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"Our business taxes are among the lowest in the nation, especially when it comes to manufacturing," said Senator Cal Hobson, Vice-chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "That makes our state especially attractive to the kind of companies that traditionally create the best jobs."

The Lexington legislator says the latest study was compiled on the advice of visiting economist Steven Gold of the Urban Institute.

The study by the Public Affairs Research Council (PAR) examined 11 southern states, all of which are among the 20 lowest tax states in the country. PAR used a model that applied actual tax burdens to hypothetical manufacturing concerns. In that comparison, Oklahoma consistently ranked among the states with the lowest manufacturing tax burdens.

"The numbers tell us that Oklahoma's tax structure is very competitive when it comes to attracting manufacturing, the most sought after industry. This is further evidence that Oklahoma is a low tax state with a very business friendly environment," said Senator Hobson.

Oklahoma also fares well in overall comparisons of business taxes. Oklahoma is 48th in property taxes and 43rd in corporate taxes. In overall per capita state and local taxes, Oklahoma ranks 44th.

"The lesson of all these statistics is that Oklahoma is already in good shape when it comes to taxes. If we really want to improve our state, we have to focus our energies and resources elsewhere, namely on education," said Senator Hobson.

"Every expert we've heard from has said Oklahoma needs to beef up its education system to be economically competitive," said Senator Hobson.

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Health & Human Services

HOUSE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MOVES BILLS

■(GIT) The House Committee on Public Health met Monday, passing several of its assigned measures.

SB587, by Rep. Gary Bastin, D-Del City, includes advanced practice nurses in a list of medical practitioners. It also allows those nurses, and others, to dispense professional drug samples and allows them to diagnose, prescribe, distribute and administer medicines or treatments as defined by the Board of Nursing. It also requires the nurses to accept responsibility to practice in an accepted manner for their profession. The measure received a do pass motion.

SB745, by Rep. Calvin J. Anthony, D-Stillwater, requires licensure of out-of-state physicians who regularly provide diagnostic evaluations to in-state physicians or patients. The measure was amended to exclude armed forces physicians and medical officers of the U.S. Public Health Service of the Veterans Administration of the United States. The measure received a do pass motion.

SB788, a committee substitute by Rep. Laura Boyd, D-Norman, creates the Licensed Perfusionists Act and the State Board of Examiners of Perfusionists. The measure received a do pass motion.

SB896, a committee substitute by Rep. Larry Roberts, D-Miami, transfers various powers and authorities of the State Employees Benefits Council from the Health Care Authority to the Council itself. The measure received a do pass motion.

SB1223, by Anthony, states that the Oklahoma Health Care Authority shall have the power and the duty to review and evaluate State Medicaid Program eligibility and enrollment guidelines in relation to federal regulations. The measure received a do pass motion.

SB1290, by Anthony, directs the State Board of Health to promulgate rules regarding the establishment of provider service networks. The measure received a do pass motion.

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