



CAPITOL

NETWORK NEWS

Today's news from Oklahoma's best government information resource

INSIDE

DAILY EDITION

Thursday

March 7, 1996

House Members
Debate SB 995
page 3

SCR 47 Could Impact
Overcrowding
page 5

Religious Amendment
for Charter Schools
page 5

S-Human Resources
Committee Meeting
page 6

Gov's Task Force on
Tobacco & Youth
page 6

Tax Break for Small
Business
page 8

Conference on Families
page 8

Trooper of Year &
Traffic Safety Awards
page 9

Developmental
Disabilities Awareness
page 10

Cozart Calls for
Investigation of
Democrats
page 10

Senate Pro Tem
Responds
page 11

House Votes
page 13

Senate Votes
page 13

Bill Activity, page 15
Calendar, page 34

669 BAD FOR OKLAHOMA, BOREN SAYS

**By Brandon Beard
Staff Writer**

■(GIT) With the March 12 vote on State Question [SQ] 669, the measure attempting to roll back property taxes to the 1993 level, less than one week away, attention turned to Oklahoma University President David Boren as he addressed the Senate Committee on Infrastructure and Strategic Planning Thursday. The former U.S. Senator spoke out against the initiative, saying it would be bad not only for OU, but for Oklahoma's economic development.

"[SQ] 669 really imperils the progress we have made," Boren said. "We [OU] would slide to the bottom of the Big 12." He said the measure would force the Legislature to take up immediate funding of the state's public schools and hospitals.

Boren compared passage of the measure to the oil bust of the mid-eighties, saying it would result in an immediate depletion of nearly half of the state's tax base. "I think we're shooting ourselves in the foot," he said. "I think it's going to cause more problems than it's going to solve."

Questioning 669's constitutionality, Boren predicts it will spark a wave of lawsuits aimed at reversing the measure. "The constitution says to treat everybody equally under the law," he said, calling the state question "good for lawyers."

Under the measure, property taxes would be lowered only for those who purchased property before 1993. Anyone wishing to purchase or make improvements on property purchased after 1993 would be expected to pay a higher rate. Unlike law created by legislation, constitutional amendments are not so easily altered. "When it's in the constitution, you can't go back and correct your error," Boren said.

OU would feel the effects of the measure with the loss of some \$70 to \$90 million in state appropriated dollars, forcing the university to use funds derived from its Reach for Excellence Campaign to bridge the funding gap. Currently, the campaign has raised approximately \$67 million, with a \$200 million goal.

The money is collected from private contributions and used for academic improvements. Passage of 669 would result in a decline in contributions, the idea being that people will find it difficult to donate money for the pursuit of excellence when it is being used "just to keep the doors open," Boren said.

CHILD ABUSE CASES UNDER-REPORTED, DOCTOR TELLS HOUSE COMMITTEE

**By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer**

■(GIT) The number of child abuse cases in Oklahoma is dramatically underreported, according to an Oklahoma City pediatrician who testified before the House's Children, Youth and Family Services committee Thursday.

Dr. John Stemke, from the department of pediatrics at Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City, told the committee that the death of two-year-old Ryan Luke in McAlester last year was just one of many similar cases in the state.

(Continued)