

# Wofford pledges aid for Chinese refugees

YORK (AP) — U.S. Sen Harris Wofford has promised to assist attorneys defending 118 Chinese men being detained in York after their boat ran aground in New York Harbor.

"I share your concerns and will see what I can do to help," Wofford told the lawyers Monday during a visit to York for a town meeting.

The lawyers said they are distraught that administrative law judges have used U.S. policy to reject asylum requests from all but one of the detainees at York County prison.

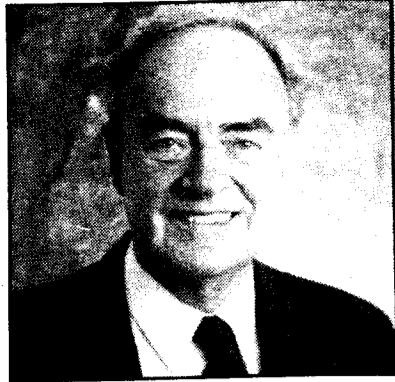
Lawyers also told Wofford a York County manufacturer has offered jobs to any Chinese from the group whose asylum applications are granted. The Immigration and Naturali-

zation Service seized almost 300 Chinese people as they left a broken-down freighter trying to smuggle them into the United States.

It placed them in prisons along the East Coast to await hearings. The detainees in York staged a three-day hunger strike.

"I don't intend to take issue with barring illegal immigration from the sea," Wofford said. "Once here, there is a whole new status with being on our soil."

Most say they are seeking refugee status to escape China's rule of one child per family. They face beatings, imprisonment, forced sterilization and possibly death if repatriated, attorney Craig Trebilcock told Wofford.



Harris Wofford

"If these guys go back and disappear in a few months, it will be a black eye for the United States in the international community," Trebilcock said.

Wofford opposed renewing China's most-favored nation trade status during a congressional vote earlier this year.

# New school strip-search policy created

By JEFFREY BAIR  
Associated Press Writer

PITTSBURGH — A school system and attorneys for six students who say they were improperly strip-searched agreed yesterday on a new search policy after a federal judge indicated he would rule in favor of the students.

The strip-searches were part of a fruitless drug investigation at Ben Franklin Junior High School in New Castle, about 50 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. Six students filed a lawsuit after being searched.

Under the policy, agreed upon after six hours of negotiations between attorneys for the New Castle Area School District and the American Civil Liberties Union, no strip-searches may be made of children in kindergarten through grade six.

The new policy also requires independent confirmation of tips that a student is carrying contraband before a strip search can be conducted. The policy also designates strip-searches to be a last resort and requires school officials to take less intrusive measures, such as searching a locker or asking a student to empty his pockets, if they suspect wrongdoing.

"Officials were basically conducting searches at their discretion," said Witold Walczak, executive director of the ACLU Pittsburgh chapter. "The searches did not meet constitutional standards."

The ACLU supports the lawsuit by the seventh- and eighth-grade students against the New Castle Area School District, eight school board members and four educators. According to court papers, the students were removed from class and forced to pull up their shirts and pull down their pants.

The searches were prompted by a student informant who said he saw several boys smoking marijuana on the football practice field. A second informant then named the boys who are suing. They were searched five hours after the first tip but no drugs were found.

Yesterday's agreement sets the district policy on strip-searches, but does not resolve the lawsuit.

"We want to send a signal to school districts who would otherwise act irresponsibly," said Amy Williams, attorney for the students. "This way, they will look at the New Castle policy."

Nicholas DeRosa, assistant superintendent and a defendant in the suit, said he was "totally satisfied" with the new policy.

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