

Gay National News

and related conditions.

HHS reprogrammed the funds at the urging of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), who spearheaded efforts to overcome the financial crisis faced by thousands of persons who depend on federal assistance for AIDS treatments.

Approximately 7,000 people in the U.S. are receiving government assistance under the program to purchase AIDS treatments, including AZT (Retrovir). AZT, which costs about \$8,000 a year at full dose, is the only government-approved drug for directing fighting AIDS.

The \$5 million will be reprogrammed from other AIDS programs within the HHS. "While we don't like to see the money come from already existing AIDS efforts, we believe the financial crisis faced by so many people with AIDS is urgent enough to warrant such measures," said Carlton Lee, HRCF lobbyist.

Efforts to pass legislation earlier in March to extend the subsidy were thwarted by Senators Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), William Armstrong (R-Colo.) and Don Nickles (R-Okla). Helms and the others blocked the action on the bill by threatening to attach "hostile" amendments to it.

NGLTF Hires New Project Director to Secure Recognition of Lesbian & Gay Families

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) launched the only national organizing project on behalf of lesbian and gay families with the hiring of veteran feminist and black activist Ivy Young as Project Director. The Lesbian and Gay Families Project was formed through a unique collaboration between the D.C. based NGLTF and the San Francisco based National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR- formerly known as the Lesbian Rights Project).

The Lesbian & Gay Families Project will educate, advocate and organize for full societal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships and for the protection of lesbian and gay families. The Families Project will

confront barriers facing lesbian and gay partners and parents and will tackle issues such as: securing equal benefits for gay and lesbian partners; fair and equal treatment for gay and lesbian parents in custody, visitation and co-parenting arrangements; passage of non-discrimination laws regarding adoption, foster care, and artificial insemination; securing survivors rights and the right to be involved in medical decisions and treatment for our loved ones.

Give Me Your Gays, Your Lesbians...Yearning to Breathe Free

The Immigration and Deportation Amendments Act of 1989, which would end discrimination against gays and lesbians seeking to immigrate into or visit the U.S., was introduced into the House of Representatives by Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA/4).

The bill, designated H.R. 1280, would remove the current "sexual deviation" exclusion used to block gays and lesbians from entering the U.S. The bill affects tourists, residents aliens or immigrants who wish to become citizens.

The bill would not change the current exclusion of people with AIDS and HIV infection, but it would grant the Department of Health and Human Services authority to waive the exclusion of persons with communicable diseases. HRCF lobbyists said they would seek to broaden the waiver provision.

HRCF's Field Division urges gay men and lesbians to contact their congresspersons to thank them for cosponsoring the bill or encourage them to sign on. Concerned individuals may write their Representatives at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. If you don't know your congressperson, call HRCF's Field Division at (202)628-4160.

Gays and lesbians may also send Congress a message by enrolling in the HRCF pre-authorized Speak Out mail program. For more information, write HRCF Field Division, 1012 14th St. NW, #607, Washington, D.C. 20005

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