

Even Congress agrees jobs top issue of year

United Press International
WASHINGTON — House Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas lists jobs, energy, defense and agriculture as top issues this year for regional congressional delegations, but said they do not always agree on all of them.

"Hardly ever could you find an issue — with members from such a disparate, heterogeneous mixture of states — on which you could unite," the Democratic leader from Fort Worth said. "But we do have a kind of camaraderie, a loose spirit of understanding."

In an exclusive interview with United Press International, Wright took a look at the important issues this year for the delegations from Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Wyoming.

"I think jobs is the top issue in any other region," Wright said. "Unemployment is considered the biggest problem in our area like anywhere else."

"Some parts of the region are particularly sensitive to oil and gas. Aerospace and military bases are important to use in Texas, at least, and New Mexico partially."

"Agriculture is important, especially to Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri," he said.

But he said the issues were perceived differently state-by-state throughout the South-west and contiguous states.

"For example, in agriculture in Louisiana and parts of South Texas, sugar is important, but it's cane sugar," said Wright. "In the Texas Panhandle, Colorado and Wyoming it's beet sugar. In Louisiana, Arkansas and South Texas, rice is important. In Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and the Texas Panhandle, it's wheat."

He said sometimes portions of states may have more in common than regions within a state.

"The Piney Woods of East Texas have more in common with the old South —

Louisiana and parts of Arkansas — than with West Texas," he said. "New Mexico and parts of West Texas have more in common with each other than with the Gulf Coast."

He said the region's delegations also will be heavily involved in issues of importance to the entire Congress. He predicted the Democrats, at least, would form task forces to study several issues this year.

"The jobs bill, level of military expenditure, the Federal Reserve Board and monetary policy, job training and industrial renewal are the basic ones," he said.

Wright said the region's delegation is part of a new phenomenon for Congress in the 20th century.

"It's new in the sense that it began probably about two years ago," Wright said. "This is the first time the absolute majority of members have less than six years experience. Back in the early days it might have been more common, but not throughout this century."

Nuclear issue lacking 'grass roots education'

United Press International
DALLAS — Nuclear war has become a major issue across the country in Senate hearings, protest marches and now the college classroom.

In the past few years, colleges across the country and around the state have begun teaching the effects and consequences of a nuclear war.

Academics are perplexed by the fact that now, 40 years into the nuclear age, the fear of Armageddon has suddenly become a controversial issue.

What has prompted their concern is the Reagan administration's support for an arms race, and what some political scientists call an ideological commitment to arms superiority among President Reagan and his cabinet.

"What's needed is a halt, a reversal to the arms race. I've argued that a reversal of the arms race is the only strategy that will ensure national security," said Lloyd Dumas, a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas.

During the past two weeks,

UTD has sponsored a series of lectures on "The Hazards of a Nuclear Age." Robert Scheer, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times who is the author of several articles and books on the issue, was the featured speaker.

Stephen G. Rabe, another UTD professor, who along with

students to advocate a nuclear freeze, he believes "they'll be no plebiscite left on buttonpushing day."

"There must be a movement to educate people about nuclear arms. And colleges should play a major role," said Rabe, who teaches the course "Issues on Peace and War."

Other Texas professors have also felt a need to begin a grass roots educational movement. They have formed an organization called the United Campus to Prevent Nuclear War.

At the University of Texas in Austin, a course is taught in the government department on nuclear disarmament by Steve Baker. The professor, who once worked for a Senate staff in charge of drafting the SALT II proposal, said his teaching objective is not to persuade, but to educate students on the potential for nuclear war.

"Where we have gone wrong is that since the mid-70s we have demanded too much from arms control," said Baker. "We have overloaded the expectation. The expectation should be a

more modest one."

Sociology students at the University of Texas are studying "Nuclear Warfare: Its Origins and Consequences." At Rice University, students are studying "Perspectives on the Nuclear Age," a course that examines the nuclear freeze movement and military strategies on nuclear attack and deterrence.

Most professors interviewed agreed that the nuclear freeze issue will become a major movement in the United States within the next few years. But none argue that it will be a student-based movement.

"I see this issue like the 'teach-ins' in the 1960s when students were educated on American involvement in the Vietnam war," said Rabe. "But the colleges haven't been the initiators. The nuclear freeze movement is supported by all segments of society."

A major concern among professors is to educate the public on the issue and in turn, pressure elected officials toward arms reduction in time to prevent a nuclear war.

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Birth experience shared by family

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MADISON, Wis. — Methodist Hospital believes the birth of a child should be a family experience.

The hospital encourages children to be with their parents in the labor and delivery rooms. It is one of few hospitals in the country to allow children to be involved in the birth of a brother or sister.

"There are different variations of the family birth," said Mary Bina-Frymark, R.N., head nurse of the hospital's Birth Place.

"Some children are there for both the labor and delivery. Some may come in just for the delivery," she said. "The variations depend on what the family is comfortable with."

"We've only been doing this with children present for three or four years," she said. "The numbers aren't really that big, but it is becoming more frequent."

Out of 850 births at the hospital last year, about 30 involved children.

There have been no problems so far, Ms. Bina-Frymark said. She said the children are prepared for what they will see.

Parents and their children

attend group pre-natal sessions together. Obstetric nurses lead discussions on topics like how the baby grows in the mother, how it is born, what new babies do and can't do.

The children have access to books and pictures on reproduction and birth, birthing dolls that demonstrate both vaginal and cesarean births, and a slide program explaining the process of birth.

"It's pretty much an individual decision," Ms. Bina-Frymark said. "If the family wants to do it, they are pretty much tuned in to making it a positive experience."

While Methodist Hospital allows children of any age into its Birth Place, other hospitals generally bar children under 12 from the labor and delivery rooms. The prohibitions stem mainly from concern that young children will not understand what is happening.

"It's our philosophy to be family-centered," Ms. Bina-Frymark said. "The ideal way to make it more a family event is to have kids present and let them take in the whole thing."

"It's not something for every family," she added.

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