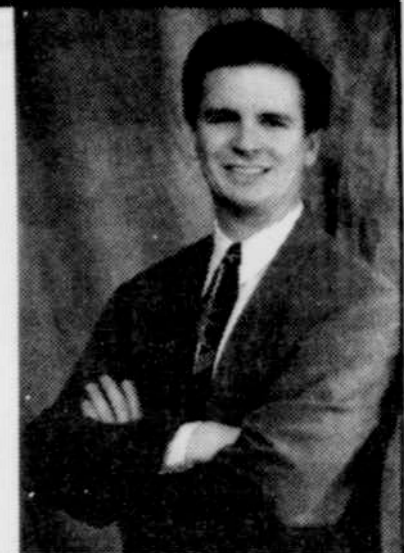
More than half of the respondents who are voters think sexual minority rights issues are not the most important to consider when voting for federal offices.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone

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