

Campaign Finance Bill Clears Major Hurdle

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Legislation to cleanse the nation's scandal-scarred campaign finance system moved to the brink of Senate passage on Thursday after Sen. John McCain and his allies prevailed in a showdown to ease the impact of the Supreme Court's inevitable constitutional review.

"I believe that we've gone over the last hurdle but I just don't know," McCain, R-Ariz., said after the 57-43 vote that indicated the high court should make its ruling section by section rather than upholding or rejecting the three main elements as a package.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the measure's most outspoken opponent, said, "This bill is going to pass ... and if I were a betting man I'd bet it's going to be signed into law."

Previous attempts to push campaign finance legislation through the Senate have perished as the result of

Republican filibusters.

But public outrage over the current system has slowly increased as the result of scandals in recent years. After President Clinton's re-election campaign in 1996, Congress held hearings over the coffees the president held at the White House for high-dollar donors, the fund-raising calls that Vice President Al Gore made from his office and allegations that the Chinese government had covertly made huge campaign donations in an attempt to influence American elections.

More recently, there has been much criticism of last-minute pardons issued by Clinton, one of which went to a billionaire fugitive, Marc Rich, whose ex-wife made six-figure donations to Democratic causes and the ex-president's library fund.

In addition, McCain made the issue the centerpiece of a surprisingly strong White House bid in 2000, and Democrats picked up several Senate seats last fall, adding to the reservoir of support.

County Examines Schools' Budgets

Issues facing local school boards include funding for adding more nurses and building new schools.

By Lee Spears
Staff Writer

The Orange County Board of Commissioners met with local school officials Wednesday to discuss concerns about next year's budgets for the county's two school districts.

The Orange County Board of Education and Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education discussed increasing the number of school nurses in the county, possible alternative school options and the construction of new elementary schools with the commissioners.

Members of all three boards agreed that schools are understaffed with nurses and are taking measures to remedy the problem.

Commissioner Barry Jacobs said North Carolina recommends a 1-to-750 nurse-to-student ratio but does little to help local governments achieve that goal.

"This was an attempt to be proactive," Jacobs said. "This is a self-imposed mandate to make sure students

get good medical care."

Orange County school board member Susan Halkiotis said her board's goal is to add one nurse to county schools each year until each school has one. She also said most Orange County schools presently share nurses with each other.

Officials also addressed the prospect of cooperative ventures between the two school boards in the future.

Orange County school board Chairman Keith Cook said both boards have been working together to explore the possibility of alternative schools.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education Chairman Nick Didow said alternative school programs could be offered for different types of students.

"(The future programs) would be quite different than the alternatives cur-

rently available at Chapel Hill High or East Chapel Hill High," he said.

Cook said alternative schools have the potential to draw many students.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro school board also presented its unfunded needs for years 2001 through 2011, which total more than \$42 million. Among these needs are two new elementary schools, renovations of six older school facilities and the expansion of the system's two high schools.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Superintendent Neil Pedersen said it is particularly important that the board receive funding for both new elementary schools at once so that they could open at the same time in fall 2003.

"It doesn't make much sense to build two schools, one right after the other,

and have to go through the agony of redistricting twice," Pedersen said.

The officials also discussed the upcoming November county bond referendum at the work session.

A joint task force is gathering information about what the county's other financial needs will be and will report back to the commissioners at the end of May. The next joint work session will be held Sept. 24.

Stephen Halkiotis said his board's interest in children causes it to give more money to its school systems than any other county in North Carolina.

"We value and treasure what children are all about."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.




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noon - The **SHEREHE Benefit Concert for the Rape Crisis Center** will be held in Great Hall. The concert will feature performances by campus groups and local artists, free food and a DJ. Donations of \$2 are requested at the door. Special thanks to RHA, Carolina Women's Center, BSM, Sangam and the Office of the Dean of Students.

8 p.m. - The Southern Writers in Performance Series presents "The Fiction of Marianne Ginger in Performance," featuring performances of Ginger's works by undergraduate students followed by a discussion with Ginger. The event will take place in

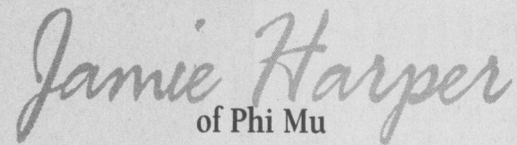
the Tate-Turner Kuralt Auditorium, 301 Pittsboro St. No admission charge. Call 962-4941 for more information.

For the Record

In the March 29 article "New CUAB President Faces Union Renovation Challenges," it was incorrectly stated that Kristi Young is the new president of the Carolina Union Activities Board. Kri Young is the new president. The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

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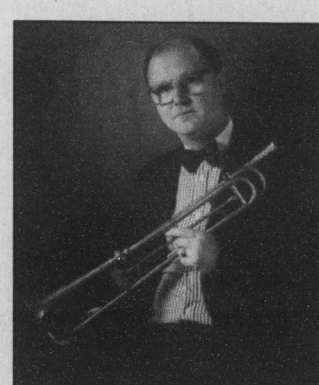


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