HRC hires 7 employees to help reduce caseload

The Maryland Human Relations Commission is still plagued by a huge backlog, but as a result of a federal grant it recently hired seven new employees to reduce the agency's caseload.

The grant, which totals $140,000, was received by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and will expire after one year.

As a result of the grant HRC was able to hire three lawyers, four investigators and two secretaries, according to HRC director Dave Glenn.

"The additional staff will help us reduce the public hearing backlog," Glenn said, adding that after the contract is up the temporary staff may be hired permanently because of turnover among the regular staff.

Glenn said HRC now has 1,776 active cases which means that 95 percent of the commission's efforts are directed toward complaints.

Because of this, the potential of HRC is being watered down, Glenn said, adding that he would like to have the staff spend more time examining affirmative action practices of other state agencies.

"The state government itself is a big discrimination unfortunately," Glenn said. "Some parts of the state government relates to a system which needs changing.

"We ought to be dealing with the state agencies up front in an affirmative action posture instead of afterwards in the form of complaints. But there is no possibility of that as long as we have a huge caseload."

Glenn also said it is not clear now whether the Human Relations Commission can give federal agencies information about firms in Maryland that are seeking contracts from it.

He said the federal government will often call the commission asking for information about a contractor's affirmative action record. But Glenn said as it stands now the Human Relations Commission cannot give out information on firms that there are complaints against.

He said the penalty for violating the confidentiality law is $1,000 and one year in jail.

Glenn said he hoped to reduce the caseload of HRC in the upcoming months.

MARCH IS "KIDNEY MONTH" — Gov. Harry Hughes presents a proclamation naming March "Kidney Month" to Dennis Rigby (L), chairman of the Kidney Foundation of Maryland's 1979 Residential campaign. The proclamation officially kicked off the Foundation's "Life. Pass it On" organ donor campaign.

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—Sen. Allen

(Continued from page 1)

Having practiced medicine in Annapolis for 34 years, Dr. Allen feels he has a certain responsibility as a doctor to be involved in policy - making decisions.

"It's not a privilege but a responsibility that I exercise my option as a physician to participate in the political area.

"Of the nearly 4,000 bills that were introduced, almost 400 affect me as a physician. With that much at stake, I definitely should be involved."

With such an interest in medicine, it is not hard to see why much of Allen's legislation relates to the medical area.

One such bill prohibits discrimination of insurance benefits to persons with Sickle Cell Trait.

It passed in the Senate and is expected to pass in the House, reported Dr. Allen, who said it came "pleasantly to his surprise" to receive support from several insurance companies.

Other medical related bills would permit 17 - year - old to be blood donors without parental consent, allow certain medical records to be obtained under certain conditions and allow written reports to be used in lieu of the doctor's presence during rape cases.

He has also co - sponsored a measure that would bring the state tax exemption in line with federal exemptions for energy saving devices in the home such as solar heating, insulation and weatherization.

Allen ran in 1978 for lieutenant governor on the ticket with J. Glenn Beall who was defeated by Gov. Harry Hughes.

Pending legislation in the House and the Senate would make the lieutenant governor's spot a separate seat and according to several legislators, Allen may have been the first black lieutenant governor in Maryland had the bill been in effect.

"I feel it's wise to separate the two seats and give the electorate a free choice of candidates," replied Dr. Allen. "However, I can foresee some disadvantages.

"We could wind up like Virginia with a lieutenant governor of one party and governor of the other."

Allen, one of six black senators, says he is pleased with the present make - up of the legislature. He pointed out that many key roles are being filled by blacks including the state secretary of personnel, Theodore Thornton and that the number of black legislators has increased greatly this year.

Allen was honored recently by the Baltimore Alumni Chapter of Howard University for his outstanding work in the community.

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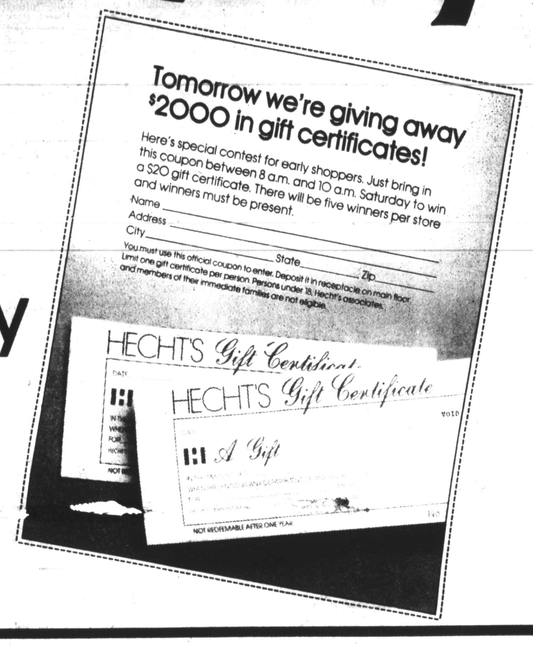

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