

N.C. lawmakers can't decide on 65 mph

By NEIL WATSON
Staff Writer

The U.S. Congress on Thursday overrode President Reagan's veto of the highway bill, clearing the way for states to raise the speed limit on rural interstates, but North Carolina officials disagreed on whether the 65 mph limit should become a reality in this state.

A bill filed last week in the state Senate Transportation Committee would give the N.C. Department of Transportation the authority to examine North Carolina interstates and to set 65 mph limits where appropriate, said Sen. Jim McDuffie, R-Meck.

McDuffie said a majority of

senators are probably in favor of raising the speed limit, but he didn't know if it was a large majority.

The higher limit would have a negligible impact on highway safety, he said.

"On the interstates, 85 percent of the people are already driving 65.8 mph," he said.

Sen. R.C. Soles, D-Robeson, favors the increase. "I think there's a mood that (the speed limit) should be increased on four-lane highways, and possibly on other rural highways as well."

"The 55 mph limit was not put in for safety but to save fuel," Soles said. "It's probably not as safe to go 55 (mph) as 65 (mph) on rural

interstates."

Increasing the speed limit might not bring more fatalities on interstates, but it could have an indirect effect on other highways, said Dr. Patricia Waller, associate director of the UNC Highway Safety Research Center.

When people leave the interstate traveling 65 mph to 70 mph, they don't want to slow down on less safe, two-lane roads, Waller said.

State Rep. Richard Wright, D-Columbus, opposes the increase. He said raising the speed limit won't prevent speeding.

"I'm on the interstate twice a week, and the traffic is going 65 to 70 mph

now," he said. "If we raise the speed limit to 65, the traffic will be going 75 to 80."

But the biggest problem with the bill is that it promotes more oil consumption, Wright said.

"We're importing more oil now than we were before the increase of prices," he said. "Anything that promotes increased consumption is not good for the country."

Liston Ramsey, speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives, said it was too early to tell if the limit would be raised in North Carolina.

"We've only had the authority given to us for a short time, so I really don't know what will happen," he said.

Few state employees objecting to King holiday

By RUTH DAVIS
Staff Writer

A survey about the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday sent to state employees last week by Gov. Jim Martin elicited few comments from UNC employees, said Jack Gunnells, UNC personnel director.

The survey asked state employees if they would prefer the Martin Luther King holiday to be optional. It also asked which existing holiday should be replaced with the new holiday, Gunnells said.

"We've heard very little about it one way or another," Gunnells said. "But that doesn't mean that concern about it doesn't exist. I imagine that once things have firmed up in terms of policy, we'll get feedback."

The governor's memo, mailed to state employees last Friday, came two weeks after the N.C. General Assembly enacted a bill making the third Monday in January a paid state holiday to honor the civil rights leader. The law requires the N.C. personnel commission to decide which holiday the King holiday will replace. There is a state limit of 11 paid holidays per year.

Gunnells said that although he hasn't had the chance to consider an optional King holiday, he thinks commemorating King is a good idea.

"(But) I would have rather seen the legislature provide the holiday it would replace, instead of creating the holiday and leaving it up to someone

else to decide," he said.

Robert Lee, state personnel department director, said the governor sent the memo to get input from state employees.

"The survey is very essential to making the decision (about which holiday should be replaced) because several employees are angry about the new law," Lee said. "I haven't heard anything positive concerning the new law from state employees. Some expressed they wouldn't mind an optional, floating holiday."

He said the department probably wouldn't choose the holiday being replaced until after April 20, about a week after the surveys are collected.

Ecstasy

ically to reduce depression in patients because it puts users "powerfully in touch with good feelings." Also, he said, ecstasy may help users recover early memories.

Because of the rising cost of psychiatric treatment, Grinspoon said, soon very few people will be able to afford expensive counseling. Using ecstasy may help some people cope with their problems.

Other effects of the drug include feelings of anxiety and insight, he said. While LSD will often give people bad and uncontrollable "trips," Grinspoon said, ecstasy trips are usually calm and controllable.

"Hopefully we'll get a preponderance for one day," he said. "But if we don't get a pretty clear picture, I guess we'll still have the problem of trying to decide."

Butch Gunnells, executive director of the State Employees Association of North Carolina, said he doesn't expect the survey to influence the legislature to change the law to make the holiday optional.

The Association does not plan to coordinate any lobbying efforts to change the holiday to an optional one, Gunnells said.

"The General Assembly has gone on to other things," he said. "I think the legislature has made its decision

and I don't intend to reopen the issue."

He said he expressed his support for a floating holiday while the bill was going through the legislative process, but efforts must now be concentrated on issues still being discussed in the legislature.

Paul Shumaker, press secretary for the N.C. Republican Party headquarters, said he thinks the governor's survey gives the state employees a chance to voice their opinions.

"The state legislature didn't complete the process in choosing the holiday," Shumaker said. "We are 100 percent behind our governor."

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The average ecstasy trip lasts from two to three hours, while the average LSD trip lasts 12 to 13 hours. "Ecstasy trips usually make people feel really good about themselves," Grinspoon said. "They are very different from LSD trips."

Although some people think the use of psychedelic drugs has declined since the 1960s, Grinspoon said, just

as many people use the drugs now. "The media isn't as interested in psychedelic drugs as it used to be," he said. "(And) people using them are not experiencing as many freakouts."



Embassy to be exterminated if bugs remain, Reagan says

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — President Reagan said Tuesday he might order the new, unfinished \$191 million U.S. Embassy in Moscow torn down if it cannot be secured against Soviet eavesdropping, but that Americans would not be "run out of town" by spies.

Reagan also said Soviet diplomats will not be allowed into their new office tower on a Washington hilltop until the Americans occupy the new facility in Moscow.

Speaking to reporters in the White House, the president said Secretary of State George Schultz would go to Moscow for arms control talks scheduled to start Monday despite the belief that the Soviets had planted listening devices in the embassy and in the replacement under construction next door.

Bakker resignation considered

DUNN, N.C. — North Carolina leaders of the Assemblies of God met Tuesday to discuss the denomination's handling of the "moral failure" of television evangelist Jim Bakker.

Bakker resigned from PTL and the Assemblies of God last month, saying he had been blackmailed for an extramarital tryst.

News in Brief

Dr. Charles H. Cookman, head of the N.C. Assemblies of God, told reporters in a brief statement before the 16-member board went into closed session that the panel would be considering the resignations of Bakker and the Rev. Richard Dortch from the denomination.

Dollar's fall brings hazards

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker said Tuesday the United States faces "substantial risks," including a recession, from reliance on a weaker dollar alone to correct the country's huge trade deficit.

Testifying to a Senate Banking subcommittee, Volcker said financial markets were already flashing warning signals that the dollar could fall too far too fast.

Mayor urges end to rioting

TAMPA, Fla. — Saying there's "no quick fix" for this racially troubled city, Tampa's mayor asked black community leaders to urge calm in the wake of rock-and-bottle-throwing triggered by the death of a black man wrestled to the ground by police.

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