

THE BATTALION

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Senate set to vote on minimum wage

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate is poised to vote at last on a minimum wage increase, but there's no guarantee that will end partisan gridlock over the election-year issue.

Before lawmakers left town for their Fourth of July recess, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Minority Leader Tom Daschle broke a long stalemate by agreeing to start debate Monday and vote Tuesday.

But an amendment crafted by conservative Republicans could leave the Senate still hung up in the partisan hammerlock that held it before Lott, R-Miss., and Daschle, D-S.D., cut their deal.

Meanwhile, the House is planning to take up two spending bills — one financing Congress itself and a second covering the departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. It already has passed seven of the 13 spending bills for fiscal 1997. If time permits, the House also will turn to

legislation aimed at discouraging same-sex marriages.

And both chambers will convene in a joint meeting Wednesday to hear an address from newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

President Clinton has threatened to veto the minimum-wage legislation if the chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee, Christopher Bond, R-Mo., succeeds in attaching an amendment exempting employees of companies with less than \$500,000 in gross receipts.

In a letter to congressional leaders, Clinton said the provision would exempt two-thirds of American businesses and branded it a "poison pill."

"Don't be fooled. It's a cruel shell game," Labor Secretary Robert Reich told the National Press Club. "This is their response to the invisible workers of America: 'Here's 90

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Clinton again testifies before video cameras

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton sat before video cameras again Sunday for another Whitewater trial, this time testifying in the case of two Arkansas bankers accused of making political contributions with bank funds.

After attending morning church services with daughter Chelsea, the president returned to the White House for two hours and 20 minutes of closed-door questioning by attorneys for Herby Branscum Jr. and Robert M. Hill and cross-examination by prosecutors.

Afterward, the White House issued a statement reiterating that Clinton is not the first president to testify in a criminal trial and citing U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright's order that officials not discuss Clinton's deposition until after it is shown in court.

"The president has consistently stated that he will provide the court with whatever information he can offer, and today's deposition fulfills that promise," the statement said.

Branscum and Hill are accused of reim-

bursing themselves for contributions to political candidates — including Clinton in 1990 when he ran for governor and in 1991 when he considered seeking the presidency — with funds from their Perryville, Ark., bank.

While Clinton is not charged with wrongdoing, the White House hoped Sunday to minimize political damage from his second testimony before a federal judge in 10 weeks. In April, the president testified for just over four hours in the Whitewater trial of Gov. Jim Guy Tucker and James and Susan McDougal, all of whom were convicted.

The president's critics said Sunday that the sight of Clinton testifying again over Whitewater sends a message to the nation that he isn't being honest about his involvement.

"When's Bill Clinton going to stand up be-

fore the American people and tell them the truth?" Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Republican Conference, said on CNN's "Late Edition." "The public needs to be able to trust the president."

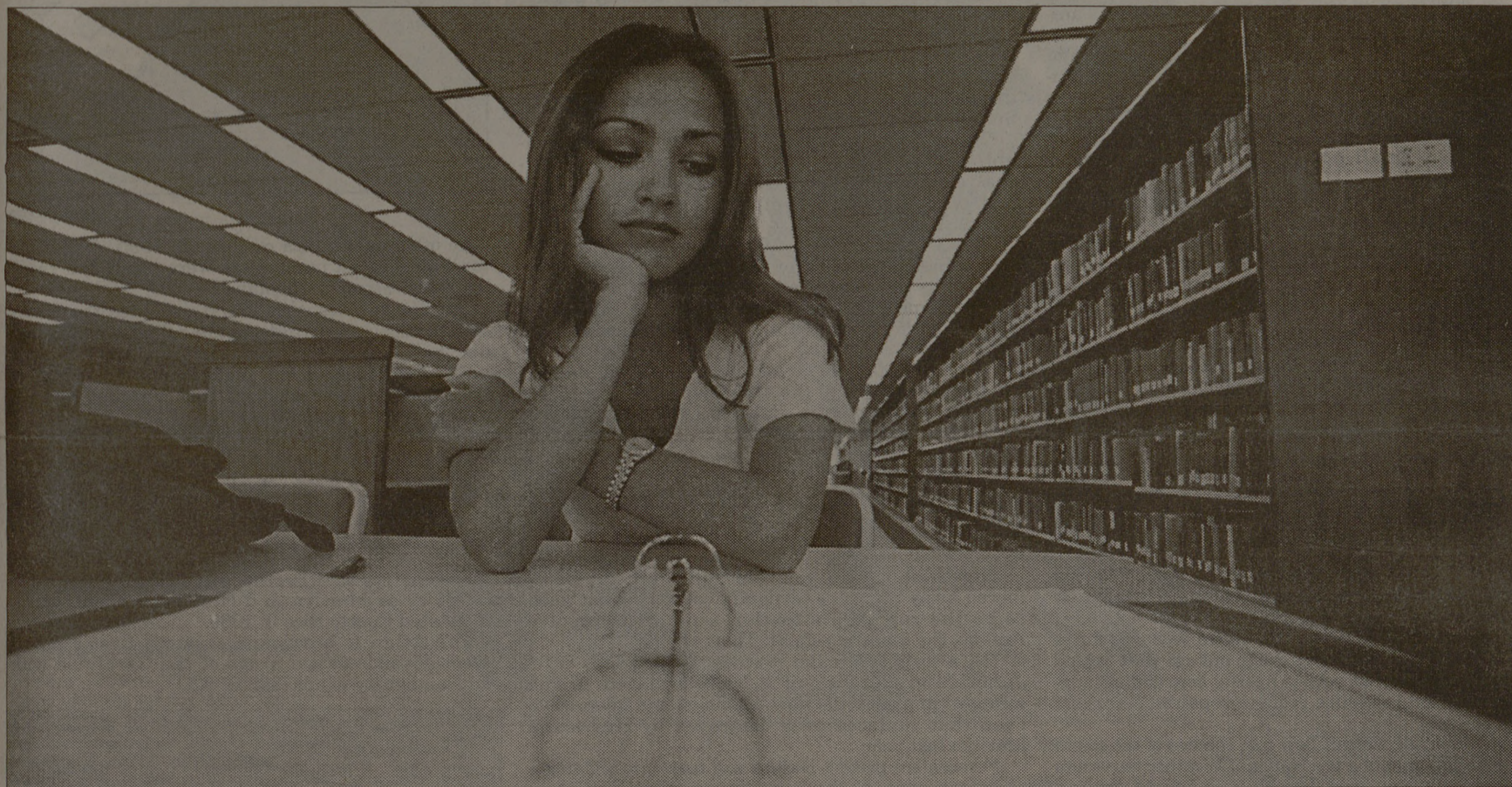
Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and member of the now-defunct Senate Whitewater Committee, defended Clinton, telling CNN that the president did not abuse his power of office — unlike the "direct presidential involvement in the abuse of power" of the Watergate scandal during the Nixon administration.

"There is nothing to suggest that either Bill Clinton or Hillary Clinton has done anything wrong," Simon said. "I think we've wasted a lot of money and I don't think the American people have gotten anything out of it."

Clinton's testimony began at 2 p.m. EDT in the Map Room on the ground floor of the White House residence. The room, filled with historic maps, was the place where President Roosevelt held top-secret briefings during World War II.



CLINTON



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

STUDIOUS STUDENT

Krista Marshall, a freshman business administration major, studies for a history final at Sterling C. Evans Library on Sunday.

Department works to alleviate class shortages

Recently, The Battalion has run four stories on the shortage of seats in Spanish classes; three of the articles focused on the hardships faced by graduating seniors in securing seats. However, I want to assure readers the Modern and Classical Languages department acts in a most responsible manner to ensure graduating seniors are accommodated and everything is done to satisfy student demand.

STEVE OBERHELMAN
GUEST COLUMNIST

During the preregistration period, 80 percent of all seats in Spanish are made available to students. I hold back 20 percent to make seats available for students who need them: majors, minors, teaching field students and graduating seniors. On the first day of class, at 9 a.m., the remaining 20 percent of the seats are opened up for terminal registration at the Pavilion. This process accommodates nearly every student who seeks a seat in a Spanish class. For those graduating seniors unable to secure the class they need, they can sign a force list in the departmental office. On the second day of class and every day after that, I personally run a degree audit on each student and force any graduating senior in the class needed.

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Students, faculty react to Russian election results

By Amy Protas
THE BATTALION

The Russian presidential elections, held last Wednesday, sparked an old rivalry — democracy versus communism. By a margin of 54 percent, democracy won.

Mark Douglass, a sophomore international studies major, said he was relieved when he heard of Boris Yeltsin's victory over Communist Gennady Zyuganov.

"I thought it was great Yeltsin won," Douglass said. "If Zyuganov would have won, it would have been a major setback for the Russian people. This was a point where the Russian people could have decided to not progress with the reforms of the late '80s."

Zyuganov's supporters claimed they were better off economically under Communism.

George Edwards, a distinguished professor of political science and director of the Center for Presidential Studies, said it is easy to be impatient with the economic reforms.

"You can see the difficulty of trying to impose an alien political system on a country," Edwards said. "The complexity of capitalism and the necessity for infrastructure is difficult to do. It takes a lot of time. This isn't something that happens fast."

Edwards said the United States should continue to support Yeltsin.

"Our stance has been to embrace Yeltsin as the best hope for the continuation of democratic reforms," Edwards said. "We have a huge stake in the transformation of Russia. In the long run, it will save us a lot of money if we help them develop markets rather than build nuclear weapons."

Although Yeltsin was viewed as the more democratic of the two candidates, some feel his victory should not be seen as a victory for democracy.

Stjepan Mestrovic, a sociology professor who has written four books about developments after the Cold War in Russia and the former Yugoslavia, said Yeltsin is not the reformer many believe him to be.

"Russia dominated the Soviet empire and wants to restore that empire back," Mestrovic said. "I see no good reason to think just because communism ended, this country would all of a sudden turn democratic. Yeltsin has become a nationalist and is willing to use military force to expand Russia's borders. I don't see this election as a victory for democracy at all."

In the initial election, held

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One of a kind

Aggie Moms president first A&M graduate to serve in top position

By April Towery
THE BATTALION

The first Aggie graduate to serve as president of the Federation of Texas A&M Mothers' Clubs, Susie Powell, has been selected for the 1996-1997 school year.

Powell, a 1993 graduate with a degree in British literature and British history, has been serving on the Aggie Mom's federation board since 1988.

Powell said she was an Aggie even then, although she had not yet earned her degree.

"There's an old saying that Aggies are born and not made," Powell said. "My husband is an Aggie, and two of my daughters are Aggies, so I feel like I've been a part of Texas A&M for years."

Powell has no children who are currently at A&M, but she is a firm believer in the old saying, "Once an Ag-

gie, always an Aggie."

"Many people do not realize that they can be an Aggie Mom without a child currently enrolled," Powell said. "We have Aggie Moms who are in their late seventies. There is a very broad age range, which really provides a lot of different perspective and insight."

President of Aggie Moms is a full-time job with a variety of duties.

During the 1995-1996 school year, the Aggie Mothers' Clubs donated over \$1 million for A&M scholarships and gifts to the University.

"The organization has a little over 7,000 members and 106 clubs in Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, Nebraska and the Washington, D.C., area, so basically I will assist the clubs," Powell said. "I also will interface with the University and go to functions to represent Aggie Moms and support the University."

In order to serve as president of Aggie

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Gwendolyn Struve, THE BATTALION

Susie Powell, class of '93, is the first A&M graduate to serve as President of the Federation of A&M Mothers' Clubs.