

Court ruling may release involuntary mental patients

United Press International
Thousands of mental patients in Texas could be freed from court-ordered protective custody under a federal court ruling which takes effect Thursday.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge George Kazen in Brownsville, holds that detaining people in protective custody without a warrant is unconstitutional.

It dissolves pending "protective custody orders" and prohibits judges from committing persons who refuse to commit themselves, even though they may be considered dangerous and mentally ill by hospital officials, said Dallas County Probate Judge Joe Ashmore, who has directed hospitals to release patients at midnight on

Wednesday.

"The immediacy of the crisis is that come the 27th, we are going to have people who represent a danger to others (on the streets)," Ashmore said. "It appears that unless some magic is worked out, as of tonight in Dallas county any person committed under an OPC (an order of protective custody) will have to be released."

Ashmore estimated that 50 to 100 involuntarily committed mental patients could be released in Dallas this week because of the judge's ruling.

Under the recently dissolved protective custody orders, a patient would be held for up to 14 days if a doctor determines that the patient is both mentally ill

and a danger to himself or others.

After the two weeks the patient would appear at a hearing with an attorney where the judge would determine whether the patient should be voluntarily or involuntarily committed to treatment.

Without the protective custody orders, no dangerous, mentally ill person could be detained involuntarily for more than 24 hours unless criminal charges were filed, Ashmore said.

Terrell State Hospital Superintendent J. R. Clemons said his staff would try to convince those patients considered dangerous and in need of further hospitalization to voluntarily commit

themselves. But if they refuse, they will be released, he said.

"Usually the people coming here on orders of protective custody would not voluntarily choose to stay," Clemons said. "We would do all we could to try to get them to sign a voluntary admission, but if we couldn't, I wouldn't have any choice but to release the person. That would be a terrible state of affairs, if that's what it comes to."

U.S. District Judge George P. Kazen ruled Nov. 24, 1982, in the case of Luna vs. the Texas Board of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, that "protective custody orders were unconstitutional because patients committed under such orders were denied due process."

Caperton, Texans fed up

PUC reforms proposed

United Press International
AUSTIN — Sen. Kent Caperton Tuesday introduced legislation calling for vast reforms at the Public Utility Commission, including the election of commissioners and the creation of a consumers' representative to be present at regulatory agency hearings.

"The public perceives that the state is not living up to its responsibility in regulating the utility monopolies," the Bryan Democrat said. "What many candidates felt as a visceral reaction was confirmed at the ballot box on Nov. 2 — a majority of Texans are fed up with the current sham of utility regulation."

Caperton's bill is one of two

pieces of legislation that proposes reforms at the PUC. Another by Sen. Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin, addresses many of the same concerns.

The PUC, currently a three-member board with members appointed by the governor, is responsible for regulating electric and telephone rates in Texas.

Gov. Mark White promised reform at the PUC in his campaign, but Caperton said that so far White has not pledged his support for the bill.

Included among Caperton's proposals were:

Abolishment of the controversial fuel adjustment clause, a PUC rule that allows utilities to automatically pass on higher

fuel charges.

The election of three PUC commissioners on a statewide basis. Candidates would be prohibited from accepting campaign contributions from utilities or their affiliates.

The establishment of administrative law judges to preside over preliminary hearings before the commission.

Provisions for management audits and the fixing of profits based on the utility's service and management record.

The establishment of an "independent public counsel" before the PUC.

Specific procedures for forecasting the future needs of a utility and the certification of new plants proposed for construction.

Ancient skull to be exhibited

United Press International
AUSTIN — The skull of a young Indian woman who may have been buried 9,000 years ago in a central Texas bedrock will be placed on display in the Capitol rotunda from Feb. 12-18, officials said Tuesday.

The skull, along with the woman's other skeletal remains, was uncovered by archaeologists on Jan. 4 about 12 feet beneath the path of a proposed state highway, about 22 miles north of Austin, between Round Rock and Cedar Park.

The bones have been taken to a state highway department laboratory in Austin for tests to determine how old they are. Archaeologists say the remains

are possibly the oldest ever unearthed in North America.

Highway department spokesman Bo McCarver said the skull is believed to be that of a woman who died when she was about 20.

"We've had such a number of requests, especially from school groups, that we just decided to go ahead and exhibit the thing in the rotunda because of the number of school groups who visit the Capitol," he said.

McCarver said only the skull will be displayed because the other bones are so fragile archeologists really don't want to move them out of the laboratory.

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General meeting to announce spring semester dance class schedules.

THURSDAY, JAN. 27
7:30 p.m.
267 G. Rollie White
New members are welcome!



Sunday is Smash The Trash Night

50¢ Bar Drinks All Night
Lipstik & Hastings rate newly released music.
Guys \$4⁰⁰ Ladies \$2⁰⁰

Monday is \$1000⁰⁰ Gong Show Night

Winners from Monday nights go to finals worth \$1000⁰⁰. Tonight's winners receive \$100⁰⁰ 1st, \$25⁰⁰ 2nd, Lipstik Shirt 3rd.

\$1⁰⁰ Bar Drinks & Beer
All Night Long \$1⁰⁰ cover

Tuesday is Pajama Night

\$1⁰⁰ Bar Drinks til 10 p.m. and all night if you wear your P.J.s.

Naughty Nighty Contest

\$300⁰⁰ first — \$100⁰⁰ second — Lipstik Shirt 3rd
\$2⁰⁰ Guys — \$1⁰⁰ Ladies

Wednesday is Ladies Night

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