Health groups line up against tobacco deal

By Jessica Lee
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Leading public health groups coalesced Tuesday against legislation that would protect cigarette makers from certain lawsuits.

But the tobacco industry warned that without such protection, it wouldn't voluntarily agree to restrict its advertising and marketing.

"We oppose granting the tobacco industry immunity against liability for past, present or future misdeeds," former surgeon general C. Everett Koop and former Food and Drug Administration chief David Kessler said in a letter to House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

The letter commits 20 medical and public health groups to work for comprehensive tobacco legislation based on its impact on public health. It represents the first time the groups have taken a united position on the tobacco bill.

The industry, meanwhile, hardened its insistence on some protection from lawsuits, which it regards as an essential part of any national tobacco deal.

Last June, the industry negotiated a deal to settle lawsuits pending in 40 states and restrict its advertising and marketing practices in exchange for limited immunity from lawsuits. Congress would have to approve the deal before it could become law.

Industry spokesman Meyer Koplow told reporters that if Congress passes legislation lacking "essential liability provisions, at a minimum, you're not going to get the industry to voluntarily give up things."

Koplow warned that the industry might return to practices such as cartoon advertising if Congress fails to grant protection from lawsuits. It will also challenge in court any provisions the industry considers to be unconstitutional, he said.

Among the legal protections sought by the industry are a ban on future class-action suits, a prohibition on lawsuits by insurance companies or other third-party payers and a $5 billion cap on annual liability payments.

But Koop and Kessler argued that Congress is under no obligation to negotiate with the tobacco industry. "Congress should not alter the legal system in any way that would weaken its ability to protect the public health or permit the tobacco industry or others to engage in any behavior that otherwise would be condemned," they said.

In addition to Koop and Kessler, the letter was signed by leaders of such influential groups as the American Medical Association, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

▶ Tobacco ads, 1B

USA TODAY · WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1998

Health Experts Oppose Legal Protection for Tobacco Industry

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 — Two of the nation's leading authorities on public health, C. Everett Koop, the former Surgeon General, and David A. Kessler, former Commissioner of Food and Drugs, said today that they opposed giving tobacco companies protection against lawsuits.

A lawyer for the tobacco industry said later that without such legal protection, the companies would fight in court any effort by Congress to restrict their advertising or prevent them from marketing cigarettes to teen-agers.

The competing news conferences, held with Congress in recess this week and lawmakers undecided about how and whether to proceed with antismoking legislation, came on the same day that the Journal of the American Medical Association published two studies about the influence of tobacco advertising on smoking among young people.

One study found that tobacco companies advertised brands popular with young people in magazines that had a high proportion of teen-age readers. The other study concluded that exposure to cigarette advertising was a significant factor in whether teen-agers took up smoking.

At their news conference on Capitol Hill, Dr. Koop and Dr. Kessler presented a letter to Congressional leaders calling for "fundamental changes in tobacco policy based solely and exclusively on what is good for the public's health without making unnecessary concessions to the tobacco industry."

Their letter was signed by representatives of 20 organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, American Heart and Lung Associations and the National Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

Dr. Kessler, who is now dean of the Yale Medical School, was especially emphatic in his opposition to giving the tobacco companies legal protection. "For the first time, Congress needs to enact tobacco legislation without asking the industry's permission," he said. "There should be no concessions to this industry."

He repeatedly avoided answering whether he would change his mind if such concessions proved to be the only way to obtain restraints on tobacco advertising.

Last year, the tobacco industry signed an accord with the attorneys general of about 40 states in which the industry agreed to restrict advertising and take other steps to limit smoking. The accord is being rewritten by Congress.

In it, the companies agreed, among other things, to stop advertisements featuring cartoon characters or celebrities, to discontinue outdoor advertisements and to restrict advertisements in magazines often read by teen-agers to text-only, black-and-white layouts.

In exchange, the agreement prohibits class-action lawsuits, limits claims for punitive damages based on past industry conduct and puts a ceiling on how much the companies would have to pay each year in compensatory damages.

As more and more documents come out showing the extent to which the tobacco companies tried over the years to promote smoking by young people, the industry has lost almost all support in Congress. Lawmakers have expressed reluctance to grant the concessions to the companies contained in the agreement.

"Their effort to target 14-year-olds is frankly reprehensible," Speaker Newt Gingrich, Republican of Georgia, said last week. "I think that they are weaker than they have ever been in this city, and I think that there is virtually no sentiment for in any way listening favorably to the tobacco companies."

But without protection against lawsuits, said Meyer Koplow, a lawyer who represents the industry, the companies would never voluntarily agree to restrict their advertising. To do so outside a comprehensive settlement, Mr. Koplow suggested, would be a violation of antitrust laws.

And if Congress tried to impose the advertising restrictions over the opposition of the industry, Mr. Koplow said, the companies would argue that their right of free expression had been violated and would tie up the matter in court for years.

In St. Paul today, in the first state case against the tobacco industry to reach trial, jurors heard the former top researcher for the Philip Morris Companies refuse to answer dozens of questions in videotaped testimony.

The Associated Press said the researcher, Thomas Osdene, 70, repeatedly invoked his Fifth Amendment rights during the hourlong questioning about his work for the nation's largest cigarette maker.

The New York Times
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1998

Tobacco Ads' Role In Teen Smoking Meets Criticism

By Jeffrey Taylor
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON—Public-health authorities released new studies they said show that cigarette companies target young people in advertising, and the ads make teenagers more likely to smoke.

The advocates underscored their opposition to granting the industry protection from civil lawsuits, as contained in the proposed $368.5 billion tobacco settlement.

Especially vocal were Dr. C. Everett Koop, former surgeon general, and Dr. David Kessler, former Food and Drug Administration commissioner. "Given all the evidence that has come to light recently, it is simply not credible for Congress to grant this industry any limits on immunity," Dr. Kessler said.

Other advocates, including William Novelli and Matthew Myers of the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, left open the possibility of supporting strong legislation that has some liability protections. That aligns with the Clinton administration's position.

A tobacco-industry lawyer reiterated the industry's resolve to actively oppose any legislation that doesn't provide legal relief for cigarette makers. Attorney Meyer Koplow also said Congress couldn't unilaterally enact many of the reforms in the proposed settlement with states and public-health advocates without violating the Constitution.

The studies appear this week in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The first, by a doctor at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and professors at Boston University and Harvard Business School, suggests that the makers of certain brands popular among teens are more likely to advertise in magazines with a high percentage of young readers.

The second study, by professors at the University of California at San Diego, concluded that teenagers with moderate exposure to cigarette ads were about twice as likely to experiment with cigarettes as teens with less exposure.

FCC May Alter Payment Plan For Licenses

By Bryan Gruley
And Elizabeth Jensen
Staff Reporters of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators are preparing to make small but significant changes that would aid wireless companies that haven't been able to pay billions of dollars for licenses they won in a government auction two years ago.

Bidders in the Federal Communications Commission auction offered $10.2 billion for licenses to use the airwaves to provide a new generation of wireless phone service. But last year, many said they couldn't pay on the FCC's installment plan, and the commission adopted a plan letting bidders choose among four options to pay or relinquish their licenses.

Now, in response to pleas by several companies, the FCC is considering changes that would give bidders more flexibility in choosing an option and allow them to forfeit less of the money they have paid the government, agency officials said. "We want to make sure that this spectrum is put to work for the American consumer as quickly as possible," FCC Chairman William Kennard said.

Commissioners are almost certain to postpone a Feb. 26 deadline for companies to choose among payment options. "We're not going to make changes and then give companies only a week to digest them," one FCC official said.

That news didn't sit well with one wireless provider, **AirGate Wireless LLC** of Atlanta, which was outbid for the licenses in question. "We're disappointed the commission seems more concerned about helping individual companies who voluntarily bid for these licenses, rather than promoting competition, which would best be served by a quick reauction," said Shelley Spencer, an AirGate director.

But **General Wireless** Inc., Dallas, which has sought protection under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code for its units holding the wireless licenses in question, praised the potential changes. "Any movement toward a commercially viable solution is positive," said Dennis Spickler, vice president and chief financial officer, although he said the options are unlikely to work for General Wireless because of its bankruptcy status. The company, which bid $1.1 billion for licenses in markets including Miami and Atlanta, is expected to file a reorganization plan shortly.

NextWave Telecom Inc., the largest holder of the troubled licenses, declined to comment.

After the auction, winners were unable to raise money to pay for the licenses, stalling the construction of several networks intended to compete with established cellular-phone companies. Officials now think the auction is likely to raise no more than $5 billion for the Treasury.

re
pay
turn
forgiv
a "full-b
for anythi
The return
tioned. The p
mony between
Hundt, who favo
and the three other

Now, with Mr. Ke
commissioners, the F
justments. Currently, bi
one payment option for a
nationwide; the FCC is cons
them choose different paymen
licenses in different metropoli
For example, a licensee could en
full-buyout option in Los Angele
walking away from licenses in Atlan

Also, the FCC is considering let
bidders use more of their down paymen
depending on which option they choose. Currently, bidders that choose "disaggregation" can use just half of their down payment toward buying licenses they keep, forfeiting the rest. The FCC is considering letting them use as much as 70%.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1998

CAPITAL BRIEFS

Courts need neutral experts, justice says

Judges in some cases should appoint independent scientific experts to help advise the judge on unsound or unreliable scientific testimony, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer said Monday.

It's important that legal decisions be based on sound science, and judges have to be gatekeepers to separate the solid evidence from junk science, Breyer said.

He told the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Philadelphia that he welcomed their offer of a pilot program to help federal judges find neutral experts. But he told reporters later that there probably aren't a lot of cases where there's a need for outside help. "That isn't a cure-all, and it can't be used widely," he said.

Breyer didn't cite specific cases but mentioned such recent legal issues as the right-to-die and environmental pollution.

PAULA JONES SUIT: Kathleen Willey, a former White House employee who reportedly says she was groped by President Clinton in 1993, asked a friend to lie about the accusation, the friend's lawyer said Monday. Lawyer John West says his client, Julie Hiatt Steele of Richmond, Va., has told Clinton's lawyers that Willey asked her last year to say that Willey had reported the purported encounter with Clinton at the time. But Willey didn't actually relate the story until last spring, when she wanted Steele to corroborate it to a news reporter, West said. The issue arose as part of the sexual harassment lawsuit filed against Clinton by Paula Jones. Jones says Clinton exposed himself and asked for oral sex in a hotel room in 1991 when he was Arkansas governor and she was a state employee. He denies it.

PAPARAZZI BILL: Persistently following a person to get a picture with the intent to sell it would be a federal crime under a bill to be unveiled today by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., the *Los Angeles Times* said. The proposal has backing in Hollywood, but some civil libertarians say it likely is unconstitutional.

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT: Two leading public health advocates — former surgeon general C. Everett Koop and former Food and Drug Administration chief David Kessler — today are expected to oppose granting the tobacco industry immunity from the legal consequences of past, present or future wrongdoing. Their stand highlights a lingering split in the public health community over the content of any new tobacco-control bill. Groups such as the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and National Center for Tobacco Free Kids also oppose broad immunity from lawsuits for tobacco companies. But the groups say they will endorse some legal protections in order to get comprehensive tobacco controls.

— Jessica Lee

POLITICS: Texas Gov. George W. Bush headed a poll of Republicans in New Hampshire, site of the first presidential primary in the year 2000. The survey by RKM Research and Communications found 23.4% supported Bush; publisher Steve Forbes got 17.6%; Jack Kemp was third at 14.5% and Lamar Alexander had 11.1%.

▶ In the Ohio race for the open Senate seat of Democrat John Glenn, who is retiring, Republican Gov. George Voinovich had a 59%-31% lead over Democrat Mary Boyle in a poll by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

▶ Rep. Frank Riggs, R-Calif., launched his campaign for the GOP nomination for the Senate seat held by Democrat Barbara Boxer. Riggs will face state Treasurer Matt Fong and businessman Darrell Issa in the June 2 primary.

By Paul Leavitt with wire reports

Morgan cries foul at 'Star' Clinton story

Lorrie Morgan is angrily denying a tabloid story that says she and **Bill Clinton** had a necking session in a limousine in December and that he later barraged her with phone calls.

The country star says she is "seeking legal recourse" in response to the article in the Feb. 24 *Star* magazine, calling it "totally fabricated. ... The only accurate information ... was that I joined him (Clinton) onstage for the Christmas tree lighting in Washington, D.C. President Clinton has only been a complete gentleman in my presence."

Adds Morgan's manager, Susan Nadler. "I was there with her the whole time and she never spent a moment alone with the president. He was never in the limousine."

The *Star* did not return a call seeking comment.

By Kitty Bean Yancey

USA TODAY · TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1998

Unfiltered Defiance

With Tobacco Industry's Support, California Bars Increasingly Allow Patrons to Violate Smoking Ban

By William Claiborne
Washington Post Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES—Egged on by a smokers' rights group heavily funded by the tobacco industry, a growing number of California tavern owners are thumbing their noses at the nation's only statewide ban on barroom smoking, allowing patrons to light up and blow smoke in the face of authority.

Although the six-week-old smoking ban provides for escalating fines for bar owners who allow smoking, reports from around the state indicate that enforcement by local jurisdictions mostly depends on response to complaints. Even at that, it has been spotty at best, with compliance in many areas but open defiance in others.

Some jurisdictions have sent health inspectors or fire marshals to check on complaints. But many local governments, lacking adequate resources, have merely mailed warning notices to alleged offenders upon receiving a complaint. Moreover, while bar owners are required to ask offending patrons to stop smoking, they are not required under the law to eject them or take other steps to enforce the ban. As a result, many bar operators acknowledge that they signal their intentions by smiling when they ask a patron to refrain from smoking and then turn their back on violators.

"The law requires us to post the signs and inform the customers that they are not supposed to smoke. We're not required to eject them," said Beverly Swanson, owner of the One Double Oh Seven Club in Santa Cruz. "People in bars are smoking. You can call it civil disobedience, but you can also call it being backed into a corner and trying to keep your business alive."

Jim Keenan, owner of the Nite Hawk Tavern in Sacramento, said, "Most of my customers comply, but if someone lights up, I will not confront him. There's nothing in the law that says I have to confront or eject a smoker."

In the first court test of the ban, the owner of a bar in Roseville, northeast of Sacramento, pleaded not guilty Friday to a charge of allowing patrons to smoke and was scheduled for a nonjury trial on March 13. In a courtroom packed with fellow tavern owners, Bill Ostrander, 70, who faces a $100 fine if convicted, said, "I fought a war to keep this country free. The state didn't buy that bar. I bought that bar with hard work."

More than 100 bar owners recently gathered in Sacramento to form an association and discuss rebellion strategies, including raising a legal defense fund for members cited under the ban and pulling the plugs on state lottery ticket-dispensing machines in taverns as an expression of their anger at state officials.

The group's contention that at least stand-alone bars without restaurant facilities should be exempted from the no-smoking law received a boost from Gov. Pete Wilson (R), an occasional cigar smoker, who publicly suggested last month that smokers should have "some sort of sanctuary" and that bar owners should have the option to allow smoking.

Similar coalitions to repeal the ban are being formed elsewhere in the state, some of them with the help of the National Smokers Alliance and the Sacramento branch of the New York-based Burson-Marsteller public relations firm, which long has had close ties with the tobacco industry.

"Rebel, revolt, resist. Bad laws should not be obeyed," headlined one missive published by the National Smokers Alliance, a tax-exempt, nonprofit group headquartered in Alexandria, Va. Since its founding in 1993, the alliance has received more than $42 million from three of the biggest U.S. cigarette manufacturers.

Deftly sidestepping the potentially dicey legal problem of suborning lawbreaking, the alliance put quotation marks around the call for defiance and attributed it to a newspaper columnist's commentary on a similar smoking ban in bars that was overturned last year in Toronto.

But the message was not lost on smokers from Humboldt County on the Oregon state line to San Diego County on the Mexican border, who view barrooms as their last refuge in a state with some of the strictest anti-smoking laws in the United States.

At J.P.'s Bar and Grill in Santa Monica, for instance, drinkers were urged to go outside to smoke for about a week after the ban started Jan. 1. Then a "Repeal the Ban" placard went up next to the state-issued "No Smoking" sign near the door. Now, patrons find a pall of smoke hanging in the air and ashtrays on every table.

"You know that's illegal," said a bartender one night this week as she handed a smoking patron an ashtray and flashed a conspiratorial smile.

The defiance campaign and an intensive legislative lobbying effort guided by one of the world's largest public relations firms prompted the state Assembly last month to vote for a suspension of the measure for at least two years. Although the repeal effort faces much stiffer opposition in the state Senate, the initial legislative victory appears to have encouraged bar owners to step up their public demonstrations and organizing activities with the help of the Smokers Alliance and tobacco industry money.

According to financial statements filed with the California Attorney General's Office, the alliance received $42 million between its founding in 1993 and 1996, during which it paid Burson-Marsteller more than $4.4 million.

The alliance's senior vice president, Gary Auxier, said his "grass-roots" group's three largest sources of funds are the Philip Morris, Brown & Williamson and Lorillard cigarette companies. He said the alliance also receives funds from tobacco industry-related firms, such as cigarette lighter manufacturers, hospitality industry contributors and dues-paying members.

Auxier and the alliance's president, Thomas Humber, both came from Burson-Marsteller, where they handled tobacco company accounts.

The National Smokers Alliance has supplied more than 3,000 California bars with posters urging an overturn of the ban and coasters that patrons can sign and mail to their legislators. The alliance also is distributing a biweekly "Prohibition News Update" and a monthly newsletter called "The Resistance," Auxier said. He said the alliance last week also hired a Sacramento lobbyist, Fred Taugher of Public Policy Advocates, to "get an intelligence-gathering process" in the state capital.

But Auxier denied that his group is encouraging lawbreaking.

"We haven't at any point even suggested people engage in civil disobedience. Do we report on it? We sure as heck do, because it's obvious that it's out there. But we're not encouraging it," Auxier said.

Stanton A. Glantz, a medical professor at the University of California at San Francisco and a leading anti-smoking activist, accused the tobacco industry of attempting to reshape its image as "responsible corporate citizens" in Washington by offering huge tobacco lawsuit settlements while "playing incredible hardball" in California.

"The fact is, they're out there encouraging people to break the law. It's one thing for Mohandas Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. to encourage people to engage in civil disobedience and it's another thing to have one of the biggest multinational corporations in the world inciting people to break the law," Glantz said.

Ann Wright, spokeswoman of the American Cancer Society's California division, which fought for the bar-smoking ban, also said Auxier's disclaimers were disingenuous.

"I think they're out there stirring the pot. It's an organized effort aimed at a small, vocal group, and that machine is rolling," Wright said. "But we've taken on the tobacco industry before and we'll do it again."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read Post coverage of the tobacco industry, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's Web site at www.washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1998

POLITICS

Christian Coalition Leaders Back Ashcroft

It's settled. The Christian Coalition has surveyed its leadership and decided that Sen. John D. Ashcroft (R-Mo.) should be the next president and Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (R) should be his vice president.

As for the Democrats, they should just forget about the next presidential election.

The poll of 65 Christian Coalition state chairmen and other top officials was conducted last weekend during the coalition's annual conference in Virginia Beach. They were given a list of about 45 names, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, "basically every candidate whose name has been bandied about in the media," said a coalition official.

Ashcroft, who was named first or second choice on 29 ballots, was the clear winner, followed by Huckabee with 16 first or second place mentions. Other top vote getters, all Republicans, were Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes and Rep. J.C. Watts (Okla.) with 15 votes each, Texas Gov. George W. Bush with 10 and former Vice President Dan Quayle with eight. Ashcroft, whose conservative message on social issues appeals to the Christian Coalition, had the most first place votes (19) and the most second place votes (10).

The Missouri senator also no doubt enhanced his appeal to these Christian activists with his early and stinging criticism of President Clinton over the sex and perjury allegations surrounding him.

The coalition was careful to include Democratic names, if only for the embarrassment value. They included Vice President Gore, House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (Mo.), Sens. Bob Kerrey (Neb.) and John F. Kerry (Mass.) and Jesse L. Jackson. The Democrats combined for a grand total of zero first or second place votes.

McCaffrey on Gingrich

■ White House drug policy chief Barry R. McCaffrey took out after House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) yesterday for playing partisan politics and being "irresponsible" in baldly rejecting President Clinton's plan to reduce illegal drug use.

"I've got an enormous concern about this," McCaffrey told the Associated Press. "My immediate reaction is that this is irresponsible."

Clinton and Gingrich both talked about drug policy in separate radio addresses Saturday, with the speaker dismissing the president's long-term plan as a "hodgepodge of half-steps and half-truths" and saying he will ask the House to pass a resolution asking for the White House to withdraw it. He described it as the "definition of failure."

"This strikes me as this brilliant man Newt Gingrich conducting drug policy by what I would have termed in my last life as 'ready, fire, aim,'" said McCaffrey, a retired Army general. "I'm sympathetic to partisan wrangling and know that Newt Gingrich is looking for issues for the midterm election, but that's not what I signed up to do. I'm afraid he's going to do a disservice to a comprehensive strategy."

"There's nothing hasty or political about Speaker Gingrich's deep disappointment that the Clinton administration cannot put together a serious strategy for saving America's teens in a more timely and effective manner," Gingrich's spokeswoman, Christina Martin, told the AP yesterday.

Gingrich, in his radio address, asked why it should take a decade to cut drug use when the Civil War was won and slavery abolished in just four years.

— Edward Walsh

5 Injured as Barge Hits Oil Platform Off Louisiana Coast

NEW ORLEANS—A barge collided with an offshore oil platform in stormy weather in the Gulf of Mexico yesterday, starting fires on both and injuring five workers, the Coast Guard said.

Fire was quickly extinguished on the barge, but it continued to blaze on the platform. The injured workers were taken aboard a Coast Guard cutter, which headed toward the Louisiana coast to get them to a hospital.

The collision happened about 1:45 p.m., 15 miles south of the mouth of the Mississippi River off Southwest Pass. Coast Guard Petty Officer India Roderick said it was too foggy for helicopters to reach the scene.

It was not known whether the injured were working on the platform or barge. Three suffered smoke inhalation, one had a broken hand and one a broken leg.

"The weather has been a challenge—thick fog and low visibility of maybe a mile, high winds and seas," Roderick said.

She said the barge was being pushed by a tug when it collided with the platform. She said the Coast Guard had no reports on what was burning on the platform, what company owned it, or whether it was in production.

Fla. Weighs In on Tobacco

■ TALLAHASSEE—Florida officials urged federal lawmakers to move toward a tobacco settlement that leaves the bulk of spending decisions with state legislators and seeks a nationwide ban on advertising aimed at children.

State leaders speaking to a joint session of the Florida legislature said they supported the concept of a national settlement even though some aspects may not be as tough on tobacco companies as provisions of Florida's landmark $11.3 billion deal.

Mississippi, Florida and Texas have already settled with the industry to recoup medical costs associated with smoking. Settlements reached in those states have prompted an 8-cent-a-pack increase in cigarette prices nationwide, Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth estimated.

"A global settlement would help out the children of Florida and the children of the country better than our particular settlement by itself," said Butterworth, who led the Florida effort that resulted in an out-of-court settlement in August.

"If there is no national settlement, three states are going to make out like bandits because we're the only states that have made a lot of money," Butterworth said.

"Right now, the rest of the country is funding Florida's settlement. I don't think representatives from around the country are going to let that happen for much longer."

Florida has already received an initial payment of $750 million from the industry, the first installment of payments that will span 25 years.

Most of that initial payment remains in escrow as attorneys in the case battle over fees.

Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.) said a national settlement remained a long way off, probably not until summer and then only if divergent sides can be brought together.

N.J. Teen Beaten to Death

■ SOUTH AMBOY, N.J.—A teenager was beaten to death as she walked home in a small New Jersey town and her body was left behind a bowling alley, police said.

The body of Katrina Angela Suhan, 15, was discovered Saturday morning in Old Bridge, police said. She was fully clothed and had not been sexually assaulted, they said.

A classmate reported last seeing Suhan alive at 12:30 a.m. Saturday, as she set off to walk home alone from a roller skating rink less than a mile from her family's house in South Amboy.

Her body was found several hours later, about three miles away, said police in South Amboy, a working-class town roughly 20 miles southwest of Manhattan.

She died of skull fractures, blunt trauma to the head and brain injuries, according to an autopsy.

She had arranged for a ride home with the father of a friend, but the friend told her earlier in the evening that her father could not pick them up, other friends said.

From news services

The Washington Post
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1998