

## GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS MARCH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

From Oklahoma Department of Human Services

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating has declared March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Oklahoma. The theme for this year's awareness campaign is: "Ours is a mission to enlighten."

"More and more people with developmental disabilities are living and working in communities all over the state," said James Nicholson, administrator of the Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Services Division. "Our division works especially hard during March to promote a better understanding of people who have these conditions."

"We would like to encourage everyone to recognize the characteristics common to all of us and be willing to celebrate differences for what they truly are — unique and individual talents," said Nicholson.

There are approximately 50,000 Oklahomans who have developmental disabilities — that means conditions which affect people during their developmental years. Examples of these conditions include mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Tourette syndrome, spina bifida, visual impairments, hearing impairments, learning disabilities and traumatic brain injury.

"The biggest barriers to people with developmental disabilities aren't architectural. They're attitudinal," said Nicholson. "Attitudes are never changed by laws alone. They are changed by people working to better understand others through education and experience."

Some of the activities planned for this month are the Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities in Tulsa on March 25-26; and the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day Rally at the State Capitol March 21.

For more information about Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and activities, contact Sheree Powell, DDS, at (405) 521-4972.

## LEGISLATOR ISSUES STATEMENT CALLING FOR INVESTIGATION OF STATE SENATE DEMOCRATS

From House Media

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Following is a statement by state Rep. Wayne Cozort, a Republican from Tulsa, concerning campaign donations to Senate Democrats:

"In light of serious disclosures by *The Conservative Review* newspaper, today I am calling for a full-scale investigation into contributions by Oklahoma trial lawyers to State Senate Democrats.

"*The Conservative Review* has made some very troubling disclosures regarding political donations to the Democrats of the Oklahoma State Senate Political Action Committee by the Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Association Political Action Committee. These donations occurred while the Senate was considering Senate Bill 263, the so-called tort reform law, in 1995.

"An investigation must determine if any senator, or anyone representing senators, violated state ethics law by soliciting contributions in return for favorable legislation, or if any trial lawyer made contributions specifically to influence legislation and the performance of legislators.

"*The Review* disclosed that a large amount of contributions — \$33,600 — was made while the bill was before the Senate.

"I believe this represents another black mark on the way business is done in Oklahoma. Clearly, there is cause for suspicion.

"It is obvious from the disclosures made by *The Conservative Review* that our campaign finance system has been deeply corrupted, and that real reform of the entire system must be a top

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