

House shifts abortion stand

WASHINGTON — The House, breaking from its previous hard-line stand, narrowly accepted more liberal language on federally funded abortions Saturday night and sent the \$56 billion Labor-HEW appropriations bill to the White House for President Carter's signature.

The 198-195 vote was a reversal of the long-held House stand — reinitiated as recently as Thursday — that federal funds should not be used for abortions except when the mother's life is in danger.

The House accepted compromise language banning Medicaid abortions except in cases of rape and incest and when the woman would suffer severe and long-lasting physical health damage.

When time ran out on the House vote, the electronic scoreboard showed a 194-194 tie. One member switched his vote, prompting anti-abortion Rep. Robert Bauman, Md., to leap to his feet screaming at members who were making last-minute arguments: "This is too important to lobby."

Despite calls for announcement of a final vote, a few minutes went by until the outcome was clear.



Somewhere in Nottingham Forest. . .

It looks as though one of Robin Hood's merry-men has stepped out of time and into south Texas, but actually it is an actor participating in the activities at the Renaissance Festival near Magnolia. The festival will be open weekends through Nov. 5.

Law now monitors foreign purchase of U.S. farmland

WASHINGTON — President Carter on Saturday signed into law a bill establishing a nationwide system of monitoring foreign purchases of U.S. farmland, but warned that the nation's overall trade policies are opposed to unnecessary restrictions on international investments.

The bill directs the secretary of agriculture to evaluate the effects of foreign investment on family farms and rural communities and sets up a system of reporting requirements by all foreign citizens who hold or acquire a significant interest in American farmland.

Carter said many of the nation's farmers have expressed concerns that increased foreign investment in U.S. farm real estate has driven up land prices. He said there have been fears that foreign investors may be more willing to subdivide or divert the land to other uses.

"While recent surveys by the Commerce Department and the General Accounting Office suggest that foreign ownership of domestic farmland is still very low," Carter said in a statement, "I recognized that we need more information on farmland ownership patterns before we reach definite conclusions."

He cautioned that there would not be immediate results from the

studies and that the information would have to be analyzed carefully. "The policy options that arise from such analysis will have to be considered in the light of overall U.S. trade policies, including our opposition to unnecessary restrictions on international investment flows," he said.

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Higher ups' eyed

GSA probe expands to past administrators

WASHINGTON — The chief investigator looking into fraud and mismanagement at the General Service Administration disclosed Saturday he is investigating "very serious" GSA officials who served in earlier administrations, even though the statute of limitations may have run out in some cases.

Vincent Alto, the former Justice Department prosecutor who has headed GSA's internal investigation since May, said much of his investigation is focusing on higher ups within the agency.

"I am looking into very high officials who have been gone from here for several years but who were involved in multimillion-dollar leasing and construction contracts," Alto

said in an interview.

"I'm going back to both the Ford and Nixon administrations, and I'm even going back before that time — not so much from a prosecuting point of view but to develop a history of fraud within the agency."

"It isn't just the past few years that GSA has been the way it is," Alto said. "Corruption at GSA can be traced back to the Truman administration and has proliferated in each succeeding administration."

"I think within a short period of time the flood gates are going to open up and you are going to see the depth of the corruption at GSA going back over many years," he predicted.

GSA officials estimate that at least \$100 million a year is lost through

fraud by the government's \$5 billion building and procurement agency, in addition to more than \$165 million lost annually through mismanagement and waste.

Alto said the government's efforts to prosecute former top GSA officials may be thwarted by the five-year statute of limitations, after which criminal convictions cannot be obtained.

"We've got to be concerned with that, particularly with one higher up," he said. He refused to say who that is.

The investigation thus far, Alto said, has developed considerable evidence proving the Justice Department under the Nixon adminis-

tration knew of wrongdoing at GSA but did nothing to prosecute those believed to be guilty.

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Ray weds - no honeymoon

PETROS, Tenn. — James Earl Ray and a 32-year old divorcee, wed Saturday at Brushy Mountain State Prison. They went their separate ways — he back to his cell and she home to Knoxville — after a "honeymoon" that consisted of a few minutes of conversation under the watchful eyes of guards.

The former Anna Sandhu said she was "very" nervous during the ceremony, conducted by the Rev. James Lawson, a close associate of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Ray is serving a 99-year sentence on his guilty plea to the 1968 King assassination, which he has since recanted.

Ray will not become eligible for parole until 1998.

"I didn't know my right hand from my left hand," the new Mrs. Ray said after the ceremony. "He said to help me. I could feel him trembling with my arm."

A free-lance artist, Mrs. Ray said she will now return to her work. Although the couple will not be

allowed to consummate their marriage, she said she is a happy woman.

"I don't think I've had a day this good in my life," she said.

Conjugal visits are not allowed in Tennessee prisons, but Mrs. Ray will be allowed to see her husband twice a week for four hours each visit.

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