

(Continued)

and I voted for it then. But I was convinced it would be a one-stop shop for environmental needs; But it wasn't."

"I'm all for the environment, but I am also for common sense state government. If it costs a county more money than they have to answer to the law, what difference does it make where the EPA, DEQ, or whatever is. I'm not doing this for my health, or to be cute. I'm doing this because people from southeastern Oklahoma have called on me to complain about being overrun by overbearing people."

The resolution was adopted with a vote of 56-43.

BILL ELIMINATING CABINET LIMITS FAILS

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) A bill that would eliminate the statutory limit on the number of cabinet posts appointed by the governor was defeated Wednesday in a 15-30 vote.

Senate Bill 1129, authored by Gerald Wright, R-Broken Arrow and presented by Mark Snyder, R-Edmond, would have eliminated the statutory limit of 10 to 15 cabinet posts that the governor is allowed to appoint. The bill would have also allowed each cabinet secretary to have an assistant.

Several senators objected strongly to the proposal, arguing that the measure would result in large increases in spending for cabinet posts. The measure also led several senators to express their dislike for the cabinet system in general.

"The cabinet system was sold to us on the basis it wouldn't cost us anything, because the governor would take the existing agency heads and give them the title of secretary," Senator Darryl Roberts, D-Ardmore, said, referring to the creating of the state's executive cabinet system under then-governor George Nigh. "That's not what happened, and this has become nothing more than another high-dollar level of bureaucracy.

"I guarantee you this will cost the state millions of dollars," Roberts added. "We ought to do away with the whole thing and go back to the way it was established in the constitution."

Joining Roberts in opposing the bill was Senator Dave Herbert, D-Midwest City, who said he, too, has not supported the cabinet idea since its inception.

"I didn't like it then, and I don't like it now," Herbert said.

Senator Charles Ford, R-Tulsa, spoke in defense of the bill, saying its opponents were trying to lump the problems of the previous three governors' administrations on the current governor. Ford challenged Roberts and others opposing the measure to give an example of problems within the current cabinet, particularly regarding spending.

In urging passage of the bill, Snyder said it would ultimately be up to the Senate to decide whether a cabinet appointment was approved, and as a result, the Senate would have a say in the costs resulting from the measure.

"This bill gives any governor," Snyder said, "the ability to organize agencies and departments in a way he feels best for the administration of government."

After the bill's 15-30 defeat, Wright announced plans to possibly bring the proposal back to the floor for reconsideration.

"The entire civil service is like a fortress, made of papers, forms and red tape."

Alexander Ostrovsky