

SESSION
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of \$100 billion. Such an action could bankrupt the companies and strike a crushing blow to the state's economy.

Legislators said they could not remain idle in the face of such dire circumstances, despite legal and philosophical objections from a handful of individuals.

Citing the 12,793 jobs and \$52.4 million in annual tax revenue tobacco firms provide for the state, lawmakers said the move was essential to preserving N.C.'s fiscal health.

"Tobacco has been good to North Carolina," said Sen. Hamilton Horton, R-Forsyth, who represents a district with a strong tobacco industry presence.

"For 250 years, it's been one of our major crops. Tobacco has made it possible for our North Carolina farmers to make a good living with small acreage."

North Carolina is the leading tobacco producer in the nation.

Sen. Betsy Cochrane, R-Davidson, said the bill was needed to prevent the snowball effect a serious blow to the tobacco industry would cause in the state.

"This is more than the big tobacco companies," she said. "This is all the little businesses in all the communities where the tobacco industry undergirds the economy."

But a few legislators took issue with the legislation.

Sen. Thomas Odom, D-Iredell, was the only senator to vote against the bill. He argued that the \$25 million cap aimed to protect the interest of large corporations but ignored smaller businesses that might run into out-of-state legal woes. "I have to vote no because as I look at it, on balance, it's basically unfair to the little man and the little woman."

Walker Reagan, a legislative counsel who helped draft the bill, said this concern had been examined. But lawmakers deemed that the state should intervene only in extreme cases where the state's entire economy was at risk.

Another main objection to the legislation was that it violated the Full Faith and Credit clause of the U.S. Constitution, which requires states to abide by the laws of others. But a letter from the attorney general and legislative staff research laid this issue to rest for most lawmakers. "My questions regarding full faith and credit have been in large part answered by our staff," said Speaker Pro Tem Joe Hackney, D-Orange, and a Chapel Hill lawyer and farmer. "I have less concern than I did have."

In addition to the bill, the House unanimously passed a nonbinding resolution urging tobacco companies to buy more N.C. leaf to protect an industry already plagued by quota cuts and

natural disasters this year.

But the Senate did not adopt a similar resolution, as several members deemed the move inappropriate. "It starts down a very bad road of trying to dictate to private businesses what they should do," said Sen. Howard Lee, D-Orange.

While economic concerns dominated legislators' discussion, some said the move was important to protect state businesses from other states' unjust laws.

Many said the new bill was appropriate because it still forced defendants to put up collateral prior to their appeal but also ensured that they would have their day in court.

Still, some lawmakers said the issue ran deeper than legal or fiscal matters.

Horton said the mounting lawsuits that have plagued the tobacco industry in the past decade were indicative of a culture devoid of personal responsibility.

"In this day and time, we are all victims," he said disgustedly. "The woman who doesn't get a raise is a victim of a glass ceiling, ... the gay man who gets thrown out of the military is a victim of homophobia, ... the white man who doesn't get a promotion is a victim of affirmative action and quotas. And now three people in Florida are suing the tobacco companies because they chose to smoke."

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FAMILY
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divorced doubled from 17 percent in 1972 to 34 percent in 1996.

The statistics are not without qualifications. Reznick said external situations and pressures, such as rising technology and heightened consumerism, have contributed to the changing face of the American family.

Ideals of the 1950s allowed June Cleaver to stay at home while her husband Ward left for work every morning, out to support the family.

"Given the expectations of the American family as to what was appropriate, one income was enough," Reznick said. "Over the last three decades, our ideas of what we need has changed. Economic pressures have pushed women into the workplace."

As well as economic needs, Reznick said women were drawn into the work force by a new view of a career as a fulfilling opportunity, one not simply limited to men.

Cheerful homemaker June Cleaver gave way to successful lawyer Claire Huxtable, who dealt with similar work stresses as her doctor husband before coming home to answer the needs of her children. Economic necessity forced Grace Kelly of the TV show "Grace Under Fire" into the blue-collar work force in order to single-handedly support her three children.

Sociologists theorize that women entering into the work force contributed to the higher divorce rate and other changes.

"Women can now support themselves, can raise a child and support them by themselves," said Kathleen Harris, professor of sociology. "There are theories that the high divorce rate has had an affect on attitudes, that people are more likely to put off marriage or wait longer to get married."

While some lament the change from

PELL
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Feingold also stated that the grant was necessary to counteract the disparity between the number of rich and poor students attending college.

The Senate Budget Committee already increased the Pell Grant by \$30 last week for the 2000-01 school year. That increase would continue for the next five years, resulting in a \$150 total increase.

Jim Manley, spokesman for Kennedy, said the proposal's strength was its simplicity and the fact that it had no restrictions.

He said the Pell Grant applied to all college students nationwide - unlike other grants that were only available to students attending college in their state of residency.

"This is the crucial tool that the government can utilize to increase access to higher education," Manley said.

He said the proposal could face opposition from Senate Republicans

because of its high price tag.

"I feel it's going to be a partisan issue," he said.

But Manley said the Pell Grant was vital for students to keep up with the cost of living while helping them pay for their college tuition.

"(Kennedy) thinks that the Pell Grant is one of the most successful educational programs the government has done in a long time," Manley said.

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CONGRESS
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senting.

Wahl was the only new member elected to a committee chairman position.

Rep. Sandi Chapman, Dist. 15,

became the new speaker pro tem during Wednesday's meeting.

"I want to make sure students know what's going on," she said.

"They need to make their voices heard."

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FUNDING
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North Carolina's senators expressed disappointment over the delay.

Sens. John Edwards and Jesse Helms each spoke with Lott, urging him to speed disaster relief to North Carolina.

"This is just classic Washington politics," said Edwards, a Democrat. "The people of eastern North Carolina need help, and they need help right now."

Michael Briggs, press secretary for Edwards, said Lott assured him that the first appropriations bill would include disaster relief for North Carolina.

"For that bill, it would only be a month longer to wait, but a month is quite a long time when the people of North Carolina are waiting for help," Briggs said.

The federal government has sent nearly \$2 billion in disaster aid to North Carolina, but much of it was delayed for weeks last fall in a budget fight between Congress and the White House.

Joe Lanier, a Helms aide, said the Republican senator would try to get the new Floyd relief added to the first appropriations bill to move through Congress.

"We're disappointed that there is a hold-up over unrelated topics and the size of the supplemental (bill)," he said.

"We don't think that the aid to North Carolina is controversial."

Briggs also said the delay of the bill was not related to aid for North Carolina. "None of the criticism surrounding the supplement bill is directed towards hurricane relief," Briggs said. "It is the other areas of the bill that are causing problems."

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the "traditional family," others point out the concept of family values is relatively new, ignoring what came before Baby Boomers and World War II.

"(The Cleavers) are the product of the American suburban dream, with separate houses and developments, the father going off to earn the income," Reznick said.

He cited agrarian societies, extended family networks and tribal ways of living that existed before the modern view of the traditional family came to be.

"It does seem to me that we often lose sight of that - family values are so recently enshrined," he said, referring to the emphasis only put on the concept in the last several decades.

The catch-phrase arose as a political term in the 1960s, when novelist Andrew Greeley coined the term to counter the rising counterculture.

Family values were part of the Republican Party platform by 1976 and have been a mainstay of political elections, national debate and television sitcom choices ever since.

As the nation questioned the values of her husband during a scandal over relations with a White House intern, first lady Hillary Clinton made her opinion of family values public with her book, "It Takes a Village." Published in 1996, the title of the work borrowed from an old African proverb stressing the need for society, as well as parents, to provide for children.

Values continue to rank high in political campaigns - both Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush have touted a dedication to family values as they vie for the nation's top office.

And while the politicians spout their views, the media provides Americans

with a mirror of family life today.

The average viewer can watch a wide range of family makeups simply by flipping the television channels at night.

"Will and Grace," a television sitcom, shows the relationship between a woman and her gay best friend, while "Friends" Chandler and Monica put the new trend of living together on the television screen.

A break from the "traditional family?" Yes. But according to some, the growing number of nontraditional families shows an increased acceptance by Americans.

"There's a tremendous diversity in terms of family forms people are growing up in," Harris said. "I don't really think there's been a corrosion of family values - people still hold their families and relationships most dear," she said. "It's just that there's been a redefinition of what family means."

Harris envisions an increasing diversity of families as members of today's Generation Y enter the work force and begin to settle down. "People still want a lasting, intimate relationship - it's just that it doesn't have to be a married relationship. The more you're around different types of families, it's more common. You accept it."

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