

STATE AND NATIONAL

Censorship of student programs, books on the rise in N.C. schools

By Anna Burdeshaw
Staff Writer

A dramatic increase in censorship efforts throughout the nation was reported last week by the People for the American Way, a left-wing civil liberties organization.

Last year, 229 attempts to ban questionable material from schools were reported. This year, that number rose to 376.

N.C. statistics paralleled national figures—14 censorship requests were made during the past school year, compared to only three during the 1990-91 school year.

According to PFAW, the materials drawing complaints are changing as well.

"(Censorship) is expanding. More and more people are challenging library books, not just required reading," said Cathy Stuart, executive director of People for the American Way in North Carolina.

Stuart said the censorship requests were not limited to books. Games, classroom curricula and specific AIDS, sex and drug education programs are also targets for censorship.

Several N.C. school districts have been forced to deal with parental concerns about the material being pre-

sented to their children.

In the Wake County school system, one parent complained that a book was causing his child to have nightmares.

The issue was taken to the Wake County school board, which recommended that the book only be available to students who were in at least the fourth grade.

Jean Johnson, director of media services for Wake County Schools, said this particular case was unusual since previous complaints were resolved before they reached the school board.

"There are other requests by parents, but ... they have always accepted the decision of the (media advisory) committee," Johnson said.

In Macon County, some parents voiced complaints about the contents of a sex education program and the age groups it targeted.

The parents also argued that they had little control over the materials and information their children received in school.

"The parents wanted more of an abstinence-based program. The program was reviewed, and ... we cleared up the way the parents could review the information," said Gene Young, associate superintendent of Macon County Schools.

School officials also changed the age

level of students in the program to accommodate parents' wishes, Young said.

"We had gone down to the fifth (grade)," Young said. "It was taken out of the fifth."

Some N.C. school districts are implementing specific policies concerning censorship requests, and they also are establishing committees to handle complaints, Stuart said.

However, a recent PFAW survey showed many parents were unaware of these new developments.

"A lot of people aren't informed about (school district) policies," Stuart said.

While the challenged programs are changing to suit demands, so are the people who are making the demands.

Historically, right-wing groups have been the instigators of censorship campaigns. But Stuart said parents now have a stronger role in pressuring schools to ban certain materials.

Mary Renck Jalongo, professor of education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, agreed. "Most people think it's strictly the moral majority (advocating censorship), but it's also from the liberal side," she said.

Paul Hetrick, vice president of Focus on the Family, said that the PFAW was a "left-wing, progressive watchdog" and claimed that past reports by the organi-

zation have contained incorrect and misleading information.

Although he has not seen this year's report, Hetrick said it was possible that the PFAW again misconstrued the facts.

Focus on the Family is one of the conservative groups that the PFAW lists as constantly advocating censorship of specific material.

But Hetrick said Focus on the Family advocates censorship, the monitoring of material already implemented in schools, instead of censorship.

Hetrick also said the organization never challenged any curricula until it received parental complaints.

"We are a sounding board for concerned parents who feel they have no one else to go to," he said. "We're getting about 10,000 letters a day from concerned parents."

Focus on the Family also claims that past PFAW reports incorrectly have portrayed them as an anti-classics, anti-sex education organization, Hetrick said. The organization does not oppose classic literature unless it has been altered.

And Hetrick claims that "we are not against sex education as long as it is sex education ... (but) what bills itself as sex education is actually sex propaganda."

Bush, Clinton race stalls most federal judge confirmations

By Eric Lusk
Senior Writer

Banking on a Bill Clinton presidential victory in November, Democrats in the Senate have put a hold on confirmation hearings for many of President Bush's judicial nominees.

While the Senate confirmed Edward Carnes, the controversial Alabama assistant attorney general, to the bench Wednesday, his acceptance will likely be one of the last until the presidential duel ends in November.

Carnes, who will take a seat on the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, was confirmed by a vote of 62-36, despite charges that he was biased against blacks in death penalty cases.

While Clinton's firm lead in the polls has brought more attention to the future of the federal court system, most observers suggest that typical election-year politics dictates a slowdown in confirmation hearings.

"It's not at all unusual for the Senate to want to slow things down as a presidential election approaches," said William Grimes, a professor at Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles. "If we look back to the 1988 election, some of this probably went on even though Michael Dukakis was trailing. Politics is not new in this area."

Presently, 50 of Bush's nominees to federal courts await hearings with the Senate Judicial Committee, the last step before the entire Senate decides whether to approve an appointee to the bench.

Almost half of the nominees have been waiting for more than seven months to be scheduled for hearings, said Frank Shults, acting public affairs director with the U.S. Department of Justice.

"That's a long time to go without a hearing," Shults said. "These positions

are extremely critical."

Carnes' nomination had been pending in the Senate since January.

U.S. District Court Judge Terrence Boil of Elizabeth City is the only pending N.C. nominee. Boil has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond. He could not be reached for comment.

Although the Senate has slowed the confirmation process in recent months, U.S. Sen. Joe Biden, chairman of the Judicial Committee from Delaware, has said he would continue processing nominations to fill important vacancies.

"Senator Biden has made it clear he will hold nomination hearings as late into the year as possible," said a Biden press representative, who requested that his name remain anonymous. "So far this year, we have held 60 hearings, which is a record in an election year. It's very inaccurate to say Biden is holding up nominations."

David Sellers, a public information officer with the Administrative Office of the Courts in Washington, said 108 empty seats needed to be filled within the federal court system.

Bruce Ledewitz, a law professor at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa., said Republicans also were to blame for the slowdown in filling vacancies.

"We've had an inability to fill our district court in western Pennsylvania for years now," Ledewitz said. "The White House under Bush and Reagan has been slow to nominate. The nominations here in Pennsylvania have just been sitting there for years."

Although the president plays a powerful role in determining the future of the federal judicial system by appointing judges for life terms, a Clinton victory would not revolutionize the courts, Grimes said.

"It's a gradual process to name people to the judiciary," he said. "If Clinton were president, he would give more interest to women and minorities. During a four-year term, he'll be lucky to appoint two or three justices to the Supreme Court, and that's not a majority."

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Pope wants stricter sex crime penalties

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — Art Pope, the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, says he will push for tougher penalties for marital rape, required AIDS testing for rapists and televised testimony by children in child-abuse trials.

Pope, at a series of news conferences around the state Wednesday, said the state should repeal a law that blocks a woman from charging her husband with rape if they are living together.

"Rape is rape regardless of who commits it," said Pope, who faces Democrat

Dennis Wicker in November. "The current law should be repealed, no ifs, ands or buts."

The fears of rape have been compounded by the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, he said.

"Rape victims should at least be given the peace of mind of having the accused rapist tested for AIDS," Pope said. "If the accused has indeed been arrested for a sex offense, then there is sufficient probable cause to require the accused to submit to an AIDS test without violating his constitutional rights."

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Graduate School Seminar
3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Friday
Murphy 111
Conducted by Robert
Kirkpatrick.

Corrections

In the Sept. 8 article "Egyptian medical experts tour UNC," Tereza Faragalla's quote should have read "We are working toward that in Egypt."

The delegation is a group of nursing professionals from Egypt touring U.S. nursing educational centers. The UNC tour was hosted by UNC School of Nursing.

Another Sept. 8 article, "Student Congress leaders consider new redistricting," incorrectly stated why Rep. Ruffin Poole, Dist. 24, withdrew his plan for congressional redistricting. The bills were withdrawn because Poole thought he could not get the necessary 10-percent voter turnout. The DTH regrets the errors.

Campus Calendar

THURSDAY
NOON: CAA Chat with the Coach: Mack Brown will answer questions in the Pit.

3:30 p.m. University Career Services will offer basic information on how to use the UCS office for seniors and graduate students in 210 Hanes.

Study Abroad will have an information session on a spring program in Maastricht, Netherlands, of interest to business students in T5 New Carroll.

4 p.m. BCC Community Volunteer Training Workshop will welcome Safia Madhubuti, professor of education at Northwestern University and founder of the Institute of Positive Education.

5 p.m. American Advertising Federation will have an organizational meeting in 203 Howell.

Tar Heel Recycling Program will meet at Columbia Street Coffeehouse.

UNC Sailing Club will have its fall organizational meeting in 226 Union. \$12 cash for dues is required.

5:30 p.m. Black Interdenominational Student Association will hold a Bible study upstairs in Chase.

Lutheran Campus Ministry will have a communion service with a fellowship meal at 6:15 p.m.

6 p.m. Lutheran Campus Ministry will have a graduate student discussion of Bonhoeffer's "Life Together."

"Brothers," a discussion group for and about African-American male students, will meet in the first-floor lounge of Hinton James. Information: 962-2175.

Presbyterian Student Center will have a student fellowship dinner and program on Habitat for Humanity. Information: 967-2311.

7 p.m. Leadership Development will have an orientation session in 101 Greenlaw.

Women's Club Tennis will have a meeting and pizza party in 210 Union.

Delta Sigma Theta will hold a discussion on campus safety tips in the Sonja Hanes Stone Black Cultural Center office.

Carolina Fever will have a meeting in 100 Hamilton.

UNC Outing Club will meet in 205-206 Union.

8 p.m. La Casa Espanola: Ven al segundo piso de Carmichael para charlar con nosotros.

TAR HEEL SPORTS SHORTS TONIGHT

Men's Soccer
vs.
East Carolina

7:00 pm
Fetzer Field

Hardee's

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