

Stevens' bill would create AIDS panel

WASHINGTON — Sen. Ted Stevens recently co-sponsored a resolution calling on the president to establish an advisory commission on AIDS.

Under the resolution, the commission would be charged with making recommendations regarding health care financing, testing and confidentiality, the allocation of funds to federal agencies and state and local governments and international information coordination.

The commission also would study and evaluate federal and state infectious disease laws, particularly those relating to immigration, discrimination and liability.

In addition, the commission would make recommendations regarding the dissemination of information which is essential in preventing the spread of the disease. The resolution specifies that the commission should make efforts to develop methods which would result in the lifestyle changes needed to stop the spread of AIDS, while taking into consideration the moral, ethical and legal issues that have been raised.

"The spread of the highly lethal AIDS virus has now reached epidemic proportions," Stevens said. "AIDS is the 10th leading cause of death in this country and is rapidly reaching first place for males in the 20 to 39 age bracket.

"The surgeon general has predicted that by 1991, 270,000 individuals will have contracted AIDS, and 179,000 will have died from this disease. Other predictions by distinguished scientists make the surgeon general's numbers look conservative."

In a recent statement, Stevens added that he is concerned about the threat of the disease to members of the nation's military.

"Our servicemen and women who are deployed throughout the world face a special risk, and I feel we must do all we can to reduce it," Stevens said.

At Stevens' request, \$40 million was added to the Fiscal Year 1986 budget and \$21.8 million to the Fiscal Year 1987 budget for AIDS research by the Department of Defense.

"We need to make tough decisions, tempered with a large measure of compassion, in order to fight this disease. A presidential commission will help us move in the most effective direction," Stevens said.