

O'Bannon supports tax increase

HARRISBURG (AP) — The state's welfare recipients deserve higher cash grants but they won't get them unless taxes are increased, Welfare Secretary-designate Helen O'Bannon said yesterday.

O'Bannon's comments followed a meeting with members of the Pennsylvania State Welfare Rights Organization, who staged a sometimes bitter news conference earlier in the day to dramatize their plea for more money.

The group urged an increase from about \$360 to \$513 a month for a family of four. But O'Bannon said even a small increase won't be possible unless Gov. Thornburgh proposes additional taxes.

"If he makes a proposal for new revenues, I think I could make a convincing argument for how to appropriate

the funds in the department," the former Public Utility Commissioner said.

State funds totaling \$594 million annually are currently being spent on cash assistance grants to 760,000 people.

O'Bannon said the needed money will not likely be found within the Welfare Department, which currently faces a \$100 million deficit she attributes to underfunding by the Legislature.

"It's a bit unrealistic, within the present framework, to talk about a significant reordering of priorities when you're running with your head underwater already," she said.

As far as a "work-fare" program suggested Monday by a group of House members, O'Bannon said she would prefer to put able-bodied welfare recipients to work at jobs in the private

sector, rather than in government as the legislators propose.

Two spokeswomen for the group of welfare mothers, legislators, community activists and clergymen present at the capitol news conference attacked the "work-fare" idea as reminiscent of slavery.

"We're not concerned with workfare," said Louise Brookins, chairwoman of the state Welfare Rights Organization. "We're concerned with survival."

However, she and co-chairwoman Frankie Jeeter vehemently refused to discuss the issue further, saying they called the news conference to emphasize that Pennsylvania's poor are starving.

"We'll find out if Pennsylvania and the world believe in human rights," Jeeter said.

Amish boy verified as polio case

HARRISBURG (AP) — The Pennsylvania Health Department confirmed the presence of a polio virus yesterday in a four-year-old Amish boy in Cumberland County.

The youth is the first Pennsylvanian outside Franklin County to produce positive results in polio virus cultures. A similar virus has been found in 17 Amish residents of Franklin County, including one young woman who was crippled by the disease.

Health officials said most carriers of the virus do not become seriously ill, but can infect others.

A total of 71 persons, mostly Amish, have been tested since a polio outbreak began in Franklin County and parts of southern Maryland last month. More than 40 dormant cases have been found in the two states and thousands of persons have received special immunizations.

Dr. William Parkin, Health Department epidemics expert, said the Cumberland County youth lives in an Amish set-

tlement near Newburg, just across the Franklin County line. "The boy has no symptoms of polio, but the presence of virus in this individual represents a source of infection from an unimmunized person," he said.

The boy was the only person with the virus among 39 Amish who underwent a new round of testing in Franklin, Cumberland, Lebanon and Lancaster counties.

Parkin said further tests are being conducted among Amish residents of Juniata, Mifflin, Montour, Centre, Clinton, Somerset and Adams counties. It takes several days to obtain results from test cultures.

More than 2,300 of the 3,000 residents in Franklin County's Upper Path Valley received polio immunizations, but only 34 of those doses were given to members of the Amish sect.

The Amish, a breakaway Mennonite sect, generally avoid all drugs and other outside influences.



Cold all under

The sisters and pledges of Triangle fraternity celebrate Valentine's Day in an unusual manner. They stole a pair

of underwear from each of the brothers at Traingle and strung them across the mall last night.

Senate gives nod to 13 Thornburgh appointees

HARRISBURG (AP) — The Senate confirmed 13 members of Gov. Thornburgh's cabinet last night, leaving only five of the top state government jobs to be filled.

The nominees, all subjected to Senate hearings over the past several weeks, were approved without any debate.

Welfare Secretary Helen O'Bannon and Environmental Resources Secretary Clifford Jones were the only ones to attract negative votes.

O'Bannon was confirmed 45-4, with

Sens. Edward Early, D-Allegheny; Leonard Bodack, D-Allegheny; Frank Pecora, R-Allegheny; and Richard Tilghman, R-Montgomery, voting no.

Early was the lone dissenting vote against Jones' nomination.

Approved 49-0 were Attorney General Edward Biester; Education Secretary Robert Scanlon; Adjutant Gen. Richard Scott; Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell, a Penn State trustee; Banking Secretary Ben McEnteer;

Commerce Secretary James Bodine; State Secretary Ethel Allen; General Services Secretary Walter Baran; PennDOT Secretary Thomas Larson, a former Penn State professor; Revenue Secretary Howard Cohen and Community Affairs Secretary William Davis.

Insurance Commissioner-designate Harvey Bartle III was approved last night by the Insurance Committee. A vote on his nomination is expected next week.

Still to be confirmed are Aging Secretary-designate Gorham Black Jr., State Police Commissioner-designate Daniel Dunn, Health Secretary-designate Gordon MacLeod and Labor and Industry Secretary-designate Myron Joseph.

In other action, Senate Democrats refused Thornburgh's request that several hundred minor nominations made by Gov. Shapp in the closing days of his administration be returned to the

governor's office. All of the nominations were approved by 27-22 party line votes.

"There is a new governor on the scene whose nominations these are not," Republican Floor Leader Henry Hager said.

"It's a hand from the past trying to write on the new governor's page," he said, adding that voters gave Thornburgh a mandate to start off with a clean slate.

Democratic Floor Leader, Edward Zemprelli, also a Penn State trustee, said the appointments should be confirmed because they were made while Shapp was in office. The senator acknowledged that he wants Democrats named to the posts as Shapp had intended.

Zemprelli added that if Thornburgh wants to block the nominations he can merely refuse to certify them when they reach his desk.

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