

FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



be saved because of new HIV testing requirements approved by the US House on Wednesday.

The proposal, written by Coburn, would eventually require states to begin mandatory testing of newborns.

A compromise between House and Senate negotiators will require the mandatory testing if there is not a significant reduction in infants born with HIV.

"This is a caring approach that says public health policy should be about saving the lives of newborns. There were 7,000 infants delivered to mothers who had the AIDS virus last year.

"We now know that we can save the lives of infants whose mothers carry this deadly virus by giving the drug AZT before birth and up to six weeks after birth. We need to do everything possible to identify infants that have AIDS," Coburn said.

Coburn was the author of the House version that required mandatory infant testing. The Senate version had only voluntary testing by the mother. A compromise has been reached that supports Coburn's position.

The measure will compel states to enact the Center for Disease Control guidelines regarding HIV and pregnant women. If the guidelines fail to make dramatic reductions in the number of AIDS babies within 18 months, states who received Ryan White Care Act funds would be required to enact mandatory HIV testing of newborns.

There is \$10 million authorized to carry out these provisions. Also part of the Coburn amendment was a provision that requires that spouses of people with HIV are notified.

—US REP. TOM COBURN, R-OKLA.
05/02/96

U.S. DEPT. OF HHS AND THE 1996 BUDGET AGREEMENT

■(WASHINGTON) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services priorities are preserved during negotiations with Congress.

— Congress passed a budget last week that restores \$5.1 billion in 1996 for health and social services, education and training, law enforcement, the environment and other key priorities.

— The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services won substantial gain-backs from the House markup of the appropriations bill last June. Total HHS discretionary spending for programs in the Labor/HHS/Educa-

tion appropriation is \$29.4 billion. This is \$1.5 billion above the House mark of last June. This final amount represents an overall cut of 1.3 percent from the FY 1995 level for HHS — whereas under the June House mark, the proposed cut was 6.5 percent.

— Add-backs to the HHS budget account for a large percentage of all government add-backs that the Clinton Administration secured during negotiations with Congress.

—US HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPT.
05/02/96

REVENUE & TAXATION

NICKLES CALLS FOR GAS TAX REPEAL

■(WASHINGTON) Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles today called for repeal of the 4.3 cents per gallon gasoline tax added in the 1993 Clinton tax bill.

"Since gasoline prices have increased over the last few weeks, this is the time to reconsider President Clinton's 30 percent increase in gasoline taxes," Nickles said.

"I voted against that bill and the gasoline tax increase because the federal government was already collecting 14.1 cents per gallon in gas taxes and the increase meant only more money for more big government.

"With all the attention now focused on higher gasoline prices and the economic impact of those higher prices on small businesses, farmers, truckers and individuals, it is time for Congress to repeal the 1993 increase."

—US SEN. DON NICKLES, R-OKLA.
04/30/96

TRANSPORTATION

INHOFE TESTIFIES ON CHILD PILOT SAFETY

■(WASHINGTON) U.S. Senator James M. Inhofe, R-Oklahoma, told the House Aviation Subcommittee Wednesday that existing regulations concerning pilot qualifications were adequate to address legitimate safety concerns which had been raised in the wake of the recent crash which took the life of seven-year-old Jessica Dubroff and two others.

Inhofe, a former member of the Subcommittee, is an active commercial pilot who has been involved in aviation for more than 30 years. In his testimony, he said he would not

oppose HR3267, The Child Pilot Safety Act, which seeks to stop non-pilots from manipulating the controls of an airplane in an attempt to set an aeronautical record. He pointed out, however, that the public perception of young Jessica as being a "pilot" with full responsibility for the airplane was incorrect.

"Despite public perception, Jessica was not flying that airplane," Inhofe said. "Her instructor...was the pilot in command and Jessica was a passenger who manipulated the controls when the pilot determined the conditions were safe to do so.

"We cannot legislate pilot error because pilots are humans and humans make mistakes. HR3267 will not prevent this kind of tragedy, but it may help prevent a more restrictive bill from passing."

"My interest is to enhance the safest mode of transportation—flying."

—US SEN. JAMES INHOFE, R-OKLA.
05/01/96

