

New Proposal May Revamp Driver's Licenses

BY WENDY GOODMAN
STAFF WRITER

The Governor's Highway Safety Commission is supporting graduated driver's licenses as its top proposal for Gov. Jim Hunt and the N.C. General Assembly. The proposal will go before the General Assembly this year, and, according to a press release, Hunt has already given approval to the commission's recommendations. The purpose of the graduated driver's licensing program is to give 16-year-olds more experience behind the wheel, said Durwood Laughinghouse, vice chairman of the safety commission. "The whole purpose behind this is to better prepare the driver," Laughinghouse said. Through this program, the driver will be better prepared for anything that could happen on the road. "Statistics show that inexperienced drivers are at high risk," said Paul Mahoney, public spokesman for the N.C. Department of Insurance.

"If we give them more experience, this will cut the number of accidents, and that is why we are involved," he said. The idea of the graduated licensing system is similar to the optional driver's permit that North Carolina already has. The new proposal adds a mandatory one-year permit period and several graduated steps in the licensing process according to Rob Foss, manager of alcohol studies at the UNC Highway Safety Research Institute. "The proposal requires people to get a permit and spend some time driving with an adult in the car and getting the experience," Foss said. "They need the practice because it is not easy to keep track of everything and the decision making that takes place while driving." There are three stages to the graduated licensing plan. The beginning stage encompasses getting the permit, which lasts a year. The second stage is the intermediate license, which lasts six months. The final stage is the full license, said Joe Parker, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"It will now be mandatory to get the learner's permit at 15, where the driver must be with a parent when driving," Parker said. "The second level, after a year, consists of unsupervised driving in the daytime only between 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. After these two steps, the person can drive at any time, subject to provisional conditions." In order to graduate from one stage to the next stage, the driver must complete each period without any driving violations. If the driver does receive a violation, then that driving period begins again. The goal of this program is the safe completion of each period before moving on to the next graduated step. "Twenty-five percent of all 16-year-olds in the state are involved in crashes," Parker said. "The purpose is to increase the practice of the driver, reduce the accidents and for more 16-year-olds to (live to) become 17." The no-violations policy before graduating to the next stage will encourage the new driver to be as cautious as possible, Foss said.

"The notion is that the drivers try to get the practice under the safest conditions with parents in the daytime. Then they have the motivational component of that, if they have really safe driving, restrictions can be lifted," he said. The proposal has received support and enthusiasm from traffic safety proponents and some from the general public, according to early reports. "There are a lot of kids growing up with no experience driving now," Laughinghouse said. "With this proposal, the drivers will be better educated, and, by having these restrictions, they will learn more about the roads quicker." The restrictions the commission has proposed are so far being supported by people within the general public who recognize the risks that new drivers are experiencing. Parker said, "Most parents would like more restrictions on the novice driver because conditions are so much more dangerous than they used to be."

'Streamlined' U.S. Budget Meets With Controversy

Under the President's New Plan, More Than \$1.6 Trillion Will Be Allocated

BY ERICA BESHEARS
STAFF WRITER

As the debate over the Balanced Budget Amendment heats up, Clinton's proposed budget for 1996, while far from balanced, is full of spending cuts. The budget includes \$1.6 trillion in spending; deficit spending is at \$200 million, down from \$203 million last year, according to a Senate Budget Committee press release. Clinton was trying to do three things when he designed this budget, according to Lawrence Haas, associate director for communication at the Office of Management and Budget of the White House. "He was looking to do three things; first, raise the standard of living for average Americans; second, continue to project American leadership around the world; and thirdly, make government work better," Haas said.

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THAD BEYLE
Political science professor

"He wanted to do the first by lowering taxes, the second by an increase in defense spending, so we can support peace in the Middle East and new democracies in Eastern Europe," Haas said. "He wanted to make government work better by streamlining, reducing the civil work force, terminating programs and untying red tape." He said the president had decided to terminate 131 programs, including the Interstate Commerce Commission, and to consolidate 271 programs into 27 because they were ineffective. "We were trying to decide what is the proper role of U.S. government," Haas said. "The ICC is a largely obsolete agency. It's been around since the 1880s. It's not a question of what work will have to be transferred. The programs we're cutting are out of date, and we can get by without them." One aspect of the budget is Clinton's "Middle Class Bill of Rights," which tries to raise standards of living in the long and short term, Haas said. "It has four provisions. Simple tax relief for families with children, expanded eligibility for Individual Retirement Accounts, a new tax deduction for college and grants for unemployed workers to get job training," he said. He said he anticipated a struggle with Congress to get the budget passed but that struggle was always expected. "The struggle should be no more than

usual. It's always a struggle for the president and Congress to agree on a budget," Haas said. He said the possible Balanced Budget Amendment would have no effect on this particular budget. "If the Balanced Budget Amendment passes, it doesn't call for a balanced budget until seven years from now," Haas said. Most Republicans believe the cuts did not go far enough, said Melissa Longoria, spokeswoman for Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. "A lot of Republicans were a little disappointed that there were not enough cuts," Longoria said. "Especially in the area of entitlements; we'd like to go a lot further." She said that much of the debate depended on the success of the Balanced Budget Amendment. "A lot depends on the Balanced Budget Amendment," Longoria said. "We haven't settled anything now. Some senators want to introduce a balanced budget anyway, and others say maybe we should wait and make substantial cuts."

Longoria said she thought most government programs were being considered for cuts. "We look at it like everything's on the table except Social Security. Anything might be included or might not," Longoria said. Thad Beyle, a political science professor at UNC, said the budget was partisan. "It's a political document. They (Republicans) don't like it," Beyle said. "I think there's no question there are things that can be done. They're moving like boxers, fighting each other all the way." Beyle said that he thought anything could happen with the Balanced Budget Amendment but that there was really no need for it. "There's no need for a Balanced Budget Amendment. There's a need for the guts to say, 'we need to balance the budget,'" he said. "This has more to do with intestinal fortitude." "The struggle will be to put their money cuts where their mouth is," he said. "It's time to step up."

Dole Will Review Effectiveness of Affirmative Action

BY KELLY RACE
STAFF WRITER

Sen. Bob Dole's announcement that he will review federal statutes collected by the Congressional Research Service concerning affirmative action has caused a stir among prominent minority groups. Many are worried that his review might result in drastic changes in the country's affirmative action policies. However, Clarkson Hine, press secretary for Dole, R-Kan., said no plans of action had been made yet. "All he's done now is to request information from the Congressional Research Service," Hine said. He said he wasn't sure how long Dole's review of the requested material would take. "He doesn't have a timetable," he said. U.S. Rep. Donald Payne, D-N.J., in a Washington Post interview, criticized the Republican affirmative action review effort.

"I think it's really a shame that the Republican Party is going about dividing this country along racial lines," he was quoted as saying. "The study, if it's done honestly and accurately, (will) show there are a great deal of barriers for minority people to move up the ladder to the top." In his appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," Dole expressed his concern about the effectiveness of affirmative action. "Has it worked? Has it had an adverse reaction? I think it's because of things like this, where sometimes the best qualified person does not get the job because he or she may be one color," he said. "And I'm beginning to believe that may not be the way it should be in America," he said. Deborah Ross, executive legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, stressed affirmative action's advantages. "Because there was a history of preju-

dice and violence (in America), the idea was to give equal opportunity to women and minorities. The obvious advantages are integration, and helping people to get their foot in the door to something (better)," she said. "A lot of people think affirmative action is giving special rights to people. I think... (it's) been blown out of proportion to say you're letting everybody in, with no regards to standard." Ross explained the importance of affirmative action in a decreasingly white-dominated society. "(Affirmative action) is relevant to the extent that whites have to accept the fact that we're a multiracial society and that that can be a positive thing," Ross said. Robert Cannon, affirmative action officer at UNC, said affirmative action contained an array of different issues that would probably be discussed. "There are a range of issues that are out there, and a range of areas that are going to

be reviewed, and possibly there's going to be some change. We're just going to have to see what they are and act accordingly. "I think the people who are qualified ought to have an opportunity to participate in any facet of this country's existence," he said. "The history of this country has been one in which groups of people have been discriminated against. It's not just blacks." Cannon said he thought that although many people benefited from the affirmative action programs, the United States was not a nation of dependency. "There will always be people who will benefit from any system that is devised, and some of the people who will benefit should not, but there will never, ever be a parentocracy, and this country is not the parentocracy," he said. The White House press office said no statement had been released from the president regarding Dole's affirmative action review.

Gingrich Offers Sketchy Welfare Reform Package

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C. —


Asserting that welfare has chained generations of women and children to poverty, Republicans sketched a plan Thursday that would deny cash aid to teenage mothers and end the guarantee to benefits for all eligible Americans. The welfare overhaul, outlined by Rep. Clay Shaw in a speech to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, tracks the hard-line reforms in the GOP's "Contract With America" but also consolidates nearly 50 social programs and returns the money to the states in three block grants. Shaw, a Florida Republican who is chairman of the House Ways and Means subcommittee responsible for welfare reform, promised business leaders that his panel would approve legislation by the end of next week that stopped welfare from being a "lifelong program." Under his plan, single parents would be required to work after two years on welfare, and cash benefits would end after five. Single, unwed mothers under age 18 would be barred from receiving cash welfare, and most illegal immigrants would be denied nearly every kind of public assistance. The legislation also ends the entitlement status of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which for decades has guaranteed benefits to children and their parents whose incomes and family circumstances meet state eligibility requirements. Nearly 5 million families, and more than 9 million children, receive AFDC. Because it is an entitlement, the govern-

ment spends whatever is necessary to cover anyone who is eligible. Shaw's bill would return AFDC, as well as spending on child care and foster care programs, to the states in three lump sums worth billions of dollars. The money would be distributed to the states for five years at 1994 levels. Conservatives complained that Shaw's bill was not tough enough. State officials criticized the ban on aid to teenage mothers and legal immigrants. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Mich., called it "strong on punishing children" and "weak on getting their parents to work." Just 2 percent of all adult AFDC recipients would be required to work in 1996, a number that grows to 20 percent by 2003. President Clinton said that if the bill "promotes work and family and protects children, then I will be favorable toward it, even with a lot more flexibility to the states." However, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said, "We remain opposed to provisions which would deny assistance to young mothers, punish children or replace families with orphanages." In his speech, Shaw said it was time for society to send a signal to teenagers. "We must say stop. Do not sleep with someone and expect the taxpayers to bail you out if you have a child."

TRAIL
FROM PAGE 3
One of the key tools Garner is using in her campaign is the information highway. She said she had challenged her fellow SBP candidates to become "technologically accessible" and to make their platforms available on the Internet. Garner said the message she was trying to communicate was about community. "With this message, I'm trying to get my slacker friends to vote — those who normally wouldn't be motivated." ■ Up until Tuesday Jen Fiumara and Jeff Berkaw were also running for co-president. Fiumara will now run alone. Berkaw, who will serve as Fiumara's campaign manager, said the objectives of the campaign remained the same. "We try to get an idea of how we are being perceived," he said. "We don't want to come across as something we're not. We want people to know that we are being real, not schmoozing." Berkaw said the campaign was trying to say "what you see is what you get." "We're not full of it," he said. "Our goals are feasible, and our platform is not political in the ideological sense." Berkaw said that part of being real was not planning or rehearsing speeches ahead of time. He said Fiumara was not going to deliver flowery speeches making promises she couldn't deliver. "We plan to underpromise and overdeliver." ■ Stacey Brandenburg is running as the candidate of inclusiveness, campaign manager Laura Ramsey said. She said the campaign theme was reflected by the coalition who were working on the campaign. "We started the campaign with the goal

of having the largest, most inclusive, campaign in history," said John Dervin, who is on Brandenburg's staff. "I don't know if we've met this goal, but I think we've come close." As election day grows near, the dedication of the staff is going to be crucial, Dervin said. "The level of intensity will go up within the next few days," he said. Ramsey said that Brandenburg and her staff would be spreading the campaign's message primarily by word of mouth, with door-to-door and phone campaigning.

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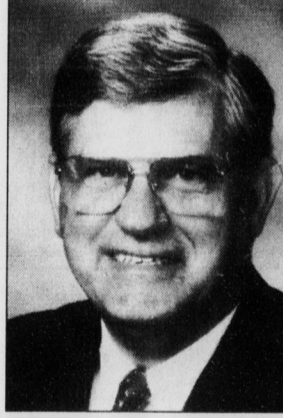
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