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Classes on AIDS under fire

Hill probe sought of 'pro-gay' slant

By Rowan Scarborough
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

At least two congressional panels plan to investigate the Clinton administration's mandatory AIDS education for federal employees in light of reports that the curriculum promotes the homosexual lifestyle.

Rep. Robert K. Dornan, California Republican and chairman of the House National Security subcommittee on personnel, said he will hold hearings later this spring.

"I'm going to go on the House floor to beg federal workers of courage to come to me anonymously and help me make a case file," Mr. Dornan said. "It's not AIDS education. It is advancing the homosexual agenda. The homosexual has cleverly used a venereal disease, and they used it brilliantly to their advantage to promote the homosexual cause."

The House Government Reform and Oversight subcommittee on civil service has begun a preliminary inquiry, a staffer said.

"These are things that really don't belong as mandatory training and have nothing to do with AIDS in the workplace," the staffer said.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia may take a look at the program after the "Contract with America" is completed, said his spokesman, Tony Blankley.

"It sounds like the typical hideous things that liberals do," Mr. Blankley said.

But the White House defended the program, which was targeted to reach 2 million federal employees and is due to end in the coming days. President Clinton signed an executive order creating the program in September 1993.

"It went very well and was very positively received," said Richard Sorian, spokesman for the White House National AIDS Policy of-

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fice, which coordinated the far-reaching network of "training-the-trainer" sessions and education. "There's been very good feedback from employees. We're very pleased."

He said he could not defend the conduct of every trainer but believes the education will be effective in preventing AIDS.

Mr. Sorian said there is no program cost for the "Federal Workplace AIDS Education Initiative" because the training was bankrolled from each department's existing budget for worker education.

Conservative groups have criticized the initiative as "pro-gay."

The Washington Times yesterday published excerpts from government training manuals that tell instructors to break down any resistance to the teaching based on religious beliefs.

The documents portray people opposed to condom distribution in schools as "partisans." They tell teachers to use nonjudgmental words such as "sex partners" instead of "husband and wife," and "injecting drug user" instead of "addict."

Trainer candidates had to discuss their views on "homosexuality for my child" as part of a scoring system to see if they were suitable.

Critics claim the test was designed to exclude all but pro-gay trainers.

Some federal workers — who, for fear of reprisal, spoke only on the condition that they not be identified — complained of being subjected to graphic talk about sex practices.

A Defense Department worker said her class included a slide on "sex toys" and flavored condoms.

A second department employee said he walked out of his session, offended by what he considered a too-intimate discussion for a mixed group.

Another worker said her instructor told participants it was likely that their grandmothers had engaged in anal sex as a form of birth control.

Concerned Women for America, with 600,000 members nationwide, is urging the Republican-controlled Congress to investigate the program.

"This initiative has proved to be little more than a thinly veiled effort at re-educating and re-orienting people's views and values," the group said.

Grace Paranzino, a nurse with the U.S. Public Health Service who has conducted federal AIDS training in Pennsylvania, said some trainers do devote too much of the discussion to homosexual sex practices. She said she avoids going over the line.

"We strictly discuss AIDS transmission, prevention and risk reduction as well as federal workplace policy as they relate to HIV and AIDS," she said. "You must also keep in mind when we talk about HIV and AIDS, it is a sexually transmitted disease, and therefore you cannot ignore it is sexually transmitted."

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