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more than fifteen years experience would have money added to their minimum salary schedule. Recommendations from the Senate include breaking up the years of service into two categories. Teachers with 16 to 19 years of experience would receive a bonus of \$1,000, while teachers with more than 20 years would receive an additional \$1,000.

The governor has recommended a similar program that would rank schools based on standards set by the Office of Accountability. Under the governor's plan, schools reaching the top 20 percent would award its teachers with bonuses.

The board is also asking for \$13.5 million to fund FY '96 midterm funding. The governor has suggested just over \$22 million, providing for anticipated FY '97 growth.

The Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics is asking for \$4,251,619 in FY '97 funding, a 24.8 percent increase over last year. Their largest request is for \$300,000 to equip and furnish a new dormitory and dining area, expected to be completed in the spring of 1997.

FROM: BRANDON BEARD

DATE: 03/25/96

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON RETIREMENT AND GROUP HEALTH APPROVES NINE BILLS

■(GIT) Nine bills were reported do pass out of committee by members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Retirement and Group Health. **HB2188**, authored by Rep. Joan Greenwood, R-Moore, received some debate by members.

The contention focused on a section of the bill that contained an "opt out" provision for state elected officials. The provision would have allowed state elected officials to decline the state insurance coverage. Sen.(s) Angela Monson, D-Oklahoma City and Ted Fisher, D-Sapulpa, opposed the section, saying the shift of officials to private insurance could cause problems in the long-run for those wanting to remain in the state program.

In favor of the section, Sen. Mike Fair, R-Oklahoma City, explained to members the choice for including only state elected officials in the "opt out" provision concerned time. "State elected officials could be here at the Capitol for a couple of years, as opposed to state employees," he said.

In response to Fair's comment, Fisher said he believed that if someone was a state employee or elected official, they should use the insurance provided. Monson agreed. Monson and Fisher offered an amendment to strike the language of section three from the bill. The amendment was adopted. The title and the enacting clause were also stricken from the bill. The measure received a do pass.

Other measures approved by committee members included:

HB2072, authored by Rep. James Hager, D-Pawhuska, relates to the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Retirement System. It expands membership to include park managers or park supervisors of the Tourism and Recreation Department. It also provides for the transfer of funds.

HB2088, authored by Rep. Larry Roberts, D-Miami, modifies life insurance benefit amounts for certain state employees.

HB2090, also by Roberts, relates to the Oklahoma Firefighters Pension and Retirement System. It modifies procedures for payment of death benefits. The measure was amended with title restored.

Committee substitute for **HB2094**, by Roberts, relates to the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Retirement System. Monson explained it was still in shell form. The bill would allow the selection of more than the required two physicians, in an effort to settle disputes over claims. The substitute also changed the notification of disputed claims from 60 to 30 days.

HB2189, authored by Rep. Jack Begley, D-Goodwell, requires the State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board to make certain payments to out-of-state hospitals. The bill's enacting clause and title were stricken. It was amended to clarify some language.

HB2422, another shell bill by Roberts, clarifies references to the Teachers' Retirement System of Oklahoma.

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