

Where they are not fully informed or have fears about the potential effects, there may be efforts to halt tests. For example, Glenn Church, a Salinas, California, Christmas tree farmer, fired off a letter to the Monterey County Board of Supervisors last January after reading in his local newspaper that Advanced Genetic Sciences would not divulge the location of its proposed test of a frost-inhibiting bacterium (*Science*, 14 March, p. 1242). He later contacted Rifkin for help.

After a public hearing, the AGS experiment was delayed by local officials, and subsequent revelations of an unauthorized experiment at the company's Oakland headquarters led EPA to suspend its field test permit. Church and a Tulalake, California, telephone company worker, who recently obtained a court order blocking Lindow's

experiment, have since organized a statewide alliance to monitor future field tests.

Efforts are under way to find neutral forums to air scientific questions and work out disputes between various factions. The National Research Council, for example, will meet on 27 and 28 October in Millwood, Virginia, to consider whether it should delve deeper into the deliberate-release issue. Also, the Washington-based World Resources Institute (WRI) has sounded out Monsanto about starting a dialogue between factions. According to WRI's vice president for policy analysis, Andrew McGuire, the aim is to help find a common ground.

"There has to be compromise by environmentalists and by this industry," says Mackler of the Association of Biotechnology Companies, "otherwise we are not going

to have an industry." Indeed, NRDC's director of scientific research, Khareem Ahmed, who wants assurances that proposed releases are examined systematically, notes that "biotechnology need not be as combative as other issues in the past."

Former EPA administrator William Ruckelshaus, who now represents a privately held Maryland biotechnology firm, Crop Genetics International, agrees that there is room for compromise. But he says scrapping the Administration's framework at this point is unwise because continued regulatory uncertainty could hurt American biotechnology companies in world markets. To get environmental activists to accept the current structure, he says, the Administration will have to make some concessions on its new guidelines and agree to strengthen weak statutes. ■ **MARK CRAWFORD**

California to Vote on AIDS Proposition

Academics and health officials are unusually vocal in speaking out against proposition they say rests on "facts" that are all wrong

CALIFORNIA is poised to be the first state in the nation to attempt to deal with AIDS by public referendum. On 4 November citizens will vote on a Draconian measure that would legally declare AIDS an "infectious, contagious, and easily communicable disease." Ballot Proposition 64, if passed, could force public health officials to establish camps to quarantine AIDS patients, as well as anyone who carries the AIDS virus. The measure would also flatly ban persons infected by the virus from attending or teaching in public schools or holding jobs that involve food handling.

Sponsored by a Lyndon LaRouche organization called PANIC (the Prevent AIDS Now Initiative Committee), Proposition 64 embodies all of the deepest fears about AIDS in one cold legislative package. PANIC, based in Los Angeles, had no trouble getting 683,000 California voters to sign the petition that put Proposition 64 on the ballot.

Opposition to the AIDS measure among health officials, physicians, and academics is strong and mounting. Stanford University

president Donald Kennedy, medical school dean David Korn, Nobel Laureate Paul Berg, and W. K. H. Panofsky, former director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, are among university professors who recently took out an ad in the local newspaper to voice their opposition. In a statement to the press, Korn, who also is the chairman of the National Cancer Advisory Board (a White House appointment), said, "As an individual who serves in a position of public responsibility, I am very cautious about making statements involving political issues. But this measure is not a matter of weighing the normal subtleties of public policy. It has been presented to the public based on patently inaccurate scientific information which unproductively feeds on public fears of a genuine health threat."

The deans and faculties of four California schools of public health have also banded together to defeat Proposition 64. They are the University of California public health campuses at Berkeley and Los Angeles, and the public health schools at Loma Linda and San Diego State universities. Berkeley dean Joyce C. Lashof, says it is the first time the

state's schools of public health have ever taken a combined stand on any state initiative but says this one would be a "public health disaster." In a public report designed to influence voters, the schools have taken on the PANIC forces. "Contrary to its stated intent, Proposition 64 would have no public health benefits . . . but would instead impede ongoing, appropriate public health efforts by spreading both hysteria and misinformation about one of the most challenging diseases to confront public health and medicine in recent times," their 24-page policy paper states.

Health officials could be forced to quarantine AIDS patients and those who carry the virus.

PANIC is an offshoot of Lyndon LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee. In addition to defining AIDS as an "easily communicable disease," the PANIC proposition directs public health officials to assume that "the condition of being a carrier of HTLV-III (the AIDS virus) is an infectious, contagious, and communicable condition."

Because the proposition got on the ballot with an excess of 650,000 petition signatures and because, in itself, it does not use scare language, nearly every medical, public health, and civil rights organization in the state is afraid it could pass, despite a \$3.5-

million campaign against it. Public opinion polls so far show most of California's 22 million voters undecided, and both sides predict they will win on election day.

The backers of the initiative do not try to put much of a gloss on the impact the measure would have. Last February, the case for the proposition was laid out fully in an issue of the LaRouche-published magazine *Executive Intelligence Review*.

Calling for "An emergency war plan to fight AIDS and other pandemics," the 138-page report raises the spectre of mosquitoes spreading AIDS willy-nilly like "flying syringes," an idea flatly rejected by essentially every reputable epidemiologist who has studied AIDS. It says the threat of AIDS "is potentially far deadlier than even a full-scale

mandatory testing of millions of people, and that it compels local health officials to take such actions as quarantining those who test positive." He added, "the numbers are pretty large. We find it particularly frightening, in that the test currently available is inaccurate at least 1% of the time."

The strategy of the pro-64 faction is straightforward. "I'm optimistic," said Brian Lantz, a PANIC organizer in northern California and a coauthor of the measure. "If the election were held today, we would win by a two-to-one majority. They [opponents of the measure] are racing against an epidemic, and that will be the deciding factor."

He said "If opponents try to make LaRouche the issue, that will backfire. It just makes him a household word in California,

sored ballot literature that explains the pros and cons has been taken to court. In August Sacramento County Superior Court Judge James Ford removed language from the pro-64 ballot argument that claimed AIDS "is not hard to get; it is easy to get," and that "numerous studies" say that insects and casual contact spread the disease. Despite the customarily wide latitude given ballot arguments in California, the judge said these statements would create a "dread, awful aura" around AIDS and clearly violated state regulations that forbid "false and misleading" information in the voters' pamphlet.

In arguing against Proposition 64, California's public health deans summarized the damage it could do. Their report cited studies by various agencies in California that passage of Proposition 64 would throw 36,000 people out of work needlessly, and would cost \$1.2 billion per year just to test the education and food-handling population for AIDS antibodies. Testing the entire state's population, a likely result of the measure should it pass and survive court tests that would surely follow, would cost many billions of dollars more. People with AIDS, or who think they might have the virus, would be driven underground and would stop contact with the health system altogether, the deans predict.

Public health officials also note the measure makes no distinction between persons with full-blown AIDS, who at present have little likelihood of living more than a few years, and those who merely carry antibodies to the virus and may never develop the disease. Furthermore, even quarantining active AIDS cases has been rejected by the federal Centers for Disease Control as inappropriate.

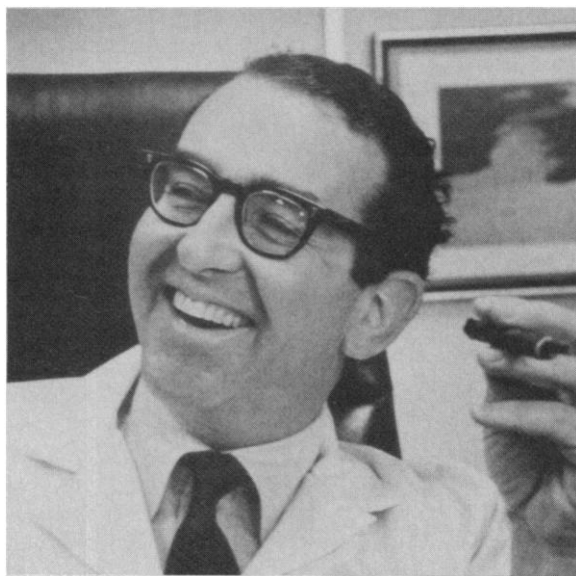
The deans' report stresses what every other major public health figure has been saying for some time: AIDS is not a casually transmitted disease, but is instead a blood-borne, sexually transmitted disease which—like other venereal diseases and hepatitis B—is best controlled via cessation of high-risk behavior among those infected.

It cites encouraging evidence that adoption of "safe sex" practices, particularly by homosexual men, has cut by a factor of four the rate at which new infections are appearing in high-risk groups. It pleaded, "Proposition 64 would waste state funds on ineffective, coercive intervention programs and thereby divert resources from the only known effective measure to reduce AIDS transmission: massive public health education." ■ **CHARLES PETIT**

Charles Petit is a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle.

David Korn.

Proposition 64 "is based on patently inaccurate scientific information."



thermonuclear war." Incorporating political theories expounded by LaRouche for 15 years, it declares that AIDS and other lethal contagions were "deliberately created" by the International Monetary Fund, that Henry Kissinger and Zionism somehow played a role by curtailing U.S. biological warfare abilities and helped open the door to AIDS, and that U.S. policy on AIDS is dictated by the Soviet government via the World Health Organization.

At the same time, the article reflects careful reading of scientific literature on AIDS, and is larded with graphs, charts, and diagrams, many taken from generally accepted publications, to accurately show the known structure of the AIDS virus, its effects on AIDS victims, and to summarize tests used to detect it.

The ballot measure that voters will see, however, "masks its real intention," said Scott Shafer, a San Francisco organizer of the No On 64 campaign. "It doesn't refer specifically to the fact that it will require

and he can defend himself very well from their vitriolic attacks. LaRouche did not write the public health laws of this or any other state. He is not the issue, public health is the issue, and that is the arena in which the voters will decide this question. They want to stop AIDS."

Lantz said the measure will leave public health officers with some latitude over how aggressively they enforce provisions for quarantine and mandatory testing, but opponents say the literal wording of the proposition leaves virtually no room for discretion.

Wide-scale quarantines, Lantz argued, would not be such a novel or heinous thing in any case. He compared the proposed isolation communities to "sanatoria for tuberculosis victims in the 30's. Those weren't concentration camps, but that is what the opponents (of 64) would have you believe."

The AIDS proposition is so potentially inflammatory that a dispute about what language can be used in official state-spon-