No Needles

And the ban played on

July 1, 1998

Elizabeth Taylor: “While it’s gratifying to know that, after many months, Shalala validated the science, a scientific determination is an empty gesture that can be meaningful only when the administration puts its money where its mouth is.”

Jim Graham, Whitman-Walker Clinic, DC: “On the morning of the decision, Clinton stated that politics wouldn’t interfere with public health in terms of tobacco. That very afternoon he let politics interfere with public health.”

Tom Henderson, President’s AIDS Advisory Council (PACHA) member: “For the administration to say there’s an effective lifesaving intervention, and in the same breath say they won’t fund it is morally indefensible. Gen. McCaffrey’s got a war-on-drugs mentality. It’s not a warm, fuzzy feeling to give needles to junkies, but neither is contracting HIV from drug use.”

Derek Gordon, SFAIDS Foundation: “Women and people of color are disproportionately infected by sharing dirty needles. These are human beings. Now I have to look at them and say, ‘You’ve been declared disposable by our government.”

Drew Kramer, Lower East Side Needle Exchange, NYC: “The other day I remembered ACT UP chants from the ’80s—’History will recall, George Bush did nothing at all!’—and I realized that across the board, nothing has changed for injection drug–users. Now’s the time to chain ourselves to the fence.”

Congresswoman Maxine waters (D-CA), Congressional Black Caucus: “We absolutely see no contradiction between supporting needle exchange and working to rid drugs from our communities.” She called McCaffrey “contradictory, dictatorial and limited in his understanding of this problem.”

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