

Debate over values targets PBS

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — With all the talk about an upcoming information superhighway, public broadcasting seems like a narrow country road by comparison.

But federal funding to support the Public Broadcasting Service, National Public Radio and their affiliate stations has become the latest battleground in the ongoing debate over values.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., told current and former Capitol Hill Republican staffers Feb. 16 he would block any legislation that included money for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, adding the latest percussion to a months-long drumbeat against public broadcasting. The corporation is the umbrella organization for public radio and television.

"We've got a fundamental debate about values" such as "public support, lifelong learning," said PBS chief operating officer Robert Ottenhoff.

Public Broadcasting is "as fundamental as a public library or a public school," he said. "In my mind, how do you have a public library in a community with no public support? A public school? A public park?"

To that end, PBS commissioned a poll which showed large majorities wanted PBS to continue.

While Gingrich's views may sway a majority in a Republican Congress, those views seem to be in the minority to Catholic observers of the debate.

Even William Donohue, head of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, who has called for the abolition of National Endowment for the Arts funding, will not go so far as to demand that PBS's federal funds be axed.

"We're still mad about what they did a few years ago," Donohue said, referring to a 1991 documentary, "Stop the Church," about AIDS activists who disrupted a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

"But because we haven't seen the egregious kind of anti-Catholicism (as elsewhere)," Donohue continued, "we're not calling for defunding of PBS."

Privatization of PBS "raises questions about whether the services that PBS provides will in fact continue," said Miriam Crawford, U.S. Catholic Conference director of communications policy. The

Bell Atlantic phone company has already indicated interest in parts of PBS should it be dismantled.

"We also have to ask whether the PBS concept of noncommercial programming will not become more important as we move to a commercial multichannel environment," she added.

In mid-February meetings on Capitol intended to speak on proposed information superhighway bills, Crawford raised the public broadcasting issue.

Of the lawmakers she talked to, "indeed, they had received overwhelming responses from their constituents that wanted to see public broadcasting continue," she said.

Henry Herx, director of the USCC Office for Film and Broadcasting, has to watch TV for a living. He spoke of federal money for public broadcasting as if it were a thing of the past.

"There's no question it could've been better, could've been better managed over the years. They were making efforts; they should have been given the chance to clean house," Herx said.

Less of the \$285 million the Corporation for Public Broadcasting gets from Congress should have gone to bureaucracy and more to programming, which received 10 percent, he said.

Gingrich's charge that public broadcasting is "elitist" is "a terrible misuse of the word," Herx said.

"It's not elitist. Its mission is basically minority," he said. What PBS carries, Herx added, are "the things that commercial television doesn't carry: ethnic, minority, children's — they're a minority — women's interests."

Sister Elizabeth Thoman, director of the Center for Media Literacy in Los Angeles, decried the move to "zero out" public broadcasting, as it's known in budget language.

"I don't see it. Ideas are ideas. All kinds of ideas, liberal and conservative, get their voice" on PBS, said Sister Thoman, a member of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. The notion of cutting off funding "just because there are ideas that don't support your view is ludicrous," she said.



AP/Wide World Photos

Cleaning up

A woman rides a bicycle down a Kobe street in front of a large apartment building in Kobe, Japan, which collapsed during last month's 7.5 magnitude earthquake. More than 5,000 people perished in the quake.

U.N. children's treaty faces opposition

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A U.N. treaty on children's rights signed by the United States Feb. 16 faces increasingly vocal opposition despite the support of the Vatican and children's advocates.

More than five years after it was adopted by the United Nations, U.N. Ambassador Madeleine K. Albright signed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the first formal step in what may continue to be a lengthy ratification process.

The convention, which sets standards for government responsibilities toward children, will eventually be sent to the Senate for ratification. There it faces opposition organized by groups such as the Eagle Forum, the Christian Coalition and home-school associations.

Among the treaty's promoters are the International Catholic Child Bureau, the Children's Defense Fund and Covenant House. Last October, Archbishop Renato R. Martino, Vatican nuncio to the United Nations, sent a letter to a con-

ference on the subject, encouraging the United States to ratify the convention.

When the convention was drafted and approved by the United Nations in November 1989, objections were raised by abortion opponents who wanted protections extended to unborn children.

In agreeing to support the treaty in April 1990, the Vatican noted its reservations on several points related to family planning and parental rights in regard to education and religion. Since then, Pope John Paul II has been one of the convention's strongest advocates.

Among opponents of the treaty is Mary Kay Clark, president of Seton Home Study, a Catholic home-schooling program. She has sent letters around the country urging parents who teach their children at home to press their senators to fight the convention.

Clark said she believes the treaty would infringe on parents' rights to raise their children according to their own morals and standards.

She said she was unfamiliar with why the Vatican supports the convention, and that she based her opposition on

information distributed within home-schooling networks and on her own reading of church documents, including the pope's "Letter to Families" marking the International Year of the Family.

"The documents of the church are very clear on the rights of parents," Clark said. "They come even before the rights of the church in raising children."

She said the treaty would be used to encourage children to defy their parents' wishes about their education. A report by the National Association for Home Education said the treaty would "undermine the family by granting to children 'rights' which would primarily be enforced against the parents."

"I don't see what documents of the Catholic Church could possibly be used to support it," said Clark.

But Lucy Cummings of the International Catholic Child Bureau said the convention specifically recognizes that education could come in various forms, including parochial or home schools. In fact, the goal of such international treaties is to prevent governments from abusing individual rights, she said.

Parish Profile



ELY & LEENE AGENCY

Kenneth George
Anita Ruffalo

315-331-1432
310 Van Buren St., Newark

Newark Office



Marine Midland Bank
100 Church Street
Newark, NY 14513
Tel: 315-331-6767
member HSBC group

BREEN'S BELLS SUPERMARKET

100 Mason Street
Newark, NY 14513
315-331-1388

**PICK-UP SPECIAL
PARTY PACK**
ONLY \$16.99
(plus tax)

- 1 Sheet Pizza W/Pepperoni
- 2 Dozen Wings
- 2 Qts. of Soda

One coupon per order

Not valid with any other offer.
Mention coupon with ordering • Expires 4/30/95
This is a pick-up special at \$16.99, but we also deliver it at \$18.99

"Best Wishes"
Sir William's Men's Shop
217 W. Union Street
Newark, NY 14513
315-331-8953

Quality Traditional Men's Apparel
Special Orders • Tuxedo Rentals
Custom Fitting & Tailoring

"Best Wishes"
**Nancy Pizzirusso
Income Tax
Service**
247 E. Miller
Newark, NY 14513
315-331-7889

There's always a good reason
to come to

The Corner
Good Food & Drink

| | |
|--|---|
| THURSDAY SPAGHETTI \$8.50 FOR TWO Includes Breadsticks & Chianti Salad | FRIDAY FISH TUE \$4.95 OUR FAMOUS 30YR. OLD RECIPE |
|--|---|

Enjoy this area's Best Italian Cuisine
Eat In or Take Out
Air Conditioned • We Accept All Major Credit Cards
Corner Rt. 31 & Rt. 88 Downtown Newark
Call 331-1822
Your Hosts, **The Zappia's**
Serving Lunch Daily • Dinner Monday-Saturday

**SCHULZ-PUSATERI
FUNERAL HOME**
103 Maple Court,
Newark NY
315-331-2125
Thomas Pusateri, Director