

State and Local

Decisions threaten 1st Amendment'

Civil rights advocate: Constitution attacked by high Court

By Hal L. Hammons
Reporter

An advocate of civil and constitutional rights addressed recent governmental decisions concerning drug testing and terrorism Thursday night, both of which he considers dangerous to the First Amendment.

Frank Wilkinson, executive director emeritus of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, spoke to about 100 students and faculty members in the Zachry Engineering Center, deploring the recent beatings he says are being administered to the Constitution.

The lecture was co-sponsored by the Texas A&M Civil Liberties Union and the Brazos Civil Liberties Union.

"In 50 years of fighting for civil liberties, I have never seen a time equal to this in terms of threats of repression," Wilkinson said.

He attributed the recent upturn in rejection of constitutional ideals to "coordinate repression" from all branches of government.

"The Supreme Court has been on collision course with the Bill of Rights since 1970," he said.

Wilkinson said the recent upsurge in legislation against terrorism is merely an excuse to silence dissent by activists such as himself.

"Terrorism is a problem in Europe, but not in America," he said.

He spoke out against random drug testing of any citizen who has not displayed cause for suspicion, comparing legislators' reactions with the panic over the communist issue in the 1940s and 1950s.

"It was 'We must not get caught soft on communism' then," he said. "Now, it's 'We must not get caught soft on drugs.'"

Wilkinson said NCARL is non-

partisan, and tries to appeal to both Republicans and Democrats. He explained that both parties have caused major setbacks and advances in the area of civil rights.

NCARL, an extension of the National Committee to Abolish HUAC (the House Committee on Un-American Activities), has contributed to the repeal of several congressional acts. These acts include the 1950 Emergency Detention Act used to send Japanese-Americans to con-

centration camps during World War II, as well as the "no-knock" statute that allowed federal narcotics agents to enter dwellings without showing identification or warrants.

For 20 years Wilkinson has been at the forefront of the causes NCARL supports, and he said the FBI had admitted to compiling 132,000 pages of information and spending \$17 million in its surveillance of him alone.

Man chased by A&M cadet faces charges in burglary of CS home

By Mike Sullivan
Staff Writer

A man arrested by the University Police Department Saturday night and later charged with burglary of a motor vehicle also has been charged in connection with the burglary of a College Station residence, said Bob Wiatt, director of the University Police Department.

The man is being held in Brazos County Jail in lieu of a \$25,125 bond on charges of burglary of a motor

vehicle, burglary of a habitation and failure to identify himself.

Wiatt said the man was chased and caught by a Texas A&M cadet after the student saw him in a car on campus. The suspect was held by University Police for taking a flashlight from the car, Wiatt said.

After the man was taken to the campus police department, officers found several credit cards in his possession that didn't belong to him, Wiatt said.

Wiatt said College Station Police were called and it was discovered that a College Station home had been robbed earlier Saturday night while the family was at the A&M football game.

In that robbery, a microwave, a television set and the credit cards were stolen.

The detective handling the case could not be reached Thursday to comment on whether the other stolen items have been recovered.

In Advance

Club sponsoring debate on need for tax increase

The Texas A&M Debate Society is sponsoring a forum debate on the need for a tax increase to solve the Texas budget deficit Saturday at 1:30 p.m. in 601 Rudder.

Shelly Davies, chairwoman of the forum committee, encourages people to arrive by 1:15, because the doors will be locked once the debate starts.

Two principal speakers will kick off the debate. Anita McDaniel, a senior speech communication major from Houston will debate against the tax, and Sheryl Perkins, a senior computer science major from Houston, will argue in support of the tax increase proposition.

Both speakers will be given two minutes to present their arguments, and then the debate will be opened to the audience, which will be seated on opposite sides of the room according to how they feel about the issue.

"We encourage people to get up and change their seats when they change their minds," Davies says.

The debate will last an hour, and then each speaker will be given the opportunity for a three-minute rebuttal.

At the end of the debate, the Debate Society will take a vote to find out how the audience feels about instituting a tax increase.

Health run to be sponsored by Humana, Med School

Participants in the fourth annual Humana Hospital-Texas A&M Medical School Health Run will be off and running at 8:30 a.m. Saturday at the Medical Sciences Building.

Late registration will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. for a

\$10 fee. Runners can pick up numbers during the same time.

The race will be divided into 5K, 10K and 15K events.

Awards will be given to female and male winners in each age category and event.

Speaker gives tax bill issue to more receptive committee

AUSTIN (AP) — House Speaker Jim Lewis, hoping to speed passage of a tax increase, took the issue away from a hostile committee Thursday and gave it to a friendlier one.

Time is running out, Lewis says.

About six hours after getting the assignment, the House State Affairs Committee voted 7-4 to approve a \$738.5 million, one-year tax bill that would raise the sales tax from the current 4 1/2 percent to 5 1/2 percent.

The plan also would add 5 cents to the current 10-cent-per-gallon gasoline tax.

If the House and Senate approve

the plan by a simple majority, both increases would take effect Jan. 1. But if both chambers approve it by a two-thirds majority, a prospect lawmakers called unlikely, it would take effect immediately once the governor signs it.

The committee-approved measure would also allow cities and counties not collecting transit taxes to add a half-penny to their local sales tax as a means of reducing property taxes.

Lewis predicted the special session would end early next week with House and Senate approval of the

tax hike that would expire next September.

For weeks, Lewis was the main roadblock to tax hikes favored by Gov. Mark White, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby, the Senate and some House members.

But Lewis last week conceded that enough spending cuts wouldn't be made to eliminate the projected \$2.8 billion state deficit. The House Ways and Means Committee, with a Republican majority, then became the roadblock.

Lewis appointed those committee members last year to kill tax bills, its

chairman said, and it was so effective that Lewis on Thursday took the unusual step of referring a similar tax bill to the State Affairs Committee.

"We have the votes on the floor," said Lewis, D-Fort Worth. "I hope we'll send a tax bill to the Senate that is going to be very clean, that they can accept and let us all go home."

The State Affairs Committee voted down proposals to make the tax hike contingent upon legislative approval of a proposed constitutional ban on state income taxes.

Some House members were upset by Lewis' transferring the tax issue

to a different committee, including Ways and Means member John Willy, R-Angleton.

"It's the will of the Senate prevailing again," Willy said.

Sam Johnson, R-Plano, agreed.

"I think he's circumvented the democratic process by doing that," he said.

Tax opponents and backers predicted the House vote would be close.

Ways and Means Chairman Stan Schlueter, D-Killeen, will continue to sponsor the tax measure. He said he has abandoned a plan that would

have included a larger sales tax increase that included dedicated funds for prison construction.

Schlueter said of Lewis' decision to send the bill to another committee, "The speaker did what the speaker had to do to get a bill out."

Lewis said something was needed to get the tax bill moving.

"We've done everything we can to cut back on spending... Now that leaves us short," he said. "We have to find additional revenue. I'm not about to let this state go in the red, write hot checks and lose the bond ratings."

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