

## Officials prepare to unveil public school funding plan

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN— State leaders plan to outline a public school funding proposal Wednesday that they want lawmakers to approve in an upcoming special session.

Gov. Ann Richards, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and House Speaker Gib Lewis will present the plan at a news conference, said Bill Cryer, Richards' press secretary.

Richards' chief of staff, Paul Williams, has said the proposal would take about \$400 million from school districts in Texas with the most property wealth and funnel it to poorer districts.

It would require voter approval of a constitutional amendment, which first would have to be passed by a two-thirds majority of

the Legislature. The money taken from the wealthier school districts would not be directly transferred to poorer ones, according to a report by the Austin American-Statesman.

Instead, it would go into the Teacher Retirement System. State funds to the Retirement System then would be reduced by an equal amount, and the state money would be given to the poorer districts.

One unidentified source quoted by the American-Statesman said the routing of the money is meant to counter criticism of the proposal as a "Robin Hood" plan.

That label has plagued the current system, in which property tax revenue is shifted from school districts with more property wealth to poorer ones.

The Texas Supreme Court said in January the present system violates the state constitution by imposing a statewide property tax, and by a levying a property tax without voter approval.

The court gave lawmakers until June 1, 1993, to come up with a new plan for equalizing school funding. Cryer would not discuss details of the proposal.

Of routing recaptured money through the Teacher Retirement System, Cryer said, "It's just a mechanism, that's all. I don't think it's a way to fool people or anything else."

Officials also have discussed asking voters to approve putting an equity standard for school funding in the state constitution, as a way to avoid continued court entanglement on that issue.

## Court upholds convictions

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON— The Supreme Court on Monday left intact the criminal convictions of two men who say they should have been allowed to tell jurors they acted in the good faith that they were not breaking the law.

The court, over one dissenting vote, rejected arguments that each man unfairly was denied a chance to have his defense fully outlined to the jury.

Justice Byron R. White voted to hear arguments in the case, but four votes are needed to grant such review.

Frederick A. Gross, president of Systems and Computer Technology Corp. in Malvern, Pa., was convicted in February 1990 of conspiring to violate federal securities law and making false statements to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Prosecutors said Gross conspired to artificially inflate his business' revenue reports to boost the value of its stock. They

said the corporation's stock value dropped by \$140 million after the scheme was publicly disclosed, but Gross insisted he acted in good faith.

Jean Marie St. Gelais was convicted in Houston of six counts of wire fraud in what prosecutors said was a 1984 scheme to get \$13 million in loans for oil and gas drilling. They said St. Gelais misrepresented his and other investors' financial assets.

The investors defaulted on their notes, and St. Gelais used most of the money for unrelated business and personal purposes, prosecutors said.

Gross and St. Gelais both asked their trial judges to tell jurors that acting in good faith, if believed, was a complete defense against the charges.

In each case, the judge refused to give that instruction but did tell jurors the defendant could be convicted only if he acted knowingly and with an intent to break the law.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of

Appeals upheld Gross' conviction, and the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Gelais' convictions.

In their appeals, Gross and Gelais contended they were entitled to a separate jury instruction on good faith.

"The chief objective of a good-faith instruction is to guide the jury in evaluating the evidence presented at trial bearing on the defendant's state of mind," Gross' appeal said.

Two other federal appeals courts have ruled that the jury instruction is required if the defendant wants it, Gross said.

Bush administration lawyers responded in both cases by urging the justices to reject the appeals.

Each trial judge made it clear that someone acting in good faith could not have willfully broken the law, the government lawyers said.

The cases are Gross vs. U.S., 92-205, and St. Gelais vs. U.S., 91-2075.

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## Pork parasite nearing border

Common Mexican tapeworm threatens U.S. meat market

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EL PASO— The pork tapeworm, which thrives in Latin America and Mexico, is showing up along the U.S. border, threatening to ravage victims with symptoms ranging from seizures to death.

The parasite has been virtually wiped out from U.S. meat, but it is one of the most common swine illnesses deep in Mexico, where the infested meat is a staple of the poor.

The same underclass has migrated north to find jobs on the border, bringing the parasite and the sickness— cysticercosis— its eggs can cause, the El Paso Times reported.

"One man, he came in with 80 to 100 cysts on his brain and died with a stroke," said Dr. Hugo Roo y Vasquez, a neurosurgeon in the Mexican border community of Ciudad Juarez.

"This was only in the poor villages before, but people have come to the cities for work and

brought it with them."

The World Health Organization estimates 2.5 million people carry the pork tapeworm and many more harbor the dangerous larvae. The numbers of sufferers in the United States are low, but health officials say reporting of cases is poor.

"Even if you have just one case that permanently damages someone's brain, it's serious," said Dr. Laurance Nickey, El Paso health and environmental director. "If that's you, or someone in your family, that's one case too many."

El Paso neurologist Dr. Albert Cueter said the infection can be prevented with simple hygiene before handling food and after using the bathroom.

"Washing your hands is a very good way to stop it from spreading," he said. "And if you cook pork well, it's not going to give you the tapeworm and the cycle ends."

The pork tapeworm uses hooks and suckers on its head to fasten itself to the host's bowel, where it lives up to 10 years, feeding on di-

gested food and growing up to 10 feet.

When a segment of the tapeworm breaks off during a bowel movement, it can release 50,000 eggs into the feces. Poorly cooked pork or poor hygiene spreads the eggs.

They hatch in the intestine and can cross into the bloodstream. Cysts that form around the larvae usually lodge in the brain and destroy tissue, causing hallucinations, speech and vision problems, severe headaches, strokes, epileptic seizures and, in rare cases, death.

"You can be a completely healthy, happy person experiencing no sign of discomfort," El Paso neurologist Dr. Albert Cueter said. "Then— snap!— you get one seizure and you're frightened to death."

The New England Journal of Medicine reported in September that booming immigration from Mexico and more use of high-tech brain scans produced a big increase in cases diagnosed near the border in the 1980s.

## Baptist pastor blames resignation on conflict

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS— Joel Gregory says he left the nation's largest Baptist church because he feared an open dispute with senior pastor W.A. Criswell would split the congregation.

Gregory, 44, named pastor after a 27-month search, was expected to lead First Baptist Church of Dallas into the next millennium.

But he stepped down Sept. 30 after only 21 months, sending shock waves through the 28,000-member congregation, the 15-million-member Southern Baptist Convention and evangelical Protestantism.

In his first in-depth interviews since resigning as pastor, Gregory told The Dallas Morning News in Monday's editions that his discontent started with uncertainty about when Criswell would step aside.

Criswell, who declined to be interviewed for the story, indicated that he plans to stay on as senior pastor until his 50th anniversary with the church, still another two years away.

That, Gregory said, wasn't what he was led to expect. And it wasn't acceptable. Gregory said that he understood that there would be a "short-term transition" working with the senior pastor, but there was never a signed document.

"Dr. Criswell told me that it would be 'a few months.' Some of the members of the search committee said it would be 'a short time,'" Gregory said.

Gregory said he feared the dual leadership would cause problems. "A Baptist church cannot have two perceived leaders. It leads to ambiguity and tentativeness," Gregory said. "If the issue had been forced, it would have been enormously divisive. There would have been a line behind Gregory, a line behind Criswell— and a lot of people leaving."

He referred to the recent troubles at General Motors, where chief executive officer Robert Stempel was dismissed to pave way for a successor.

"GM didn't suggest that they were going to have two CEOs for four years," he said.

R. Albert Mohler, editor of Christian Index in Atlanta and a fundamentalist leader, described Criswell, 82, as the engine that has driven First Baptist for 48 years.

"The gears on that type of engine do not shift smoothly," he said. Gregory has painted a picture of the breakup that was not a power struggle between the two pastors or even a personality clash. What emerged is rather of an unspoken test of wills.

He seems to feel no bitterness toward Criswell.

"Dr. C and I, neither in public or in private, ever crossed swords on anything," he said. "There is no question that Dr. Criswell yielded the day-to-day operation of the church to my leadership."

Gregory is considered a loyalist to the Southern Baptist fundamentalist cause. After serving as state Baptist convention president for two years in the late 1980s, Gregory's conservative leanings disappointed many moderates. Last year, Gregory became embroiled in a bitter controversy with Baylor President Herbert Reynolds, who wanted the school to be independent of Texas Baptist state convention control. It still rankles Gregory that conservatives lost the battle.

## Sheriff cites innocence in theft trial

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT WORTH— Tarrant County Sheriff Don Carpenter on Monday pleaded innocent to charges of theft by a public servant as jury selection began in his felony trial.

Carpenter is accused of lending a gun from the Sheriff's Department property room that prosecutors say should have been destroyed or returned to its owner.

If convicted, he could receive punishment ranging from probation to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Carpenter, 61, has maintained his innocence since his indictment in January.

"He's confident that he has not violated the laws of this state," defense attorney Joe Brent Johnson said Monday. "His attorneys are confident that he has not violated the laws of this state. We're all confident at this time."

As the trial began in state court, Carpenter was arraigned and made his innocent plea. Attorneys then began questioning 60 potential jurors.

The sheriff also faces seven other felony indictments, and special prosecutor Ray Sumrow said he plans to try all the cases.

Most of the charges accuse Carpenter of illegally taking for himself, or giving away, guns confiscated by his department.

One indictment says he lied to a Tarrant County grand jury about what he did with a weapon.

Carpenter has been on paid leave of absence since his indictments.