

(Continued)

rectified through mediation, court would be the alternative. He told members that the case load in Washington was reduced by 30 percent due to a similar law.

Rep. Chris Hastings, R-Tulsa, proposed an amendment to the amendment to "clear up Smith's amendment." The amendment states that a person injured on the job should receive treatment before the mediation.

"Is this an attorney amendment," asked Rep. Dan Webb, R-Oklahoma City. No one responded to Webb's question.

An amendment by the bill's author, Rep. Bill Settle, D-Muskogee, stated that the Insurance Commissioner shall provide a plan to jump-start the pilot program for 24-hour care coverage by January 1998.

Rep. James Hager, D-Pawhuska, proposed an amendment that would not allow insurance companies to retroactively assess employers regardless of past status.

Hager's amendment was tabled.

The bill passed with an unanimous vote of 101 to 0.

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## HOUSE HEARS WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES PROTECTION ACT

By Heather Myers  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The House today heard discussion over HB2374, authored by Rep. Jari Askins, D-Duncan, which creates the Workplace and Employee Protection Act.

"This bill just gives employers more ways to protect their employees," Askins said.

As the bill was up for discussion, Rep. William Graves, R-Oklahoma City, offered an amendment that would specifically include abortion clinic employees to be protected during peaceful protests.

The measure passed with a vote of 98-2.

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## BARBER BILL GETS SECOND CHANCE

By Marta McCloskey  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) In session, members voted to reconsider HB2550 by Rep. Mark Seikel, D-Harrah. The measure applies to professions and occupations and creates the Oklahoma Barbers' Regulation Act. The need for the Act and certain of its provisions had been questioned by members in a prior session. The bill was debated again today on the House floor.

Rep. Frank R. Davis, R-Guthrie, asked Seikel why he wanted to create another agency. "I got a haircut this Saturday and my barber said he did not know a thing about this barber bill," he said. "How many boards and commissions do we have anyway?"

Davis challenged members by asking if anyone could tell him exactly how many boards and commissions are regulated by the Legislature in Oklahoma. He added, that if anyone could give him the number he would "gladly" vote for the bill. No one could.

Seikel argued the mere reason that Davis's barber did not know about the act, was the reason for its need. "Barbers need to know that the state regulates them," he said.

"This is more than getting a haircut... it is getting good dialogue between them (the barbers) and the state," Seikel said. "The only people who will be upset is our good friends at the State Health Department, who currently receive fees to regulate barbers."

The measure passed with a vote of 58 to 41. It will now go to the Senate for further consideration.