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**NSW's Marsden takes aim at Govts
as peers fete his achievements**

Former NSW Council of Civil Liberties president John Marsden was honoured with life membership in front of 300 guests at a Chinatown restaurant in Sydney last month.

The award came as he is personally battling the physical disease of cancer, having in recent years defeated in the courts a cancerous attack on his reputation by television's Channel 7.

Marsden's long public service includes:

- NSW CCL since 1975, including president 84-86 and 93-97, and national CL president 1984-85;
- councillor of NSW Law Society for more than a decade, president 91-92 and delegate to the Law Council of Australia 90-93;
- wide range of service on arts, education, community, swimming and rugby league organisations in the Campbelltown area of Sydney;
- member of NSW Anti-Discrimination Board 88-92; and
- member of NSW Police Board 92-95.

Marsden used his speech in response to the award to lambast both the federal and NSW Governments while making a fervent plea for a national Bill of Rights.

Australia, he said, was "...not the Australia I once knew, not the Australia any more that my father fought for, that my uncles went to Changi for".

He castigated the Howard Government for its treatment of refugees and for introducing new anti-terrorist legislation which took away the basic rights of law-abiding Australians citizens with no proof that it would contain terrorists.

In NSW, Premier Bob Carr had managed to create "more prison beds than hospital beds since he's been in power...".

"Sixty per cent of the people in NSW jails are there with mental health problems, but we're not doing anything to help them," Marsden said.

"In the 1970s we fought to close Katingal*. But the cement cells at Goulburn (now) are 10 times worse.

"Sentencing guidelines have taken away the discretion of judges.

"Lack of access to justice is a key issue for our society: I thought we were all equal before the law – that's gone.

"We need a Bill of Rights in this country," Marsden said.

He quoted Sir Anthony Mason and Sir Gerard Brennan as eminent Australian jurists who both spoke out in favour of a Bill of Rights as long ago as the early 1990s.

Promising to work on his health and his golf game as he winds down his business life, Marsden said he would continue to campaign for a more egalitarian Australia, for pulling down the citadels of "The Establishment", and for the cause of securing a Bill of Rights for Australia.

An array of eminent politicians, judges, barristers, solicitors and movers and shakers from a vertical slice of Sydney society, including Marsden's homosexual friends, aligned to honour the man noted for standing up for principle and fighting – and winning – against Channel 7 when it accused him of being a paedophile.

Marsden becomes the third living recipient of honorary life membership of the NSW CCL. Also present at the dinner were the other two, Ken Buckley and Mary McNeish.

The two dead recipients of the NSWCCCL's highest honour are Jack Ferguson and George Petersen.

– Bill Rowlings

** Katingal was the purpose-built, ultra-security jail at Long Bay in Sydney that was so horrendous that a public campaign succeeded in having it closed in the 1970s only three years after it opened. NSWCCCL was a big part of the campaign.*

Marsden dinner prompts plans for national civil liberties meeting

Leaders of national and State civil liberties bodies used the opportunity of the John Marsden life membership dinner in Sydney last month (see *story above*) to begin planning for a revival of a fully-functioning national CL organisation.

They agreed to hold the first national CL meeting for a decade or more.

Discussions involved NSWCCCL president Cameron Murphy, Australian CCL public face and spokesperson Terry O’Gorman and CLA ACT president and vice-president, Dr Kristine Klugman and Bill Rowlings.

The discussions ranged over what the aims of national meeting might be:

- better coordination between CL groups in Australia to achieve greater influence and impact for the CL messages;
- ensuring all CL groups spoke as simultaneously as possible with ‘one voice’ and one approach, particularly to the Australian Government;
- providing stronger CL organisation in Australia due to the demonstrably increased need for speaking out on new federal and state anti-terrorism legislation;
- promoting and campaigning for a national Bill of Rights; and
- cooperatively monitoring and speaking out on other, day-to-day issues while keeping up an ongoing emphasis on the need for a BoR.

The Victorian group, Liberty Victoria, will also be invited to attend the national CL meeting.

A date and time has yet to be fixed. Canberra or Sydney is the likely venue, with the meeting to be held before September 2005.

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– from Human Rights First email, 03 March 2005

Activist’s death by poison on Garuda flight no closer to being solved

There has been virtually no progress* in the investigation into the death by poison of a leading Indonesian civil and human rights defender six months ago.

Munir died on a flight to Amsterdam on the Indonesian state airline Garuda in September 2004. An autopsy in Holland revealed a fatal dose of arsenic in the activist’s system.

Late last year the Indonesian government approved an independent fact-finding team to work alongside the police investigation.

But progress has been slow*. Despite three weeks’ notice, at the last minute Garuda officials cancelled a reconstruction of the crime planned for January 22.

(The exercise, a standard step in Indonesian police investigations, was postponed a second time on 1 March, though there were conflicting reports of whether this was at the request of the police or the airline).

Garuda has not conducted an internal investigation into Munir’s death despite its pledge to the fact-finding team.

"Garuda officials were very defensive in the (most recent) meeting and seemed to be trying to cover up something," Police Brigadier-General Marsudi Hannafi, chair of the Fact-Finding Team, said on 1 March.

** LATE NEWS, 31 March: an SBS Dateline program on 30 March comprised an excellent summary of the Munir case, and the program’s airing seemed to itself engender action. A suspected agent of Indonesian’s main state spy organisation was arrested just before the program went to air in Australia, and is facing charges. Airline officials allegedly involved in a cover-up are also being investigated.*

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– from NY Times, 12 March 2005

Brits pass anti-terrorism law despite Lordly opposition

From a report by SARAH LYALL

Prime Minister Tony Blair has succeeded in getting his new antiterrorism package

through the House of Lords in mid-March...despite fierce opposition from the Lords themselves and civil libertarians throughout the UK.

The new British law allows suspected terrorists to be 'home-prisoned', without trial, instead of going to jail.

On the day the new laws passed, eight foreign terror suspects were released under strict 'home-prison' bail conditions. They had been held without charges or a trial under an anti-terrorism law passed soon after the aircraft attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001.

A panel of UK judges ruled recently that their imprisonment violated European human rights legislation.

"The new law was intended to get around just such objections, and had become a political minefield," Sarah Lyall reported in the New York Times.

"An increasingly angry Mr Blair insisted that it was essential for national security; his opponents in an unusually combative House of Lords asserted, in the words of the Earl of Onslow, that it was a 'rotten, rotten stinking bill'."

Both the ruling Labor Party and the Conservative opposition wanted to be seen as tough on terrorism because of an expected general election in May.

"In the end, the differences between the parties came down to issues of procedure rather than issues of substance, as the civil-liberties objections of legislators from both parties were swept away in the final rush to exhibit toughness," Lyall reported.

Many of the Lords believe the new law violates basic rights of individuals as enshrined as long ago as the Magna Carta.

The Lords rejected the new Bill four times, sending it back to the Commons.

Finally, PM Blair offered to agree to allow Parliament to review it within a year, and this concession enabled the Bill to become law.

The eight Muslims released at the same time as the law passed have to wear

electronic monitoring tags, report to an official every time they enter and leave their houses, and remain at home between 7pm and 7am every day.

They may not attend gatherings, other than group prayers at mosques, without prior permission. They are not allowed visitors to their own homes – except for their children's friends, their lawyers, tradespeople and health care workers.

No Internet equipment or mobile telephones are allowed in their houses.

They have to notify the UK Home Office when they want to travel outside Britain. They can hold just one bank account apiece, and must provide the government with monthly reports of their financial transactions. They are not allowed to transfer money or send documents or goods abroad without government permission.

One of the men, Syrian cleric Abu Qatada, whose incendiary calls to arms have caused him to be described by British officials as Osama bin Laden's "ambassador to Europe", is also banned from leading prayers or preaching at mosques.

Mr Blair was in danger of losing control of an issue in which he has long held the political upper hand.

Lyall reported that the eight detainees, as well as a ninth also released, had been held in near total secrecy in Belmarsh and other prisons in conditions that had been called Britain's equivalent of Guantánamo Bay. Some had been in prison for more than three years.

UK civil liberties groups say their imprisonment violated human-rights legislation and basic legal principles enshrined in the British Constitution.

"As at Guantánamo Bay, the detainees were never informed of all the charges against them and were not given access to lawyers," Lyall reported.

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– from Straits Times, 15 March 2005

Asian nations want less conflict on human rights

Reported by John Zarocostas

Geneva - Asian countries, spearheaded by China and South Korea, called during the opening session of the world's top human rights body yesterday (14 March) for a shift away from North-South confrontation, with rich countries largely condemning only developing countries for breaches.

'It is my strong conviction that one of the most effective ways of addressing human rights situations lies in strengthening international cooperation and not engaging in condemnation,' John Zarocostas reported Dr Makarim Wibisono, Indonesia's ambassador and this year's chairman of the 53-member UN Human Rights Commission, as saying.

Mr Choi Hyuck, Korea's ambassador, speaking on behalf of the 13-nation Asian group, which includes China and Japan, said: 'The importance of enhancing the effectiveness of the commission and avoiding counterproductive politicisation of its work, especially with respect to country-specific resolutions.'

The Korean envoy said the group instead favours dialogue, consultation and consensus building, Zarocostas reported.

He said that China's ambassador, Mr Sha Zukang, said the commission has turned into a place of naming and shaming of developing countries.

Mr Sha said there has been 'an indiscriminate use of country-specific resolutions targeting mainly developing countries.'

He said the record also revealed a lack of transparency, application of double standards and political motives, and that these factors have led to the loss of objectivity, credibility and impartiality.

A UN report concluded that the commission's capacity had been undermined by eroding credibility.

But the report also emphasised its concerns, Zaracostas wrote, that in recent years, 'states have sought membership of the commission not to strengthen human rights, but to protect

themselves against criticisms or to criticise others'.

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– from AI website, 16 March 2005

China: horrific New Year for execution of criminals

Amnesty International has monitored a significant rise in executions as China celebrates the lunar new year, according to its website.

Amnesty said that incomplete statistics showed there were 200 executions reported in the two weeks leading up to the start of the lunar new year on 9 February.

There were at least 650 executions reported in local media in the months of December and January alone. Both months are considered to be 'normal', without the peaks seen around certain public holidays.

The true figure is certainly much higher, as China refuses to publish full details of all the people it executes.

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– from Straits Times, 17 March 2005

Taiwan introduces fine for pregnant women smokers

TAIPEI: Taiwan will fine pregnant women for smoking in a bid to ensure healthier babies and curb the number of female smokers, health officials said.

The report, by Agence France-Presse, was carried in the Strait Times of Singapore.

According to a draft revision of the Tobacco Hazards Act, women will be fined between NT\$10,000 (about \$500) and NT\$50,000 for smoking during pregnancy.

Retailers who sell cigarettes to mothers-to-be will also face similar penalties.

The fines will be waived if pregnant smokers attend courses to help them quit.

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– from NY Times, 6 March 2005

Rule change lets CIA freely send suspects abroad to jails

Reported by Douglas Jehl and David Johnston

WASHINGTON – The Bush administration's secret program to transfer suspected terrorists to foreign countries for interrogation has been carried out by the US Central Intelligence Agency under broad authority without case-by-case approval from the White House or the State or Justice Departments, according to government officials.

The New York Times report quoted officials as saying that the unusually expansive authority for the CIA to operate independently was provided by the White House under a still-classified directive signed by President Bush within days of the 11 September 2001 terrorist aircraft attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The process, known as rendition, has been consistently criticized by civil liberties and human rights groups for leading to torture, according to people transferred, including Australian Mamdouh Habib.

A senior US official said that the process had been aimed only at those suspected of knowing about terrorist operations.

The official said the CIA had gone to great lengths to ensure that people were detained under humane conditions and not tortured, according to the NY Times report.

But former detainees, including Habib, have described being subjected to coercive interrogation techniques and brutal treatment.

The US official would not discuss specific cases, the NY Times said, but did not dispute that there had been instances in which prisoners were mistreated.

The newspaper quoted former US government officials as saying that since the 11 September attacks, the CIA had flown 100 to 150 suspected terrorists from one foreign country to another, including to Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan.

Each of those countries has been identified by the US State Department as habitually using torture in its prisons.

The NY Times reported that former prisoners claimed they were beaten, shackled, humiliated, subjected to electric shocks and otherwise mistreated during their long detention in foreign prisons before being released without being charged.

Accounts included claims like:

Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian, detained at Kennedy Airport two weeks after the 11 September attacks and transported to Syria, where he said he was subjected to beatings. A year later he was released without being charged with any crime.

Khaled el-Masri, a Lebanese-born German who was pulled from a bus on the Serbia-Macedonia border in December 2003 and flown to Afghanistan, where he said he was beaten and drugged. He was released five months later without being charged with a crime.

Mamdouh Habib, the Egyptian-born Australian who was arrested in Pakistan several weeks after the 2001 attacks. He was moved to Egypt, Afghanistan and finally Guantánamo. While detained, according to Mr Habib, he was beaten, humiliated and subjected to electric shocks. He was released after 40 months without being charged.

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– from UNity, e-newsletter of UN Assn of Australia, 18 March 2005, No 411

Amnesty calls for 'no torture' in war on terror

As the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights got underway, Amnesty International has called on the commission, members and observer governments to reaffirm unequivocally that an absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment applies in all circumstances, including the "War on Terror".

The 61st session in Geneva is running from 14 March to 22 April.

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– from ACLU email alert, 1 March 2005

ACLU files lawsuit which holds Rumsfeld accountable for torture

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has filed a federal lawsuit charging that US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld bears direct responsibility for the torture and abuse of detainees in US military custody.

The lawsuit, filed on 1 March, asks the court to declare that Secretary Rumsfeld violated the US Constitution and international laws.

The landmark lawsuit was filed by a coalition of human rights advocates on behalf of eight former detainees held in US detention facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The lawsuit seeks justice for the men, who were held without charge and suffered severe and repeated beatings, cutting with knives, sexual humiliation and assault, and forcible sleep and sensory deprivation,” says Human Rights First executive director Michael Posner.

None of the men was ever charged with a crime, according to ACLU executive director, Anthony Romero.

He said the lawsuit claims:

- * Widespread abuses did not spring from the spontaneous acts of a couple of soldiers. Secretary Rumsfeld personally authorized the military to abandon (the) nation's historic prohibition against torture and cruel and degrading treatment.

- * Secretary Rumsfeld and other high-ranking military officials failed to stop the torture and degrading treatment of detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo even after credible reports of abuses began to emerge in the media and in military documents.

- * Although Secretary Rumsfeld knew of wrongdoing, and even ordered investigations into the torture of prisoners, he knowingly limited those investigations in a way that blocked high-ranking civilian or military officials, including himself, from being held accountable.

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– from HR First email 10 March 2005

Iranian activist sentenced to 14 years in jail

Iranian human rights activist and ‘web logger’ (blogger) Arash Sigarchi was sentenced to 14 years in prison on charges of "espionage and insulting the country's leaders."

The sentence was handed down by a Revolutionary Court on 22 February 2005.

It ends a stark message to other bloggers and independent government critics in Iran.

Arash Sigarchi, editor of a daily newspaper in the province of Gilan, has run a social and political blog for the past three years.

His blog has from time to time dealt with human rights issues and criticized government policies.

At the time of his arrest he had been protesting the harassment, detention and mistreatment of more than 20 journalists and bloggers in Iran in recent months.

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– from Human Rights First, 10 Mar 2005

Police on trial over disappearance of Thai human rights lawyer

March was the first anniversary of the disappearance of Thai lawyer Somchai Neelaphaijit.

He was representing several groups of Thai Muslims detained after violence in the south of Thailand. Just before disappearing, he filed a claim that police had tortured his clients.

Five policemen have been charged in connection with his disappearance, and their trial is scheduled to begin in August 2005.

Somchai's wife, Angkhana Wongrachen, has successfully fought for the right to call witnesses as a co-plaintiff in the case.

Together with several Thai human rights organizations, she has pressed the Justice Ministry to have the case transferred from the police to the

Department of Special Investigations without success.

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New guide helps unravel the complexities of terrorism law

A very useful guide to Australia's laws relating to terrorism can be found on the University of Technology's Law faculty site.

The publication, entitled *'Be Informed - ASIO and Anti-Terrorism Laws'* can be downloaded from the site:
<http://www.law.uts.edu.au/~utsclc/index.html>

Unfortunately, the date for submissions to the Federal Government's review of the national legislation (by 24 March 2005) has closed.

However, keep an eye out for the parliamentary committee's report.

For further information, you might like to also visit these sites: www.amcran.org and www.civilrightsnetwork.org

– Diana Simmons, 10 March 2005

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– from Straits Times, 10 March 2005

Indon women activists seek revised Islamic code

Reported by Devi Asmarani

JAKARTA - Female activists are pushing the Indonesian government to revive an alternative Islamic code of law banning polygamy and giving equal rights to women in marriage, the Straits Times has reported.

Activists say a proposed code shelved by the government last month after strong objections from conservative Muslim leaders would be good for the country.

The current Islamic code of law was approved in 1991 as the legal basis for any case tried in the Islamic court.

It permits polygamy and forbids inter-faith marriages.

The code also requires a three-month waiting period for women before they can remarry.

There is no such requirement for men.

When the draft of the alternative code was made public last year, it was described as 'satanic' by some Islamic leaders, according to the Straits Times report.

The leaders said the draft code was not in line with the principles of Islam.

They also argued that scholars of Islam were the only people who could interpret Islamic laws correctly.

In the past few years, some provinces and regencies in Indonesia have issued their own by-laws on Islam.

In Aceh, shariah laws have been imposed.

Women must wear headscarves in some towns in West Java, and there is a night curfew for women in one part of West Sumatra.

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– from NY Times, 10 March 2005

US forces tighten the rules on prisoner interrogation

The top American military commander in Iraq has narrowed the set of authorized techniques and added new safeguards to prevent abuse of Iraqi prisoners, the New York Times reports officials as saying.

The new procedures were approved by General George W. Casey Junior on 27 January, have not been publicly disclosed, but are described in the Church report, a wide-ranging investigation into interrogation techniques used at military detention centres in Cuba, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"This policy approves a more limited set of techniques for use in Iraq, and also provides additional safeguards and prohibitions, rectifies ambiguities and, significantly, requires commanders to conduct training on and verify implementation of, the policy, and report compliance to the commander," according to a summary of the inquiry's classified report.

Three senior US defense officials said that the new procedures clarified the prohibition against the use of muzzled dogs in interrogations, gave specific

guidance to field units as to how long they could hold prisoners before releasing them or sending them to higher headquarters for detention, and made clear command responsibilities for detainee operations.

General Casey, who took over the Iraq command about six months ago, said the changes were intended to "tighten up" the interrogation procedures American officials have been using since 13 May 2004.

A senior military official also said the revised procedures reflected the experience military officials had gained since then.

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– from UNity, the Australian UN e-newsletter, No. 410, 11 March 2005

Women's Rights Watch launched by Australian Democrats

A new campaign – Women's Rights Watch – was launched in Australia last month via the Australian Democrats' website.

The Women's Rights Watch website includes:

- an email alert service for those who want to take action in protecting women's rights;

- fact sheets on a range of issues as well as a myths and facts section on abortion and a pro-choice petition; and
- profiles on 'wonder women' - women active in pursuing equality.

The website is at www.democrats.org.au/campaigns/womens_rights_watch/

A national postcard distribution campaign is planned to highlight the following claims:

- Women's total wages are 50% lower than men's.

- A lack of childcare places and its high cost robs around 160,000 women of the choice to work.

- Australia has one of the lowest female workforce participation rates in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

A handful of powerful politicians are trying to limit women's access to termination and contraception.

Australia lacks government-funded paid maternity leave.

The law discriminates against single women and lesbian couples who want in-vitro fertilisation, or to adopt.

Over 100,000 single mothers are living in poverty.

Men hold 70% of seats in Parliament and most positions of power.

Further information: Senator Lyn Allison's Adjournment speech on International Women's Day

E-mail: senator.allison@aph.gov.au

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- from UNity, as above, 11 March 2005

Women's rights 'going backwards' is action network's claim

The Women's Rights Action Network Australia (WRANA) concludes from the results of a recent survey that women's human rights in Australia, while showing progress in some areas, are going backwards.

Caroline Lambert, co-convenor of the WRANA says, "Women from across Australia have reported a drastic reduction in services.

"It is getting harder for them to access health services and to afford housing, education, and legal representation."

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Amnesty International news service, 11 March 2005

Human rights defender spends 75th birthday in prison

Myanmar's longest serving prisoner of conscience, U Win Tin, turned 75 on 12 March 2005.

Arrested in July 1989 and serving a 20-year sentence, he has spent more than one fifth of his life in prison.

"U Win Tin's imprisonment highlights how the justice system in Myanmar has been misused in order to silence peaceful government critics," said Natalie Hill, deputy director of AI's Asia Pacific Program.

"His 75th birthday is a reminder that the consequences of long-term abuses of justice are too great for the authorities to ignore.

"Authorities must stop criminalizing peaceful dissent, and take concrete steps to improve the administration of justice," she is reported to have said.

U Win Tin was imprisoned because of his senior position in the National League for Democracy (NLD).

He was sentenced to further years in prison for his attempts to inform the UN of ongoing human rights violations in prisons in Myanmar.

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– Human Rights First email, 24 Mar 2005

Cuban activist suffers as prison term enters its third year

The health of Hector Palacios, 62, has been aggravated by harsh prison conditions in Cuba, reports say.

Two years ago Palacios was one of 75 human rights advocates, independent journalists and librarians arrested, tried, and sentenced to up to 28 years in prison.

Human Rights First believes that these people have been wrongfully imprisoned solely for openly exercising basic rights guaranteed them in both international and Cuban law.

Currently serving a 25 year sentence, Hector Palacios has advocated for human rights reforms in Cuba since 1980, and is an Independent Librarian.

Independent Librarians in Cuba provide access to books that are banned by the authorities.

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– from ACLU email, 24 March 2005

New report examines impact of drug policies on women and families

A new report, *Caught in the Net: the Impact of Drug Policies on Women & Families*, highlights sky-rocketing incarceration rates of women in the US.

It features stories of women minimally, peripherally or unknowingly caught up in drug activity who are found "guilty by

association" with their husbands and boyfriends involved in the drug trade.

The number of women serving time in state prison facilities in the US for drug-related offences has increased 888 per cent since 1986 according to the Sentencing Project.

US Bureau of Justice statistics show that more than 1m women are currently in prison, in jail, or on parole or probation.

"We (are) a nation of locked-up moms, where women are the invisible prisoners of drug laws, serving hard time for someone else's crime," said Lenora Lapidus, director of the ACLU Women's Rights Project.

The report was co-authored by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Break the Chains: Communities of Color and the War on Drugs, and the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law.

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– email from Prof. Jan Quarles, Murfreesboro Tenn, 30 March 2005

New US State law means students could sue for 'untolerated' beliefs.

Reported by JAMES VANLANDINGHAM of the Florida Alligator publication

TALLAHASSEE, Florida, USA – Republicans on Florida's House Choice and Innovation Committee voted along party lines in late March to pass a bill that aims to stamp out "leftist totalitarianism" by "dictator professors" in the classrooms of Florida's universities.

The Academic Freedom Bill of Rights, sponsored by Republican Dennis Baxley, passed 8-to-2 despite strenuous objections from the only two Democrats on the committee.

The bill has two more committees to pass before it can be considered by the full Florida House.

Promoting the bill, Baxley said a university education should be more than "one biased view by the professor, who as a dictator controls the classroom", as part of "a misuse of their platform to indoctrinate the next generation with their own views".

The bill sets a statewide standard that students cannot be punished for professing beliefs with which their professors disagree.

Professors would also be advised to teach alternative "serious academic theories" that may disagree with their personal views.

According to a legislative staff analysis of the bill, the law would give students who think their beliefs are not being respected legal standing to sue professors and universities.

Students who believe their professor is singling them out for "public ridicule" for instance, when professors use the Socratic method to force students to explain their theories in class "would also be given the right to sue".

Dan Gelber, a Democrat, warned of lawsuits from students enrolled in Holocaust history courses who believe the Holocaust never happened.

Similar suits could be filed by students who don't believe astronauts landed on the moon, who believe teaching birth control is a sin or even by religious medical students who refuse to perform blood transfusions and believe prayer is the only way to heal the body, Gelber said.

"This is a horrible step," he said.

"Universities will have to hire lawyers so our curricula can be decided by judges in courtrooms.

"Professors might have to pay court costs – even if they win – from their own pockets. This is not an innocent piece of legislation."

The staff analysis also warned the bill may shift responsibility for determining whether a student's freedom has been infringed from the faculty to the courts.

Similar bills are being considered in the Ohio and Tennessee State legislatures.

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CLA ACT preparing submissions on two police matters

CLA ACT is preparing submissions to two ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Legal Affairs inquiries:

a) Police Powers of Crowd Control – due by 2 May 2005

b) Sentencing in the Criminal Jurisdiction – due by 30 June 2005

Preliminary research has started into these issues. Any members willing to comment on the draft submissions, please advise.

Also, any interstate/overseas readers with experience and materials on the topic are asked to email them to the Secretary CLA ACT at the address shown at the top of this document.

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Publicity posters readied for unis

CLA is designing several posters for display at the Australian National University and the University of Canberra, calling for students and staff to join CLA (ACT).

The aim is to form one or more university chapters, with current student/political adviser Anthony Williamson as chief contact and organiser.

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Meetings with Chief Minister and to form student chapter scheduled

CLA ACT President Kris Klugman advises that two important meetings are scheduled for this month:

ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, 2.30pm April 21: re CL/HR and a review of the first year of the Bill of Rights in the ACT; and

Prof Hilary Charlesworth ANU 11am April 26: re forming CLA student chapter at ANU.

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Major function in early planning stages: CL celebrity sought

Planning has started for a major public function – possibly in September/October 2005 – to raise money and awareness of civil liberties in the ACT and Australia.

First approaches have been made to noted barrister Geoffrey Robertson's publishers re a public lecture, which we would try to have televised. We are awaiting their feedback – Robertson is due in Australia around that time to promote his latest book.

If Robertson is unavailable, we welcome suggestion of another public figure we could approach.

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Membership drive letters to be sent to solicitors

A new letter has been drafted to send to solicitors, inviting their participation in CLA (ACT).

"We are holding dispatch in the hope we can add notice of the major September function with Robertson," President Kris Klugman said.

"We intend to personally visit selected lawyers, as a letter sent to about 50 barristers last year elicited no responses at all.

"Suggestions of who may be worth approaching in the legal profession in the ACT and surrounds are welcome."

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CLArion welcomes contributions: please send us by email any snippets that take your fancy. Just make sure you include the attribution to the source or sources (say, newspaper and bylined author), plus the date of happening and/or publication...and your name and membership details (eg, NSW CCL, or Qld CCL, or whatever).

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