

State

Chief Justice says prison system poor

HOUSTON — Chief Justice Warren Burger said Sunday America's tidal wave of crime is the result of a legal system that allows continuing appeals and an unsuccessful prison system.

Delivering his annual "state of the judiciary" address at an American Bar Association meeting, Burger suggested speedy trials and ending warehousing of prisoners.

"The search for perfect justice had led us on a course found nowhere else in the world," the Supreme Court justice said.

The "deterrent effect" of "swift arrest, prompt trial, certain penalty and — at some point — finality of judgment" would improve the criminal justice system, Burger said.

Burger advocated trial "within weeks of arrest" in uncomplicated crimes, with appeals court review soon after.

He also suggested allowing reopening of criminal cases for review only when there has been a "true miscarriage of justice," regardless of the time elapsed.

Although his suggestion could mean ignoring police and prosecutor misconduct in some cases, Burger said it was needed because "the judicial process becomes a mockery... if it is forever open" to appeals and retrials.

The criminal process, he said, often goes on two, three, four or more years before the accused runs out all the options.

"Even after sentence and confinement, the warfare continues with endless streams of petitions for writs, suits against parole boards, wardens and judges," Burger noted.

The prospect of freedom robs the prisoner of incentives to learn new skills to enable him to re-enter society, Burger said. Inmates should be discouraged from becoming "jail-house lawyers," he feels.

No prisoner should leave prison without at least being able to read, write and do basic arithmetic," he said.

However, he warned that turning the system around will be "long, painful and costly." But, he said, it will be "less costly than the billions in dollars and the thousands of blighted lives now hostage to crime."

The speech took a tone of advocacy that departed from Burger's customary listing of judicial problems.

His comments come at a time when U.S. Attorney General William French Smith has declared violent crime the top Justice Department priority.

Burger said many of the nation's 800,000 prisoners are under 30 and could make a new life if taught a marketable trade.

First time non-violent offenders should be given "generous" use of probation coupled with "intensive supervision and counselling and swift revocation if probation terms are violated," he said. Once released, Burger recommended an "after-care" type of followup used by some European countries.



Staff Photo by Brian Tate

Leisure time

When the outdoors proved inviting due to pleasant weekend weather, these students picked the Wofford Cain Pool on campus to enjoy the springlike conditions.

ACLU leaders: future 'ominous'

HOUSTON — The next decade may be "ominous" for individual freedoms, leaders of the 200,000-member American Civil Liberties Union warned Sunday.

ACLU Executive Director Ira Glasser told an American Bar Association convention that, while each decade experiences assaults on individual liberties, certain periods see combinations of forces to suppress people's rights, and said another such period may be imminent.

Glasser identified forces creating a climate for reduction of individual rights such as the nation experienced during the McCarthy Era and in the 1920s, when the ACLU was founded.

Glasser cited a current national "fear of foreigners and foreign domination" as causing an "overreaction" to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian seizure of American hostages.

Glasser said economic issues are creating conditions under which the middle classes are afraid for their own economic security.

The rise of groups like the Moral Majority with their "militant intolerance," Glasser said, has fueled increased censorship of books, opposition to rights of homosexuals and women and encouraged school prayer efforts.

"The future is indeed ominous, particularly in Congress," John Shattuck, ACLU legislative director, said.

Although Shattuck said economic issues will "undoubtedly dominate Congress in the immediate future,"

he said it was inevitable there would be activity in the near future on bills to allow prayer in public schools, restrict student transportation for integration purposes, limit abortions and other similar areas.

Shattuck said Supreme Court actions over the last two decades have resulted in introduction of legislation to strip federal courts of power to finally decide issues.

Another threatening force, Shattuck said, is the potential passage of the proposed "human life" amendment which he said would go beyond previous congressional efforts to bar federal abortion funding and make it the equivalent of murder.

Such an amendment would also extend into the areas of contraception, Glasser said, facetiously forecasting the possible creation of "pregnancy police" since the use of certain birth control devices could be considered as killing a person at conception.

There are new political factors that favor passage of the amendment, which has been introduced in Congress each year since the Supreme Court gave women the right to an abortion in 1973. However, Shattuck said there were forces that might preclude its passage, the most important being public opinion polls showing citizen support "that remains constant and high" for the right to choose an abortion.

No suspect yet in truck bomb killing

NEW ORLEANS — A bomb ripped apart a pickup truck Sunday in the residential Algiers area, killing the driver.

Police said the explosion which killed Robert Lee Collins, 38, an unemployed commercial diver, was very powerful and apparently a "professional job."

The bomb apparently detonated when Collins turned the ignition key. The blast shattered nearby windows and threw Collins out the door, severing his leg and several fingers. Collins died shortly after being taken to the hospital.

Police said agents from the federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Department were investigating the explosion. Police have no suspects in the case.

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.53	2A	900	.25	4A	525	.24	3A	480	.37	2A+	775	.45	3A	1035
.71	3A	1700	.28	4A	575	.24	3A+	500	.38	3A	825	.46	3A	1200
1.06	3A+	5500	.33	3A+	675	.25	3A+	550	.38	3A+	875	.49	3A	1225
			.44	3A+	1000	.33	3A+	760	.49	3A+	1370	.51	3A+	1425
			.61	4A	1625	.43	3A+	1050	.58	3A+	1700	.54	3A+	1550
			.74	4A	2200	.44	3A	1050	.72	3A+	2350	.64	3A	1575
			1.43	3A+	7200	.45	2A+	975	.72	4A	2400	.75	3A	1725
						.53	3A	1300	.82	3A+	2700	1.06	3A	3390
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.11	4A	120	.25	2A	375	.33	4A	700	.46	3A+	1475	.73	2A+	1775
.12	4A	145	.27	3A	390	.34	4A	750	.47	3A+	1500	1.01	4A+	5500
.13	3A	150	.27	3A+	410	.36	3A+	830	.47	4A	1550	1.04	3A	3950
.16	4A	220	.27	4A	440	.39	3A+	900	.48	4A	1600	1.04	3A-	3500
.18	3A+	250	.28	3A+	445	.41	3A	1000	.49	4A	1650	1.49	3A	5800
.19	4A	285	.28	4A	490	.44	3A	1125	.50	3A	1525	1.72	3A+	7400
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