

## Crime & Judiciary

### EDUCATION IS EMPHASIS OF NEW JUVENILE JUSTICE MEASURE

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) A juvenile measure that emphasizes education as a deterrent to crime is advancing through the state Legislature.

**House Bill 2692** was endorsed 100-0 last month by the House of Representatives, received a "do pass" recommendation recently from the Senate Judiciary Committee and now awaits a vote by the full Senate.

The proposed law was introduced by House Majority Leader Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, and Sen. Ted Fisher, D-Sapulpa.

HB2692 would clarify and strengthen House Bill 2640, Benson's juvenile justice reform package signed into law in 1994.

A key feature of HB2692 is that it would deprive school drop-outs of the privilege to drive.

The bill would direct the state Department of Public Safety to deny or suspend a driver's license for anyone younger than 18 who cannot prove that he/she is enrolled in a public or private secondary school or vocation-technical school, is home schooled, has graduated from school or is enrolled in a general equivalency degree program.

Submitting false information about a student's school attendance would be deemed a misdemeanor crime.

When any youth between the ages of 14 and 18 drops out of school for any reason other than "circumstances beyond the control of the student," the school district's attendance office would be compelled by HB2692 to notify the Department of Public Safety.

The DPS then would be required to send a warning letter to the student, advising that his or her driver's license will be canceled within 30 days, for a period of at least two months, unless the student returns to school. The bill would accord a student a right to appeal a driver's license suspension or denial if the youth "had a legitimate reason to quit school," Benson added.

In a related vein, HB2692 would require schools to offer alternative education programs for disobedient and non-violent delinquent students. The bill decrees that any student who is suspended from school must be placed in "a supervised, structured environment in either an alternative school setting, another appropriate classroom, in-school suspension, or home-based instruction." The State Board of Education is directed to phase in a system of alternative education programs in schools throughout the state over the next five years.

Finally, another section of HB2692 would require a juvenile lawbreaker to make restitution to a victim, in an amount "not in excess of actual damages caused" by the minor, by working for the victim or by participating in public works programs and earmarking at least half of the juvenile's wages for the victim. The bill also stipulates that a supervised work program shall not interfere with the child's schooling.

FROM: HOUSE MEDIA

DATE: 03/25/96

### THREE BILLS ADVANCE THROUGH HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

■(GIT) Three bills received do pass recommendations Tuesday from the House's Committee on Criminal Justice:

**SB1062** by Sen. Dick Wilkerson, D-Atwood, and Rep. Jari Askins, D-Duncan, allowing the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation to establish a crimes information unit;

**SB1123** (committee substitute as amended) by Sen. Sam Helton, D-Lawton, and Rep. Ron Kirby, D-Lawton, modifying the list of prescription and non-prescription drugs to be included

(Continued)