

## Court to study Chicago's anti-loitering ordinance

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will decide how far cities can go in combatting street gangs, agreeing Monday to study a Chicago anti-loitering ordinance intended to control the "expanding cancer" of urban gangs.

Chicago contends its ordinance, struck down by a state court, was a lawful effort to head off drug deals and shootings associated with gangs. The 1992 ordinance required police to order any group of people loitering in public to move along if the officer believed at least one was a gang member. Those who refused could be arrested. Gang-related killings

dropped after police were allowed to remove a "visibly lawless element whose very presence ... was often viewed by rival gangs as an invitation to violence," the city's lawyers said.

But those challenging the law say it was too vague and unfairly allowed people to be arrested for innocent conduct. One man was arrested after standing on a sidewalk with his brother, eating carryout sandwiches, said lawyers for the Chicago-area American Civil Liberties Union.

The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case this fall and issue a decision by mid-1999. In ruling the law uncon-

stitutional last October, the Illinois Supreme Court acknowledged, "Criminal street gangs are an expanding cancer in our society."

But the state court said, "The city cannot empower the police to sweep undesirable persons from the public streets through vague and arbitrary criminal ordinances" and cannot make it "a crime to be a gang member in a public place."

Under the ordinance, people who refused to move along after a police order could be arrested and sent to prison for up to six months, fined \$500 and ordered to perform 120 hours of community service.

## Funds for addict program denied

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration refused on Monday to use federal tax dollars to buy clean needles for drug addicts, even though it said needle exchanges fight AIDS without encouraging illegal drug use.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said her scientific endorsement should encourage more communities to start their own needle exchanges.

But Shalala, under orders from the White House, sidestepped a political fight with conservatives and stopped short of providing communities with federal money to let addicts swap dirty needles for clean ones.

Half of all people who contract HIV are infected by needles or by sex with in-

jecting drug users, or are children of infected addicts.

The decision bitterly disappointed AIDS activists, who said they couldn't recall another medical program the government had declared lifesaving but refused to try to pay for.

"They've now said we know how to save lives and we don't want to do what's necessary to save the lives," said an angry Dr. Scott Hitt, chair of President Clinton's AIDS advisory council.

"This administration is now publicly stating how to slow it (the AIDS epidemic) down and is saying they lack the courage to do it."

Republicans continued to argue that needle exchanges were bad policy, and Rep. Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y., said he would

push for Congress to ban federal funding altogether in case Shalala changed her mind.

"Why not simply provide heroin itself, free of charge, courtesy of the American taxpayer?" asked Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo.

President Clinton's own drug policy chief, Barry McCaffrey, spent the weekend arguing that needle exchanges jeopardize the administration's war on drugs and send the wrong message to children.

Asked about the criticisms, National Institutes of Health Director Harold Varmus said that they were being made only by politicians, not scientists.

Every major public health organization has supported needle exchanges.

## Youth foundation buy Reagan's

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Young America's Foundation, a 29-year-old group that promotes conservative values among high school and college students, is buying former President Reagan's beloved California ranch, which he once called "Shangri-La," for use as a center for future political leaders.

The organization, led by Ronald Reagan Leadership Development Program on the property, executive director Short said.

"There's a tremendous movement for the Republican Party and it does leader," said Adm. Spokesperson for the based in Fairfax, Va.

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