

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Court Rules On Sex Offender, Juvenile Cases

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court took two cracks at one of the law's thorniest questions Monday: When can you lock up a prisoner and throw away the key? Not when it's a teenager who hasn't killed anyone, the justices said. But when it's a "sexually dangerous" inmate, maybe so, even if he has completed his federal prison sentence.

By a 5-4 vote, the court said young people serving life prison terms must have "a meaningful opportunity to obtain release" if they haven't killed their victims. The majority opinion by Justice Anthony Kennedy extended the "children are different" rationale that drove his decision five years ago that outlawed the death penalty for killers under 18.

The court ruled in the case of Terrance Graham, who was implicated in armed robberies when he was 16 and 17. Graham, now 23, is in prison in Florida, which holds 60 percent of juvenile defendants who are locked up for life for crimes other than homicide.

"The state has denied him any chance to later demonstrate that he is fit to rejoin society based solely on a non-homicide crime that he committed while he was a child in the eyes of the law," Justice Kennedy wrote in his majority opinion. "This the Eighth Amendment does not permit."

In a second case, the court voted 7-2 to uphold a federal law that allows for the indefinite imprisonment of inmates considered mentally ill and "sexually dangerous," no matter that their sentences have been served.

Thai Rebels Offer Cease-Fire To Fighting

BANGKOK (AP) — The Thai government said Monday it would accept a cease-fire offer from a "Red Shirt" protest leader if their fighters end raging street battles and return to their main camp in central Bangkok, as the death toll from five days of violence rose to 37.

The offer was made by Red Shirt leader Nattawut Saikuwa, who called the government's chief negotiator, Korbak Sabhavasua, on his cell phone, Korbak said. It was the first direct talks between the two sides since the fighting started Thursday, but Korbak said it was unlikely to achieve much as the two sides still remained far apart.

Nattawut's response was not immediately known. Calls to his phone went unanswered.

Earlier, a Thai government ultimatum passed for the thousands of protesters — who have been camping in an upscale commercial district for more than a month in a bid to force the government from power — to vacate the barricaded protest zone by 3 p.m. or face up to two years in prison. Meanwhile, unrest flared in various parts of the downtown area outside the barricades, with troops firing live ammunition at protesters who were lighting tires to hide their positions. The thick smoke darkened the sky.

The Red Shirts, many of whom hail from the impoverished north and northeast, are trying to unseat Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and force immediate elections. They say the coalition government came to power through manipulation of the courts and the backing of the powerful military, and that it symbolizes a national elite indifferent to their plight.

Militant Caught For Plans Against World Cup

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi security forces have detained an al-Qaida militant suspected of planning an attack targeting the World Cup in South Africa next month, an official said Monday.

Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, a spokesman for Baghdad security services, said Abdullah Azam Saleh al-Qahtani was an officer in the Saudi army. He is suspected of planning a "terrorist act" in South Africa during the World Cup beginning June 11, al-Moussawi told a news conference in Baghdad.

He said al-Qahtani entered Iraq in 2004 and is suspected in several attacks in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

In South Africa, a police spokesman said Iraq has not notified them of the arrest.

Detained U.S. Missionary Freed In Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The last of 10 Americans detained while trying to take 33 children out of Haiti after the Jan. 12 earthquake was freed Monday when a judge convicted her but sentenced her to time already served in jail.

Laura Silsby, the organizer of the ill-fated effort to take the children to an orphanage being set up in the neighboring Dominican Republic, returned to her cell briefly to retrieve belongings before quickly heading to the Port-au-Prince airport.

The Idaho businesswoman had been in custody since Jan. 29. She was originally charged with kidnapping and criminal association, but those charges were dropped for her and the nine other Americans who were previously released. Silsby she was convicted of arranging illegal travel under a 1980 statute restricting movement out of Haiti signed by then-dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier.

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IMMIGRATION

Ariz. Law Divides Police Across U.S.

BY JONATHAN J. COOPER
Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Arizona's tough new law cracking down on illegal immigration is dividing police across the nation, pitting officers against their chiefs and raising questions about its potential to damage efforts to fight crime in Hispanic communities.

Two officers are challenging the law in court, while police unions that lobbied for it are defending it against criticism from police officials.

Both sides are debating how a law such as Arizona's can be enforced, without leading to racial profiling of Hispanics and without alienating residents in Hispanic neighborhoods with whom police have spent years trying to build trust.

"Before the signing of this bill, citizens would wave at me," said David Salgado, a 19-year Phoenix police officer who sued the city and the governor asking that the law be blocked. "Now they don't even want to make eye contact."

Still, police unions say, many of their officers in Arizona, the nation's busiest corridor for illegal immigration and smuggling, are tired of feeling helpless when dealing with people they believe are in the country illegally. Those officers want a tool to arrest them.

"Crime is not based upon skin color, it's based upon conduct," said Mark Spencer, president of the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association, the union represent-

ing Phoenix officers that lobbied aggressively for the law.

It requires police enforcing another law to verify a person's immigration status if there's "reasonable" suspicion they are in the U.S. illegally.

Several Arizona police chiefs and sheriffs say, as hard as officers try not to profile, enforcing the law will inevitably lead to it. They say it will end up taking time away from solving crimes in their cities and towns.

"When you get a law that leads a state down this path, where the enforcement is targeted to a particular segment of the population, it's very difficult not to profile," said Phoenix Police Chief Jack Harris, a critic of the law.

On Monday, police bosses from Maryland and Nevada condemned the law, saying that it could suck up vital resources and destroy delicate relationships with immigrant communities if implemented in their own states. There are at least nine other states considering similar legislation.

Police Chief Thomas Manger of Montgomery County, Md., in suburban Washington said he doesn't have the resources or the desire to enforce federal immigration violations by people who aren't disrupting the community.

"If they're not committing a crime here, frankly, I'm not sure how it enhances public safety to target those people for removal," he said.

Manger spoke on a conference call with the sheriff of Washoe

County, Nev., and the retired police chief of Sacramento, Calif. The call was organized by the Law Enforcement Engagement Initiative, which advocates immigration reform.

Their criticism added to the chorus of opponents since the law's adoption April 23. There have been calls for boycotts, and some state and local governments have decided to stop doing business with the state in protest.

On Monday, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund filed the latest challenge to the law in federal court on behalf of labor unions and others.

The law takes effect July 29 unless blocked by the pending court challenges. Being in the country illegally would become a state crime, and Arizona residents could sue an agency or officer they feel isn't enforcing immigration laws to the fullest extent possible.

Arizona's legislation was passed in part with the lobbying muscle of the unions. An association of police chiefs tried to defeat or soften it.

Tucson police officer Martin

Escobar also filed a lawsuit, arguing there's no "race-neutral" criteria for him to suspect that someone's in the country illegally. Some say it would be impossible to enforce without relying on indicators such as skin color, clothing and accent.

They worry Hispanic crime victims will be too scared to call for help, or eyewitnesses will refuse to cooperate in murder investigations.

Supporters say there are plenty of indicators other than race that suggest someone is an illegal immigrant, including a lack of identification and conflicting statements. They say police have plenty of experience enforcing laws without relying on physical characteristics.

If officers are empowered to decide when it's appropriate to arrest or even to kill someone, they should be trusted not to profile based on race, said Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu, a supporter whose jurisdiction includes busy human and drug smuggling routes into Phoenix.

"We will do it without profiling," he said. "And any police chief or any sheriff in Arizona will not tolerate profiling based on race or national origin. That's unacceptable."

U.S. Auto Dealers Fight To Avoid New Regulations

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's 18,000 auto dealers are trying to cut themselves a deal in the Senate, seeking exemption from proposed consumer regulations that would police how they write car loans.

The Obama administration is pushing back, using the Pentagon to make the case that soldiers are particularly vulnerable to high interest car loan schemes.

The dealers argue that when it comes to lending to car buyers, they are mere intermediaries for financial institutions that ultimately process and service the loans.

In waging this fight, they stand between the president and the success of a vast rewrite of financial regulations that Obama is determined to sign into law. A House version of the bill already excludes auto dealers from new consumer financial rules. By standing firm now, the administration hopes the Senate version prevails.

The debate over a special carve out for auto dealers, who have a high visibility in their local communities, comes as Senate Majority Leader Harry

Reid, D-Nev., seeks to wrap up debate over the broader regulatory overhaul later this week. Reid planned to seek a vote to end debate on Wednesday, which would require 60 votes to pass. If successful, the Senate would have until Friday to dispatch remaining issues.

Beside the auto dealers' exception, senators must still work out differences over how to regulate complex securities known as derivatives and decide whether to toughen provisions in the bill that would restrict the ability of banks to engage in speculative trades with their own accounts.

Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., is leading the effort for the dealers with an amendment that would specifically carve them out of the bill's consumer protections provisions.

Auto dealers, however, still make money from the loans. Consumer advocates argue that's enough to place them under extra scrutiny. The Pentagon has been especially aggressive in opposing an exemption for auto dealers, initiating its campaign after the House agreed to exclude dealers from its bill.

SPILL

From Page 1

the oil might avoid the beaches of Miami and Fort Lauderdale but could wash up around Palm Beach.

Many scientists expect the oil to get no farther north than Cape Canaveral, midway up the coast, before it is carried out to sea and becomes more and more diluted.

The pollution could endanger Florida's shoreline mangroves, sea-grass beds and the third-longest barrier reef in the world, the 221-mile-long Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, which helps draw millions of snorkelers, fishermen and other tourists whose dollars are vital to the state's economy.

Pollutants can smother and kill corals — living creatures that excrete a hard exterior skeleton — or can hinder their ability to reproduce and grow. That, in turn, could harm thousands of species of exotic and colorful fish and other marine life that live in and around reefs.

In other developments: — Chris Oynes, who oversees offshore drilling programs at the federal Minerals Management Service, will retire at the end of the month, becoming the Interior Department's first casualty of the disaster. Oynes has been criticized as too cozy with the oil industry.

— The White House will establish a presidential commission to investigate the spill, according to an administration official speaking of condition of anonymity.

— California Sen. Barbara Boxer and other Democrats are calling on the Justice Department to open a criminal investigation.

— BP said it has spent \$500 million on the spill so far.

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