

# Reagan OKs changes proposed for welfare

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan on Thursday signed the first major overhaul of the nation's welfare system since it was created in the Great Depression. He said the new law is a "message of hope" to those mired in a life of dependency and destitution.

But that message to welfare recipients, said the president, also contains a demand from the citizens who pay the bills.

"For too long the federal government, with the best of intentions, has usurped the responsibility that appropriately lies with parents," said Reagan at the signing ceremony in the Rose Garden. "In so doing, it has reinforced dependency and separated welfare recipients from the mainstream of society."

The legislation contains the most sweeping revision of the nation's principal welfare program — Aid to Families

with Dependent Children — since it was created in 1935.

Under the agreement reached after two years of legislative struggle, the government has pledged to provide training and support systems to destitute parents if they take steps to become independent. Each state must operate a Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program to educate, train and find employment for the AFDC recipients. Over seven years, states will be entitled to receive \$6.8 billion in federal matching funds to pay for employment and training activities.

The president touted the measure's work and education requirements, as well as its provisions increasing pressure on absentee parents to pay child support.

Also present for the signing was the chief architect of the bill, Sen. Daniel

Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y.

"I've been waiting 20 years for this day," Patrick said. He added that he hoped its features would take hold fully by the end of the century. Under the complex piece of legislation, various programs have differing starting dates.

Under the bill, states are required for the first time to offer people on welfare a broad variety of education, training and work programs.

Mothers of young children are required to participate. They retain medical coverage for a year after they find a job, and they will be far more likely to get child support payments.

For the first time, the federal government will require all states to pay cash benefits to two-parent welfare families. Only 27 do so now.

Starting in 1994, one adult in each two-parent welfare household must participate in a job search and, if it fails, work 16 hours a week in a state-organized work activity. A young parent may work instead toward a high school diploma.

All states will be required to provide at least some cash benefits to families with unemployed fathers living at home.

Non-custodial fathers will face new pressure for child support payments, with states required to identify more of them and automatically withhold payments from their wages.

Those most likely to feel the immediate effects of the welfare bill are able-bodied women with children aged 3 and over. They are the prime targets of the new JOBS programs to be developed by each state.

## Authorities charge teen in arson case

JEFFERSON, N.H. (AP) — Police arrested a teen-ager and charged him with setting one of two dozen fires that have plagued the White Mountain area recently. The arrest came one day after a former firefighter was accused in several other blazes.

Lawrence Coulter, Jr., 19, of Jefferson, was charged with setting a fire earlier this month at a vacation home in Dalton, two towns away from Jefferson, the scene of most of the fires, police said.

Someone at a neighboring home saw a man walking from the house about the time of the fire and took down the man's license plate number, but state Police Lt. Gary Sloper declined to say if the plate was traced to Coulter.

On Wednesday, police charged Lance Lalumiere, 23, of Jefferson with setting one fire in Jefferson and said they will seek indictments charging him with 15 others. Lalumiere was charged with setting fire to his brother's house in August.

Jefferson has been plagued by 21 arson fires since May. During the period, there have been at least three suspicious fires in nearby towns — the one Coulter is charged with setting and two in August in Lancaster.

# Arab storyteller receives Nobel for literature

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — Naguib Mahfouz of Egypt, an Arab storyteller who chronicled the search for human values from the Nile delta of the Pharaohs to the back alleys of modern Cairo, won the 1988 Nobel Prize for literature Thursday.

Mahfouz, the first Arab writer to win the award in its 87-year history, has been compared to Charles Dickens for his vivid portrayals of poverty.

One book of his was banned in Egypt, and another attacked former President Gamal Abdel Nasser's domestic and pan-Arabist policies.

The Swedish Academy honored him for advancing the art of the novel, a relatively new genre in Arabic literature.

"His work speaks to us all," the academy said.

Mahfouz, 76, was awakened from an afternoon nap at his Cairo home and told the news. He said he was very happy and thankful for the Arab world and added:

"I congratulate the Egyptian people that one of its small people won a big award, (but) it's not too big for Egypt. I hope this will be the first step for our literary generations. We have taken a lot and must now give."

The award continued a recent trend of the 18-member body to seek laureates outside the mainstream of European and American literature.

Wole Soyinka of Nigeria was honored in 1986. Exiled Russian poet Joseph Brodsky won last year.

Mahfouz, the son of a Cairo civil servant, has shown little admiration for contemporary Arab writers, including himself.

Once asked to appraise his work, he said: "Probably like the rest of modern Arabic literature, fourth or fifth rate."

The 1988 prize is worth \$390,000, but it inevitably brings a further bo-

nus in royalties and prestige. Sigrd Kahle, a Swedish specialist in Arabic literature, said Mahfouz could probably use both.

"Still, at his age, he can't support himself as an author, and he's not lacking for enemies," she said.

The Egyptian laureate said his frail condition might keep him away from the Swedish capital, and one of his two daughters or another representative may accept the prize.

The academy commented his work for contributing to "a powerful upswing for the novel as a genre and for the development of the literary language in Arabic-speaking cultural circles."

Though widely read at home, Mahfouz's realism and his reputation as a "free thinker" have dampened his popularity.

Egyptian censors banned his 1959 novel, "Children of Gebelawi," touched on religious themes not acceptable for publication in Egypt. The book was printed in Lebanon, and is still banned in Egypt. A 1967 novel, "Miramar," took aim at Nasser's domestic policies and politics.

But President Hosni Mubarak and other officials sent congratulations Thursday.

Some of Mahfouz's earlier novels were set in ancient Egypt, but had sidelong looks at modern society, the academy said.

The academy also cited "God's World," a collection of stories. "The artistic treatment of the existential questions is forceful and the formal solutions often striking," the announcement said.

In all, Mahfouz's works include 40 novels and collections of short stories, many of them available in English and other languages.

Mahfouz also is credited with more than 30 screenplays, about a dozen of them based on his novels.

# Senate OKs death penalty for drug-related killings

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Thursday voted to allow capital punishment for drug-related killings, as lawmakers lurch past procedural snarls and finally began debating a \$2.6 billion drug bill.

The capital punishment language, retained in the legislation on a 64-25 vote, was just one of many provisions in the 600-page, campaign-season measure that would strengthen the government's arsenal against drug offenders.

The lawmakers easily defeated two other efforts to weaken the death penalty language, and then adopted by an 88-0 vote a provision that would allow fines of up to \$10,000 against people who possess even small amounts of illegal drugs.

The failed effort by liberals to strip the death penalty language from the bill was a major step toward extending federal capital punishment statutes because there is similar language in the harsher, House-passed version of the legislation. Con-

gressional leaders want to send the drug legislation to President Reagan before adjourning for the year in the next few days.

"The death penalty is necessary and long overdue as a weapon in the incredible butchery that is taking place on America's streets," said Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y.

Liberals from both parties, however, derided capital punishment as an ineffective vestige of less enlightened times.

"The desire for vengeance, for eye-for-an-eye justice, is a principle and a mentality unworthy of civilized government and of this body," said Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore.

The bill would allow capital punishment for drug traffickers who kill civilians or law enforcement officers. Hatfield's amendment, which was defeated 64-25, would have removed the death penalty from the bill and replaced it with mandatory life imprisonment without possibility of parole.

# Iranians agree with U.S. leaders on issue of hostage negotiations

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iran has told the United States it is not interested in dealing with unauthorized individuals over the release of American hostages, a top diplomat said Thursday.

Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy said the Iranian message had been part of communications between the two countries conducted through Switzerland and other countries that have diplomatic ties to Iran.

The United States has not authorized any individuals to strike deals with Iran over the release of the hostages, held by pro-Iranian militants in Lebanon, he said.

same channels I referred to that the government of Iran has received that same message, and they realize our position and they affirm they are not interested in dealing with private citizens and unauthorized individuals," Murphy said in testimony before the House subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East.

Murphy did not say when that communication took place.

Former Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr said earlier this month that an emissary for Vice President George Bush had negotiated the release from Lebanon of Mithileshwar Singh, a U.S. resident from India. Secretary of State George Shultz last week denied that and

other reports about negotiations with Iran.

Murphy said the United States has repeatedly made clear to Iran that the continued detention of Americans in Lebanon would preclude any improvement in relations between the two countries.

"There will be no deals made for their release," he said. "They must be returned forthwith."

Asked about reports that the hostages may be held by Palestinian groups, Murphy said the United States did not have any evidence that the Americans are in the hands of anyone but Lebanese faithful of the Hezbollah, or Party of God. Hezbollah is closely allied with Iran.

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