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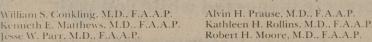
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# World and Nation

# Supreme Court says law helps those with contagious diseases

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court, in a ruling likely to help AIDS victims fight discrimination, said Tuesday people with contagious diseases are protected by a federal law helping the hand-

icapped.

The court, by a 7-2 vote, said businesses and government entities re-ceiving federal aid are barred from discriminating — in employment or against people with contagious diseases.

Rejecting Reagan administration arguments, the court said employers may be violating a 1973 federal law if they fire employees based solely on a fear that those employees may spread a disease.

The decision did not directly involve Acquired Immune Deficiency And the court pointed out it was not deciding whether some carriers of AIDS, those who do not suffer from to ensure that handicapped people symptoms of the disease, are covered by the 1973 law.

But gay-rights groups and other organizations nevertheless hailed the ruling as a huge victory for efforts to protect AIDS victims from discrimination in employment, housing, insurance and health care.

The ruling kept alive a job-discrimination lawsuit against the Nassau County School Board in Florida by Gene Arline, fired as an elementary school teacher in 1979 because she had tuberculosis, an infectious respiratory disease.

Led by Justice William J. Bren-

to ensure that handicapped people "are not denied jobs or other benefits because of the prejudiced atti-

tudes or the ignorance of others."
Brennan said, "It would be unfair to allow an employer to seize upon the distinction between the effects of a disease on others and (its) effects on a patient and use that distinction to justify discriminatory treat-

Jean O'Leary, executive director of the National Gay Rights Advocates, said the decision "certainly bodes well for us.'

"It shores up our position and goes against what the Justice Departnan, the court said allowing bias ment has said," she added. "It moves

us one step closer to obtaining af eral remedy for discrimination." Ben Schatz, director of NGR

AIDS Civil Rights Project, said decision could influence job cases now pending in lower courts.

"My guess is that . . . lawyers both management's side and plaintiff's side are going to have understanding that AIDS-based crimination is illegal," Schatz said think that will be the very clear res of this decision.

In a highly publicized memor dum last year, the Justice Dep ment's Office of Legal Counsels employers do not violate the law by firing employees out of ale even an unfounded one, that it may spread a disease.

# U.S., Soviets continue talks on medium-range missiles

GENEVA (AP) — U.S. and Soviet day that the Soviet Union will no ceed with us to serious discussion of details which are essential to transteams continued talks on mediumrange nuclear missiles and President Reagan said the Americans would present new proposals today, when this round of talks originally had been scheduled to end.

Maynard Glitman and Lem Masterkov led the U.S. and Soviet negotiators in Tuesday's meeting. Soviet spokesman Alexander Monakhov said they talked for about 90 min-utes at the Soviet Mission, but he gave no details.

Max Kampelman and Yuli Vo-rontsov, chiefs of the two delegations, had a luncheon meeting Tuesday to discuss procedure.

During an appearance in the White House briefing room in Washington, Reagan said: "I welcome the statement by Soviet Secre-

longer insist on linking agreement on reduction in INF (Intermediate Nuclear Force) to agreements in other negotiations."
Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet

leader, proposed that the superpowers reach an agreement apart from other arms negotiations on eliminating medium-range missiles from Europe in five years.

Reagan said he would bring U.S. negotiators home for consultations at the end of this week and, "following these dicussions in Washington, I will send a team back to Geneva to take up once again the detailed ne-gotiations for an INF reduction agreement.

He said he had told the American team to begin presenting the U.S. proposals today and added: "I hope that the Soviet Union will then pro-

late areas of agreement in principle to a concrete agreement.

Among issues to be resolved, he said, "none is more important than

We will continue to insist that any agreement will be effectively verifiable," he said.

U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms negotiations in Geneva are in three areas: medium-range missles; long-range or strategic weapons; and the fields of defense and space.

Gorbachev's offer reversed the Soviet position, taken after his Iceland summit with Reagan last October, that agreement on mediumrange nuclear forces must be tied to the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative,

## Officials defend Nancy Reagan as supportive to the president

Reagan, victorious in her campaign to drive Donald Regan from the White House, suddenly is being picwhite House, suddenly is being pictured as everything from "a dragon" to a "power-hungry first lady" who has made her husband appear wimpish and helpless.

But Mrs. Reagan's supporters say it is not provided.

it's nonsense to assert — as one published report did this week - that the first lady has become so powerful she plans to use the remainder of President Reagan's term to press for an arms-control agreement with the Soviet Union.

'That's silly," Mrs. Reagan's press secretary, Elaine Crispen, said Tuesday. "Sure, she's interested in arms control, she's interested in peace. But she's interested in arms control

(Reagan's) planning and his policy and what he's doing with it."

Mrs. Reagan's former press secretary, Sheila Tate, agreed.
"She gets involved with people,

yes. Policy, no," said Tate, a longtime aide now working in public re-

Few people question that Mrs. Reagan has great influence over her husband or that she acts out of an intense concern about his health and his image She often has commented that "all

my little antennas go up" when she believes someone is attempting to take advantage of her husband and that she tries to stop it "by telling

him or telling someone else.' And she has not been reticent in

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nancy only to the point that it affects his recent weeks while the president, eagan, victorious in her campaign (Reagan's) planning and his policy out of sight recuperating from prostate surgery, has been battered by the Iran-Contra controversy.

Many who know the couple might argue over how pervasive Mrs. Rea-gan's influence is. But rare is the White House official or adviser who is willing to have any comments about her attached to his or her

Commenting only on condition they not be named, sources had said for weeks she was leading a

movement to dump Regan.

"She's making it happen,"said one
Republican source prior to the chief of staff's departure last week. A senior White House official said, "It looks pretty obvious, she's going to get rid of him, one way or another.

### Indicators for economy post decline

WASHINGTON (AP) - Th percent in January, the bigge nosedive in 30 months, the com merce Department said Tuesday The steep drop in the Index Leading Indicators was seen b

some economists as an ominous sign that the economy could be teetering on the verge of a recession. But other analysts said that the big January setback should

viewed as a correction after a large December advance.

The 2.3 percent rise in December and the 1 percent drop in January represented the biggest two-month swing in the index i more than 36 years.

Analysts attributed the volatil ity to a temporary surge in spending at the end of 1986 as consum ers and businesses rushed to be new autos and capital equipmen to qualify for expiring tax break Jerry Jasinowski, chief econo-mist for the National Association

of Manufacturers, said the Ja uary leading index report "c clusively demonstrates that co-nomic activity is falling sharplyin the first quarter of 1987." He said business investment

spending is being held back be the loss of tax benefits while on sumer spending is weakening because of high debt burdens.

The leading index, made upo a dozen forward-pointing ed nomic barometers, is designed forecast economic activity six nine months in the future. Three consecutive monthly decline the index can be the signal of an impending recession. Irwin Kellner, chief economic

Manufacturers Hanover Trust in New York, cautioned against reading too much in the one-month decline, which he said was primarily a reflection of buying patterns influenced by the chang-

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