



The average state spends 65 cents per capita on AIDS prevention and treatment, while North Carolina spends 9 cents, The Common Sense Foundation reports.

Speaking up

Nonprofits seek to influence legislative agenda

At a recent legislative seminar for nonprofits sponsored by the North Carolina Council of Churches, advocates urged sector leaders to speak up on issues ranging from campaign finance reform to criminal justice.

By BARBARA SOLOW

Cary

North Carolina nonprofit leaders are gearing up for a legislative session expected to touch on everything from welfare reform to regulation of the state's pork industry.

With the General Assembly back in session, nonprofit staff members,

LOBBYING

board members and volunteers are looking for ways to make their voices heard on measures that will affect their organizations' missions.

At a legislative seminar in February sponsored by the North Carolina Council of Churches, nearly 120 nonprofit leaders from throughout the state met in Cary to share information on the status of particular bills and issues.

Many of those issues - such as the environment and early childhood education - are on Gov. Jim Hunt's "top 10" list of legislative priorities. But others - such as health care and

gun control - have so far failed to appear on the radar screens of state policymakers.

The overall message of the day-long gathering was that nonprofits have to speak up on issues they care about.

"It's really up to people to say that issues like health care cannot go on the back burner," said workshop presenter Lynice Williams, who is executive director of North Carolina Fair Share, a statewide consumer group. "The more stories legislators hear from folks, the better. They've really got to put faces to some of these problems."

One major challenge facing nonprofits is to avoid pitting issues or

causes against one another in a legislative climate marked by fiscal conservatism.

For example, leaders of a workshop on children and families said the price tag for expanding the state's Smart Start program and improving teacher pay - two items Hunt has promised to pursue - is \$600 million.

"That doesn't leave very much in the budget for other, very good things," said Paula Wolf, chief lobby-



Collins Kilburn

ist for the newly-formed Covenant for North Carolina Children.

The North Carolina Council of Churches has chosen four issues as priorities for the current legislative session: welfare reform, health care reform, issues affecting children and young people's access to tobacco.

The recent legislative seminar also featured workshops on campaign finance reform, criminal justice, religion and politics, gun violence, the environment and state-sponsored gambling.

Specific measures for which nonprofit advocates plan to lobby in the area of children and families include:

Look for AGENDA, page 5

In search of support

Some Durham leaders seek payments from Duke

Recent moves by some Durham municipal leaders to pursue payments in lieu of taxes from Duke University are not likely to succeed or to be replicated across the state, university officials say. But some observers worry that as local governments become increasingly strapped for funds, they will be more likely to seek revenues from large nonprofits.

By BARBARA SOLOW

Durham

John Burness is not worried about Duke University's tax-exempt status.

Despite recent moves by a city councilman to seek payments from Duke in lieu of taxes, the university's senior vice president says the balance sheet is clearly on the university's side.

"Duke provides all of its own services - we do our own roads, our own police," Burness says. "And we provide somewhere between \$8 million and \$12 million worth of indigent care out of the hospital - which if we did not, the county or the municipalities would have to pick up."

TAXES

City Councilman Floyd McKissick's proposals for payments from Duke so far have failed to gain widespread support among his colleagues - many of whom dismiss them as little more than mayoral-election-year posturing. But nonprofit leaders are mindful that such attempts may become more common in North Carolina as local governments feel the loss of federal funding for social services and the continued effects of corporate downsizing.

"I think it's a growing trend," says Dan Gerlach, an economist with the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center in Raleigh. "You see reports of [nonprofit] salaries that people think are out of range and that leads them to think, 'Well, why shouldn't those organizations pay taxes?'"

"The trend here is going to be to say, 'Is Duke a member of the community? Is Chapel Hill a member of the community? And shouldn't they pay something back?'"



Putting a tax value on Duke Chapel is one of the challenges university leaders say they would face if they were to make payments in lieu of taxes.

Throughout the U.S., a growing number of municipal leaders are turning to large nonprofits as sources of untapped revenue. In Nashville, for example, six nonprofit hospitals were sent tax bills of \$5.4 million after county tax assessors decided they did not deserve full property tax exemptions.

The city of Philadelphia began a drive in 1994 to encourage nonprofits to make payments or provide services in lieu of taxes - an effort officials say could result in

Look for DURHAM, page 5

Preserving the family farm

Nonprofit cultivates agriculture

The scope of RAFI's work ranges from helping isolated contract poultry farmers build a support network to presenting the issue of life patenting before the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

By KELLY PRELIPP LOJK

Pittsboro

When Mary Clouse's contract to raise poultry was terminated in 1989 by the corporation that controlled her family's farm, she and her husband sought to sign on with one of the other poultry firms that contracted with farmers in their area.

To the Clouses' dismay, they soon discovered they had been blacklisted in the poultry industry, Mary Clouse says.

The Clouses established their Chatham County farm in 1977 specifically for the purpose of hatching eggs with the promise of a lucrative family business.

The Clouses enjoyed raising poultry and did so successfully; theirs was the largest egg hatching operation in the state. However, they concluded that the agreement they had signed with a large poultry firm was one-sided and offered poultry farmers

little if any recourse when grievances arose.

When they questioned some of the corporation's practices, their contract was pulled. Because the Clouses had discussed their troubles publicly - with the media and in research done by the Institute for Southern Studies - they had been labeled "troublemakers," Mary Clouse says.

Never ones to give up easily, the Clouses were determined to make their family farm a success. John Clouse quickly set up a cattle farm, which he still operates.

We're committed to biodiversity of plant life, but also diversity of people who nurture those plants. We're working to help sustain small family farmers, who are really the geniuses of agriculture.

John Justice
Director of Development
RAFI

Meanwhile, Mary Clouse refocused her energies, becoming a full-time advocate for contract poultry growers. Through Clouse's work at the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, she seeks to change the dynamics among growers and the large corporations with which they contract.

"When we lost our contract, this became a personal issue at RAFI," says Clouse, who had been working at RAFI part-time while helping to run the family farm. "People there said, 'We can't let this happen, what can we do?' I told them we've got to do two things. Growers have got to get organized, and they need information badly."

Look for AGRICULTURE, page 5

BRIEFLY

Congressman eyes nonprofit salaries

U.S. Rep. Robert Menendez of New Jersey has introduced a bill to impose salary caps on some nonprofit employees and create a national clearinghouse to offer copies of nonprofit 990 tax forms for a fee. H.R. 239 would limit compensation for nonprofit officers and directors to the level of "cabinet members."

Smart Start moving offices

The North Carolina Partnership for Children - which oversees Smart Start - has moved its offices to 1100 Wake Forest Rd., Suite 300, Raleigh, N.C. 27604. The organization's telephone and fax numbers, respectively, will remain (919) 822-7999 and (919) 821-8050.

Help offered to grandparents

The Orange County Commission for Women is distributing a Grandparenting Packet at libraries, family resource centers and senior centers. It offers grandparents living with children advice on legal, financial, medical and educational issues. Call (919) 732-1524.

Substance abusers to get help

The Bridges Pilot Program offers care for people in Wayne County who have undergone hospital treatment for substance abuse. The service is offered by the Child & Family Services division of the Methodist Home for Children in Raleigh. Call (919) 735-3028.

Governor lauds Work First

In its first 18 months, North Carolina's Work First welfare reform program has moved almost 30,000 welfare recipients into the workforce and has saved taxpayers \$75 million, says Gov. Jim Hunt. Work First sets limits on the length of time clients can receive welfare benefits.

National coalition measures impact

Independent Sector, a national coalition of nonprofits, has launched a Measures Project to gauge the roles and impact of nonprofits in the U.S. The research effort will also focus on how the sector is filling gaps not being met by for-profit or government sectors.