

# ERA backers lobby in Illinois, cite poll

United Press International  
SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Equal Rights Amendments supporters went into an informal lobbying session with state officials in Chicago Tuesday encouraged by a poll showing more than 60 percent of Illinois' voters favor the ERA.

Republican Gov. James R. Thompson, Democratic Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne and Democratic Senate President Philip Rock were scheduled to attend the Chicago meeting, which was organized by leaders of ERA Illinois. GOP House Speaker George Ryan and other ERA opponents were not invited.

The survey, released Monday by Louis Harris and Associates Inc., showed 62 percent of 801 adults polled at random supported the ERA after hearing arguments for and against it.

ERA Illinois officials said the poll will provide ammunition for discussion at their session.

"I think it's very encouraging," said Edna Schade, president of the group. "Any statistic we can find that there is support will give everyone courage."

Seven women entering the fifth week of their fast for the ERA asked Vice President George Bush, the highest-ranking Republican to back the ERA, to meet with them to rally support for their cause.

However, a spokeswoman for the vice president said Bush's schedule does not permit him to travel to Springfield by Sunday and the administration's anti-ERA stand makes a meeting after Sunday unlikely.

Bush supported the amendment as it was originally worded, but he did not back the extension.

ERA supporters have focused

# Blue Cross loses UT account

United Press International  
DALLAS — Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Texas officials said Tuesday they do not believe the loss of the firm's second-largest account — the University of Texas System — will substantially hurt the insurer's finances.

"UT is a valuable contract because of its size and prestige, and we're certainly sorry to see it go but economically, this won't have much effect on us," Blue Cross President John D. Melton said.

Melton said the UT System contract, which was won by low bidder Aetna Life and Casualty Co. for \$44.3 million, had been a money-loser for Blue Cross.

"We bid the best bid we thought we could live with," he said. He said the Blue Cross bid was about \$400,000 over the Aetna Life and Casualty Co. bid.

Melton and state insurance officials denied a rumor that Blue Cross had filed for bankruptcy.

"Let me assure you that is not correct," William Daves, chairman of the state Insurance Board said.

The Texas Farm Bureau, with 50,000 health contracts, ended its relationship with Blue Cross last October after 37 years. Since then, Blue Cross has lost some of its more prominent customers, including DuPont Co., the Dallas Independent School District and A.H. Belo Corp.

Blue Cross announced about two weeks ago that it was withdrawing from its arrangement with the Alamo Health Maintenance Organization in San Antonio because it was a money-loser.

# Border patrolmen forced sex on two Mexicans, soldier says

United Press International  
EL PASO — A soldier has testified that two U.S. Border Patrol officers forced two Mexican women to have sex with them under threat of arresting him and another soldier.

William E. Ward, a private at Fort Bliss at the time of the

alleged Oct. 18, 1980, incident, said Monday that he and the other soldier had smuggled the two women across the border to have pizza with them at a friend's apartment when they were arrested.

Border patrolmen David M. Davila and Robert M. Jacques are charged with three

federal counts of obstruction of justice and falsification of official reports.

Ward said he and Warren C. Palmer were with the women — Alicia Ortiz and Norma Munoz-Pro — in a bar on the Mexican side of the border when they decided to

cross the border illegal women at first were

he said. He said he learned the day that the officers the women to Davila ment and forced sex on them under a threat the officers would be able for their boyfrien



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