

World and Nation

Report criticizes nuclear agency

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) grants licenses for handling radioactive material without verifying claims or inspecting facilities, making it "overly vulnerable to dishonest or careless applicants," a congressional report said Wednesday.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) said it discovered a series of "continuing and sometimes chronic problems" with the way the NRC hands out licenses and oversees businesses after they're licensed.

"NRC usually does not verify license application information, visit the facility before granting a license

or have specific detailed criteria for its license reviewers to determine when a denial is warranted," the GAO report said. "As a result, NRC is overly vulnerable to dishonest or careless applicants."

"All of these weaknesses or problems increase the public's risk of exposure," the congressional investigative agency said.

Rep. Edward Feighan, D-Ohio, had asked for the GAO investigation after the accidental spill of radioactive material that had been smuggled onto Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio.

He issued a statement calling on the NRC to "take immediate action

to correct deficiencies identified in the report."

"We have every right to expect quick response from an agency that oversees hazardous materials licensing. Unfortunately, there is little in the GAO report to suggest that the NRC has corrected critical problems identified over the last 16 years," Feighan said.

NRC spokesman John Kopack said the agency would not discuss the report until after the agency's staff had reviewed it.

The report noted that the NRC has limited resources: 25 full-time license reviewers and 36 inspectors, versus 7,700 licenses for industrial and other

uses of radioactive materials. When new developments force the NRC to turn its attention elsewhere, backlogs grow, the GAO said.

In addition to granting licenses without verifying applicants' claims or visiting facilities, the report said the NRC:

- Doesn't have checklists to determine when a license application should be denied or when repeat violators should get extra penalties.

- Doesn't make sure license-holders can afford to clean up after an accident.

- Takes too long to renew licenses and make inspections because of large backlogs.

German Jews commemorate anniversary of Nazi atrocities

From Associated Press reports

FRANKFURT, West Germany — A Jewish leader said Wednesday that descendants of victims will preserve the memory of the orgy of genocide launched 50 years ago with a night of horror the Nazis called Kristallnacht.

Heinz Galinski, leader of West Germany's 32,000 Jews, later went to a ceremony in East Germany, whose Jewish population numbers about 600. He urged both nations to make the anniversary a joint day of remembrance of the Nazi past.

Some Jews objected to Chancellor Helmut Kohl's presence in the Frankfurt synagogue where Galinski spoke, and he was heckled from the balcony. They cite his 1985 visit with President Reagan to the Bitburg cemetery where 49 Nazi SS officers are buried and his alleged insensitivity to Jewish concerns.

On Tuesday, the eve of Kristallnacht, someone spray-painted swastikas and pro-Nazi slogans on a synagogue in the Bavarian village of Binswangen, police reported.

Judge OKs KAL damage suits

WASHINGTON — A federal judge has ruled that families of passengers killed when a Korean Air Lines (KAL) jumbo jet was shot down by a Soviet fighter five

News in Brief

years ago can seek damages of more than \$75,000 per passenger. All 269 people on board were killed.

U.S. District Judge Aubrey E. Robinson Jr., in a 58-page decision Monday, said KAL "has failed to carry its burden of persuading the court that there are no disputed material issues of fact."

However, Robinson said there was sufficient evidence of "willful misconduct" on the part of the crew of Flight 007, which was shot down on Sept. 1, 1983, after violating Soviet air space over the Sea of Japan.

Gene linked to schizophrenia

NEW YORK — Researchers have found evidence that a single gene can help trigger schizophrenia and have estimated its approximate location, an approach that may help find new treatments for a disorder that strikes 1 in 100 people.

The gene also may predispose people to a personality disorder that makes them loners or to other mental conditions thought unrelated to schizophrenia, researchers said.

Court races still await final vote reports

From Associated Press reports

RALEIGH — Judicial elections historically have been walk-aways for the Democratic Party, but some of this year's tightest races in North Carolina came in the judicial branch.

"From the looks of it, I may be waiting up all afternoon," Republican Appeals Court Judge Donald Smith said Wednesday. Smith was hoping to join fellow Republican Robert Orr as the first members of their party to win a statewide judicial election in this century.

With 94 percent of the precincts reporting early Wednesday, Smith was trailing John Lewis by just over 4,000 votes.

"We've been steadily cutting away at the lead all night," Smith said. "Boy, it's close."

Orr and Smith were appointed by Republican Gov. Jim Martin to fill vacancies. They were running to complete terms that expire in 1992.

With 94 percent or 2,254 of 2,391 precincts reporting, Orr had 52 percent or 960,342 votes to 48 percent or 895,136 votes for Democrat John Friday.

Republican candidates contested only three of the 17 Superior Court races, and two of the three races were still too close to call early Wednesday afternoon.

With 93 percent of the precincts reporting, James Riddick trailed Democrat Cy Grant in District 6-B, 916,997 votes to 906,873.

Carlton Fellers lost to Democrat George Greene in District 10-A, 52 percent to 48 percent, with 93 percent of the precincts reporting.

GOP contender Howard Manning continued to hold a slight lead over incumbent Democrat Harley Cashwell in District 10-C, 907,730 votes to 874,395, with 93 percent of the precincts reporting.

Superior Court judge candidates facing no opposition included Ernest Fieldwood in District 5, G.K. Butterfield in 7-B, Donald Stephens in

Wake's 10-D, Gregory Weeks in Cumberland County's 12-B, Orlando Hudson in Durham's 14-A, Shirley Fulton in Mecklenburg's 26-A and Joe Freeman Britt in Robeson County's 16-B. In Guilford County, Steve Allen in 18-A, Howard Greeson in 18-B, Thomas Ross in 18-D and Joseph John in 18-E faced no challengers. Also unopposed were Joseph Deramus in 21-B and James Beaty in 21-D, both in Forsyth County.

However, the GOP could benefit from a lawsuit filed by Martin challenging the constitutionality of some judicial districts drawn by the Democrat-controlled General Assembly in 1987.

N.C. incumbents eke out tough victories

From Associated Press reports

RALEIGH — After the dust settled Wednesday, there were some bruised and battered survivors among North Carolina's congressional delegation.

For some, like Asheville Democrat James Clarke, victory didn't come easy.

Running against a strong GOP showing led by George Bush and Gov. Jim Martin, Clarke eked out a narrow 1,551-vote victory Tuesday over Republican challenger Charles Taylor in the 10th House District race.

Clarke wasn't the only survivor,

though. Longtime 9th District Rep. Bill Hefner withstood a strong challenge from Ted Blanton to win an eighth term.

In the 5th District, Rep. Steve Neal had to wait until early Wednesday to learn he had beaten GOP challenger Lyons Gray.

Meanwhile, over in the 4th District, Democratic incumbent David Price defeated Republican Tom Fetzter in a hard-fought campaign.

With 100 percent of the precincts reporting, Price captured 58 percent to Fetzter's 42 percent.

Price, 48, said the outcome showed voters were willing to vote their mind. "I'm very gratified that the kind of issues that I was dealing with seem to have struck a responsive chord," said the former Duke University

political science professor. "I would say that the voters have obviously been looking independently at the various races."

Fetzter, who was making his first run for public office, told his supporters, "I want to encourage all of you to stay in the fight, a fight worth fighting."

Fetzter, 33, is a veteran of Republican Sen. Jesse Helms' ultra-conservative National Congressional Club.

Unofficial returns Wednesday indicated that all of North Carolina's incumbent congressmen would retain their seats. That means the Democrats will continue to control eight of the 11 districts.

Veteran Democrat Rep. Walter Jones, the dean of North Carolina's

congressional delegation, defeated Howard Moyer to win re-election to a 13th term from the 1st District.

GOP Rep. Howard Coble held onto his 6th District House seat Tuesday by defeating Greensboro businessman Tom Gilmore, 62 percent to 38 percent.

Republican Alex McMillan coasted to a relatively easy victory over newcomer Mark Sholander in North Carolina's 9th District House race.

In the 7th District, Democrat Charlie Rose was elected to a ninth term by capturing 66 percent of the vote to 34 percent for George Thompson, a former Federal Express deliveryman from Lumberton.

In the 10th District, Republican Rep. Cass Ballenger defeated former Belmont Mayor Jack Rhyne.

Two Democrats, Tim Valentine of the 2nd District and Martin Lancaster of the 3rd District ran unopposed.

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