

# Senators Look to Future After Clinton Debacle

By JONATHAN COX  
Special Assignments Editor

WASHINGTON, FEB. 15 — After standing in the spotlight of America for more than a month during the trial of William Jefferson Clinton, senators say they will step back into the shadows of mundane legislative duties next week without fear of political repercussions.

Senators will take this week off after acquitting President Clinton on both articles of impeachment Friday. When session resumes next Monday, freshman Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., said he and his colleagues would work together with a better understanding for each other's perspectives.

"I think there is more respect inside that Senate chamber than when we went in," he said Friday as he walked down the Capitol steps.

Because of that unity, and the drive to move forward, the Republican party will not suffer any ill consequences from this defining point on the political landscape, senior Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., said from his office Friday. Analysts have predicted that citizens will turn against the GOP during the 2000 elections because its members pushed the trial. "This is today and next year is next year," Helms said. "I don't think it will have any lingering effects."

Citing one of his colleagues, Helms said Clinton might not be so lucky during the last two years of his term.

"Billy's going to be Billy, and he's going to fall into another hole," he said.

Clinton escaped from the biggest threat to his political career Friday when Republicans failed to acquire the two-thirds majority, or 67 votes, needed



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President Clinton approaches the podium to speak to members of the press after his acquittal on two articles of impeachment.

to remove him from office.

Standing with the other 44 representatives from his party, Edwards found the president not guilty on both articles of impeachment.

The former Raleigh attorney tapped his knowledge of the judicial system and justified his vote with a legal explanation rather than a substantive evaluation. "I think the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the president was guilty of these charges," he said. "You cannot convict and remove a president from office based on speculation."

Edwards said Lewinsky's testimony and that of White House aide Sidney Blumenthal, whose depositions he wit-

nessed, along with the viewpoints of his colleagues caused him to constantly reevaluate his own opinion.

"All of it had an influence, but none of it ever really changed my mind," he said.

Helms also stood by his first impressions, saying he knew Clinton was "guilty as sin" from the beginning. Calling the process a "political gambit," Helms said he told other Republicans in their first conference that they should do nothing.

"I knew exactly how it was going to turn out," the 27-year veteran of the Senate said.

"We were destined to lose from the very start."

# BOG Hears Financial Aid Proposal

If approved, the \$32 million need-based financial aid plan would be the largest of its kind in N.C. history.

By MATTHEW B. DEES  
State & National Editor

BOONE, OCT. 10 — UNC-system advisors pitched their proposal for a large-scale need-based financial aid program to the full Board of Governors for the first time Oct. 7.

The \$32 million program would be the first state-funded need-based initiative of this magnitude.

Officials cited the rising cost of higher education, increased demand for a college degree and the inadequacies of need-based aid in North Carolina as major reasons to implement the program.

Jane Wellman, a consultant hired by the UNC-system General Administration, pointed to federal statistics that indicate the total cost of attending a public institution has risen 265 percent since 1976, while the mean family income for middle and lower-class families has remained relatively stagnant.

UNC-system President Molly Broad also said that many state schools, includ-

ing UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State and UNC-Charlotte, would face tuition increases as several institutions tried to raise faculty pay.

She said a financial aid program was needed to offset the increase.

Financial aid and faculty salaries will go hand in hand, not compete with one another, when the BOG requests funding from the state legislature in May, Broad said.

"It really has to be a balanced strategy," said Broad, who recently announced that financial aid, faculty salaries and a proposal to improve facilities would be presented en masse next year to the N.C. General Assembly. "We can't go for one without the other."

Wellman outlined the financial aid plan for BOG members at their monthly meeting.

She estimated the average annual cost of education at UNC-system schools was tuition and required fees plus \$6,750.

Students who qualified for the program would have to make a contribution based on their families' income and support themselves either through grants or by working.

The state grant will cover the remain-

der of the cost.

Both Broad and BOG Chairman Ben Ruffin praised the program.

"This is the best student aid program," Broad said.

"It elevates North Carolina's opportunity to gain support from the federal government, and it focuses where it's most likely to increase the college-going rate."

Ruffin said he liked the idea of students contributing to their own education. He cited a figure that indicated as many as 74 percent of UNC-system students worked during their senior year of college. "It shows they're not just waiting for a handout," Ruffin said.

"It says that young people want to get an education."

The full board will vote on the proposal later this week when it convenes in Wilmington.

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