

(Continued)

Leftwich noted that complaints about the caucus system remain unchanged — that too few people participate and that they are dominated by special interest groups.

Leftwich said during the meeting that rather than eliminating the presidential preference primary, the state might want to consider what he called the Saturday experiment — moving the presidential preference primary to the Saturday before Super Tuesday.

Speaking with *Capitol Network News*, Leftwich said the idea is consistent with efforts to improve voter participation.

"We've talked for sometime about holding an election on a Saturday," Leftwich said, "to see what kind of effect it might have on voter participation."

Another consideration, mentioned by both Leftwich and state Democrats, is the effect such a move could have on candidate interest in the state. Many people, particularly those within the state political parties, have complained about the lack of attention paid Oklahoma by the presidential candidates.

Leftwich noted that South Carolina also holds its presidential preference primary on that day. Because of that, he said, Oklahoma might want to consider moving its primary to an even earlier Saturday.

"I can't say either way that it's going to get candidates more interested in the state, but it might," Leftwich said.

Other, less specific ideas for increasing voter participation and candidate interest have also been mentioned by various lawmakers. A key concern this year, however, was to avoid tampering with the system and giving the appearance of attempting to influence this year's presidential primaries.

Twenty-five measures dealing with elections, particularly voter registration requirements, are currently making their way through both houses of the legislature.

EDUCATION REFORM LEGISLATION DISCUSSED AT CONFERENCE

By Marta McCloskey
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools (OROS) held their annual Spring Conference in conjunction with the fifth National Conference on Creating the Quality School Friday in Oklahoma City. Organization members listened to a presentation on federal legislation by the National Rural Education Association (NREA), and a question and answer Legislative update followed NREA's presentation. The update allowed members to ask Rep. James Hager, D-Pawhuska and Chairman of the House Education Committee, questions on pending state legislation, specifically **SB1100**, known as education reform bill.

Pauline Hodges, president-elect for NREA, urged members to not neglect federal legislation and targeted a House resolution introduced by freshman Oklahoma Congressman, Steve Largent.

HR1946, known as the "Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1995," is backed by 151 House sponsors, Hodges claimed. The resolution would allow parents to sue schools and teachers that exposed their children to issues conflicting with their beliefs. It would also allow a student to opt in or out of any class, school, portion of curriculum and challenge minimum graduation requirements. The bill would also allow parents to challenge home school regulations and minimum age laws relating to compulsory school attendance.

Hodges said the National Parent Teacher Association encourages federal intervention on these local issues. "There is also an identical bill in the Senate," she said.

Hodges encouraged members to contact their Congressmen as well as state elected officials to go on record denouncing the measure. "It is pretty scary what is happening in Washington," she said.

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