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Proposal for Uninsured Children Could be Delayed Until May

By Dennis Patterson

RALEIGH (AP) - Delaying final approval of a proposal to give health care to uninsured children until May would keep sick children at risk, Health and Human Services Secretary David Bruton says.

But the co-chairman of a legislative oversight committee says pushing for a special legislative session in March without reaching a consensus would be a mistake.

"Instead of Bruton's proposal, Rep. Lanier Cansler, R-Buncombe, proposed Tuesday that the state expand Medicaid to all children in families making less than 133 percent of the federal poverty level in a special session. Then lawmakers could consider Bruton's full plan when the General Assembly convenes its regular session in May.

"I hear all these various kinds of options available," Bruton told the Joint Legislative Commission on Health Care Oversight.

"We studied every one of those carefully. It comes down simply to, do you want to do this or not? Or do you want to raise objections that will delay us from doing it?" "I'm concerned if we come in here in early March trying to approve a plan, the plan we've got, we could be here until the short session (in May) trying to resolve the differences," Cansler said.

Legislators have discussed holding a special session to develop a plan for extending health care to an estimated 70,000 uninsured children. The plan would be financed with \$79.9 million in federal money earmarked for health care.

"What a marvelous opportunity we have right now," Bruton said.

Congress has said that for the next 10 years they will have available money to insure uninsured children up to 200 percent of the poverty level," Bruton and Gov. Jim Hunt have proposed expanding Medicaid coverage to the children of low-paid government workers in families making less than twice the federal poverty level.

"Other poor children would be given the same services as Medicaid, but without a guarantee that those services would continue.

"It's taking care of the really sick kids, that's what this is all about," Bruton said. "These are the kids who have trouble getting coverage with regular insurance." But Cansler and others have raised questions about exactly how the program will be structured and how to make it fair to the working poor both in government and private businesses.

Instead of Bruton's plan, Cansler said expanding Medicaid coverage would help up to 50,000 children quickly, and give lawmakers more time to consider Bruton's plan.

"I want to get this program into place as rapidly as we can, but once we establish it, we all know around here, backing up and re-doing it if we do something wrong is going to be very, very difficult," he said.

"I know he wants it in place so he can help the children," Cansler said of Bruton. "I know how badly he wants it in place. I just want to make sure we do it in a way that we feel good about overall." Rep. Thomas Wright, D-New Hanover, said legislators were familiar with the issue of uninsured children.

"You either do it or you don't," he said. "We've played with this for years. There's no secret about how our kids are not being treated adequately in the state." The proposal will be taken before legislative budget committees next week for comment before a special commission decides whether to recommend the proposal and a special legislative session.



1998 Annual Philadelphia Martin Luther King, Jr. Association for Nonviolence, Inc. Bell Ringing Ceremony. Left to right are: Hon. Ed Rendell, mayor of Philadelphia; Dr. C. Delores Tucker, president, Philadelphia Martin Luther King, Jr. Association for Nonviolence, Inc.; Melba Moore; and The Honorable Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior.

The Rev. Thomas Kilgore Jr., Civil Rights Pioneer, Dies

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The Rev. Thomas Kilgore Jr., a civil rights pioneer who helped organize the 1963 march on Washington and worked for peace after the 1992 Los Angeles riots, has died. He was 84.

Kilgore died Feb. 4 at Good Samaritan Hospital. For 22 years, Kilgore was senior pastor at Second Baptist Church, the city's oldest black church. He also helped found the Los Angeles chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

"He was an ecumenical figure, he was an interracial figure, he was a multicultural figure," said the Rev. Cecil "Chip" Murray, who knew

Kilgore for more than two decades.

"He was one of the great community organizers and one of the great ministers," Kilgore, the sixth of 12 children, was born on Feb. 20, 1913, in Woodruff, S.C. He attended school in South Carolina and North Carolina, later graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta and went on to seminary graduate work.

During the 1940s, while he was pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., Kilgore led the organization of voter registration in schools and the drive to unionize tobacco workers.

From 1947-63 he was pastor of the Friendship Baptist Church in New York, where he raised bail money for jailed civil rights workers in the South. He also helped organize the famous 1963 civil rights march to Washington and walked behind its leader, the late Martin Luther King Jr.

Kilgore became pastor at Second Baptist Church in 1963.

It was also in the early 1960s that Kilgore and about a dozen other prominent black ministers formed an alliance that was the forerunner of the local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the only SCLC chapter west of the Rockies.

He was one of the few people to serve as president of two national Baptist denominations. Kilgore headed the largely white American Baptist Churches, USA from 1969-70 and mainly black Progressive National Baptist Convention from 1976-78.

Following the racially charged riots in 1992, Kilgore was among those who encouraged creation of the Interfaith Coalition to Heal L.A., an ecumenical group dedicated to promoting cross-cultural dialogue.

Kilgore "was always on the cutting edge of blending spirituality and community involvement," said the Rev. William Epps, who succeeded Kilgore as senior pastor at

National NAACP Nixes Appointment Of New State Executive Director

GREENSBORO (AP) - Leaders of the NAACP have refused to confirm the appointment of the executive director chosen by the North Carolina chapter of the civil rights group, saying hiring procedures were not followed.

Hurley Derrickson was appointed last month to run the day-to-day operations of the state chapter and already had set up his office at state headquarters in Greensboro.

But Mark Clack, the NAACP's national field secretary, said the state chapter didn't follow the rules in hiring Derrickson, a friend of the chapter president.

"The constitutional process was not adhered to, and they didn't abide by the uniform constitution for state conferences in hiring staff," Clack said.

State chapter president Melvin "Skip" Alston learned of the decision Feb. 7 in a letter from the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Kweisi Mfume.

Alston said he will appeal the decision and expects the matter to be resolved during a national conference in New York on Feb. 19.

"It's blindsided us," Alston said. "I've asked Mr. Mfume for more clarification because I can't tell Mr. Derrickson why he wasn't approved. I think once I sit down with Mr. Mfume, this can be resolved."

Derrickson will stay in the Greensboro office and on the job for now, Alston said.

Derrickson, who declined to comment, was chosen to replace former executive director Keith Sutton, who resigned in December after a falling out with Alston.

Second Baptist Church. "He knew that to be spiritual meant you had to have a positive impact on making this a better community," Kilgore is survived by his wife, Mrs. Jeannetta Kilgore; two daughters, Lynn Elda and Jini Medina and three grandchildren. Burial will be in North Carolina.

Analysis: For Bill Clinton, Millennium A Bridge Not too Far

By Tom Raum

WASHINGTON (AP) - As he works to show it's business as usual at the White House, President Clinton has been showering a lot of attention on the millennium.

Hardly a speech goes by when he doesn't evoke the 21st century. And tonight, he begins a series of White House lectures aimed at ushering it in.

The speaker at the first of the "Millennium Evenings" will be historian Bernard Bailyn, a Harvard University professor who has written 11 books on U.S. history, including two Pulitzer Prize winners. Repeatedly bringing up 2000 is one way for Clinton to reinforce the notion that he'll still be on the job two years from now - and thus will have weathered the present personal storm.

For a president with more than just a passing interest in his place in history, talking up the millennium is clearly a topic Clinton returns to.

After all, he offered to build a bridge to the 21st century during his acceptance speech at the 1996 Democratic National Convention in

Chicago. And his 1997 State of the Union address talked about making "the year 2000 a national celebration of the American spirit." By the time of this year's State of the Union, Clinton was using the 21st century and "the information age" almost interchangeably. And he reminded his audience: "With barely 700 days left in the 20th century, this is not a time to rest." The White House even has a millennium program page on its Web site (www.whitehouse.gov) that includes a clock counting down the days, hours, minutes and seconds until the calendar rolls over to 2000.

"We are entering this new millennium, the new century, with restored confidence - the information age, a growing global economy, they're changing the way we live and work," Clinton said earlier in a speech at Georgetown University about Social Security overhaul.

Bailyn, the speaker at tonight's kickoff White House lecture, will address "some of the core American ideas that crystallized during the revolutionary era that have shaped history thereafter and that

must be preserved as we move into a new millennium," said a White House fact sheet.

Julie Mason, a spokeswoman for first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, said the lecture series will consist of "different events, a variety of experts." Other speakers have not yet been selected, she said.

Some critics have suggested Clinton may have ulterior motives.

"This is so typical of Clinton to attempt to sweet talk his way into history by inviting historians to the White House," said University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato.

Clinton defenders scoff at such notions.

And Mike McCurry, Clinton's spokesman, said anew that Clinton is "fully focused on the agenda that we will pursue in the year ahead." There also are a whole lot of side celebrations planned for 2000: the 200th anniversary of presidents occupying the White House, the 200th anniversary of the first meeting of Congress in the Capitol and the 200th anniversary of the Library of Congress.

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Rev. Alfreddie Johnson, left, Founder of the World Literacy Crusade, and supporter Isaac Hayes, right, are shown here receiving a literacy award on behalf of L. Ron Hubbard from Celes King III, California chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality.