

Q-Notes

March
Madness

...Page 24

A Call to
Arms

...Page 25

Vol. 10, No. 1

June 1995

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper Printed on Recycled Paper FREE

Sources say Helms stalling Ryan White funding

by David Jones
Q-Notes Staff

WASHINGTON, DC—North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms has reportedly placed a hold on a bill to re-authorize the Ryan White CARE Act which provides services to people with HIV and AIDS, delaying and possibly preventing a vote on the bill by the full Senate.

Helms' office, through a spokesperson who said her name could not be used, refused to confirm that he has placed a hold on the bill. The spokesperson told *Q-Notes*, "holds are supposed to be confidential."

"The Senator does have serious problems with the bill," the spokesperson admitted. But she could not or would not say whether Helms would support an appropriation at any level or whether he intends to try to kill the measure altogether.

Christine Lubinski, Deputy Director of AIDS Action, a Washington, DC lobbying group, told *Q-Notes* that "A hold is in place and we understand that it is from Senator Helms. It seems to be related to a larger anti-AIDS or anti-gay agenda that is becoming a litany in the new Congress." Carolyn Harley, director of the state's AIDS Care Branch which manages the Ryan White program in

North Carolina, told *Q-Notes* that sources at the Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors also confirmed that Helms has blocked a vote on the bill.

The bill was recently reported out of committee to the full Senate. There are 57 co-sponsors, 19 of which are Republicans, including presidential candidate Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas, and conservative Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. "This bill has broad, bipartisan support," said Lubinski. "It is a real tragedy that one senator can hold up something that the American people clearly support," she said, "and there's nothing controversial here, nothing about condoms or educational material."

Helms' anonymous spokesperson was quite willing to discuss the bill and the senator's objections to it. She said that Helms does not like the fact that HIV disease has the ninth highest mortality of the leading causes of death but receives the highest level of funding through federal public health and research agencies. "This is way out of line with other diseases," she said.

Figures faxed to *Q-Notes* by Helms' office, compiled by the Congressional Research Service, list AIDS research, prevention and

treatment spending at \$2.7 billion in 1995 (research, \$1.5 million; prevention and education, \$490 million; and treatment, \$660 million). \$2.3 billion was spent on cancer, the second leading cause of death. \$809 million was spent on heart disease, the leading cause of death, in fiscal year 1995. The figures also show that deaths due to heart disease are down 26%, up 3% for cancer, while deaths due to HIV are up 105%.

(The spending tables faxed by Helms office also list tobacco as the nation's leading actual cause of death. In another table, smoking is listed as the principal risk factor for the top four causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke and bronchitis/emphysema.)

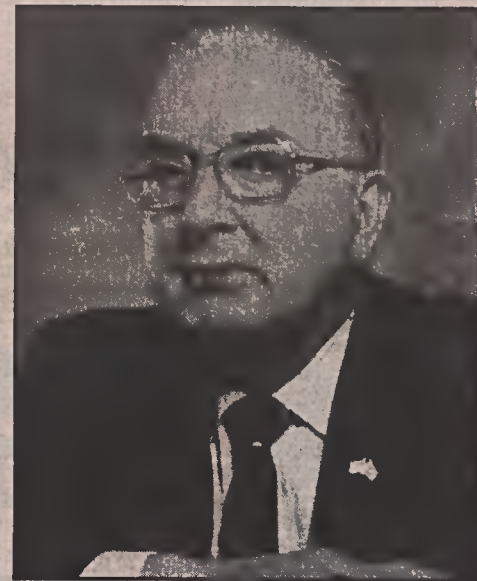
"The Senator is concerned that the federal government is just playing to effective lobbyists, almost like a disease of the month," the staffer said, "and feels that this is a disproportionate amount to be spending on one disease."

Senatorial holds are supposed to be a courtesy, requiring only that the senator placing the hold get 24 hours notice before a bill is brought to the full Senate for a vote. However, Lubinski pointed out that in many cases, like this one, a hold is a signal that there is a serious controversy and can result in an indefinite delay in a bill's consideration. Holds also give the senator placing them more time to negotiate for amendments.

North Carolina currently receives \$2.4 million in Ryan White funds, an increase from \$1.9 million in the previous year. Under a change in the funding formula in the proposed re-authorization bill, the state would receive from \$4.5 to \$5 million in the 1995 fiscal year. Funds are used for a wide variety of support programs including medical and dental care, housing as-

sistance, transportation to health care services and emergency financial assistance. Some 5,000 people have received services

Continued on page 14



Sen. Jesse Helms

OutCharlotte 95 receives grant from Fund for Southern Communities

by Robert Marcus James
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—Naomi Swinton, Chair of the Board of Trustees of OutCharlotte, announced on May 23 that the Fund for Southern Communities (FSC) had awarded OutCharlotte 95 a grant of \$5,000 to support the first festival this October.

"We were very surprised, but very grateful, to have been awarded the maximum grant for a new organization," stated Swinton. "It bodes well for the success of OutCharlotte, and the many things we are trying to accomplish."

OutCharlotte is an annual cultural festival celebrating the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) community. The festival's stated purpose is to foster awareness and appreciation of LGBT culture through arts-related, educational and historical programs. The first festival will be held October 11-15.

The grant application was prepared by Festival Director Dan Kirsch. "We asked for funds to help promote the educational components of the Festival," said Kirsch. "We will have workshops, seminars, performances and speakers about all aspects of LGBT culture, and we want to promote these programs to the general public as well as our community. These funds will allow us to create even more visibility for LGBT culture."

Jack Beckford, Program Officer for the Fund for Southern Communities, said the

decision to give the festival a maximum grant was quite simple. "We were supportive of the work; we think it's important work, and the money was available."

The grant awarded to OutCharlotte was from FSC's Southern Outlook Fund, which specifically funds lesbian and gay projects in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. A significant amount of money is available in the next grant cycle, with applications due September 1. For a grant application, write the Fund for Southern Communities at 552 Hill Street SE, Atlanta GA 30312, or call (404) 577-3178.

OutCharlotte 95 will feature a public speech by Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer, workshops and seminars, a business & crafts fair, an art exhibit, and several performances. In addition, several area groups are planning complementary events.

Swinton, though pleased with the award, cautioned overconfidence regarding fundraising for the Festival. "We are planning a major event, and it takes money and lots of volunteer time to produce an event this size," stated Swinton. "The FSC grant is a great start, but we need the entire community to contribute to ensure a success. This grant is really a challenge to the community that says, 'come on, now do your part.'"

For more information about OutCharlotte, including how to become a sponsor, write OutCharlotte, PO Box 32062, Charlotte, NC 28232-2062, or call (704) 563-2699.



Chapel Hill OKs domestic partners

CHAPEL HILL, NC—Although gay rights are under fire across the country, the Chapel Hill Town Council bucked a national mood on April 24 by unanimously approving measures allowing for registration of same and opposite sex unmarried couples.

The passage not only makes Chapel Hill the second and largest community in North Carolina to recognize domestic partnerships, but also gives gay-rights activists hope, even though the town is an anomaly among local governments held hostage by fear from the far right.

Five members of the public spoke in support of the measures, which also provided for family and sick leave for domestic partners of town employees, restrictions regarding supervisory relationships between town employees and their domestic partners, and reporting requirements regarding the real estate holdings of the domestic partners of elected officials. No members of the public spoke in opposition.

Gloria Faley, a lesbian mother and member of the Orange (County) Lesbian and Gay Association (OLGA) spoke of many problems faced by nontraditional families in the area. She said that the domestic partnership registration would allow the recognition of her 17 year relationship with her partner, Susan Johnston, and that it would help strengthen families.

"I believe in the true meaning of family values," Faley said at the meeting. "Love,

respect, and commitment."

Dan Coleman, a member of the Orange County Greens, a local environmental group, said the measures would help deal with social fragmentation by continuing Chapel Hill's long tradition of supporting nontraditional families.

"It's important that the Chapel Hill Town Council speaks out against the rhetoric of hate," Coleman said, adding that the measures would foster relationships of care and commitment.

Also debated at the meeting was a measure that would have provided domestic partners of town employees with dependent coverage under the town's insurance policy. The measure was referred for further study to determine whether any conflicts might exist with state laws. However, according to Bob Garris, OLGA's communication director, the town agreed to proceed with preparation of a budget assuming the coverage would be provided.

Chapel Hill's passage of domestic partnership legislation came during the 25th anniversary of the town's inclusion of affectional preference in its employment anti-discrimination policy and less than eight months after neighboring Carrboro passed similar measures. Registration of domestic partners was made available immediately to Chapel Hill residents who met specific requirements and were willing to sign an affidavit. The fee for registration is \$50.