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BILL CHANGING ELECTORAL PROCESS PASSES SENATE COMMITTEE

By Brandon Beard
Staff Writer

HB 2381 Do Pass
HB 2940 Do Pass

■(GIT) Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations and Agency Oversight passed a measure designed to change the way Oklahoma distributes its electoral votes. **HB2940**, by Rep. Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, would require each of the state's eight presidential electoral votes to be won individually, instead of the current "winner takes all" method.

"I think it's going to create a partisan type vote within each district," said Sen. Mark Snyder, R-Edmond, who voted against the measure. "The president has to represent all of the people. The majority of the states elect their governor that way. The states should elect the president the same way."

Though she voted for the bill, Sen. Angela Monson, D-Oklahoma City, said it caused her concern. "It makes me nervous," she said, "to the extent that any time you are faced with substantial legislation you should be concerned."

"Democracy was built on the concept of one person one vote," she said. "Maybe this is the best way that Oklahoma's voting population would be equally represented."

Monson said she expects problems with the bill on the Senate floor, the bill's next stop. Unable to predict what kind of partisan flack it would draw, she expects the final vote will ultimately "boil down to a matter of personal preference."

Though she agreed the measure would probably see resistance on the floor, Committee Chairman Sen. Maxine Horner, D-Tulsa, said the bill would promote equity at the polls. "From the surface it presents fairness of representation," she said. "Republican or Democrat it will allow for that fairness."

Election Board Secretary Lance Ward said his main concern with the measure is how it will effect the state's election process. The measure would not affect the process, he said. "It really is a political decision," he said.

Though he was unable to speculate on possible partisan resistance, Ward said Oklahoma has not given any of its electoral votes to a Democratic presidential candidate since 1964, with the election of President Johnson.

"This issue is appropriately partisan," he said. "There is a time and a place for partisanship and politics and this is one of them."

Ward's statement rang true. With the support of committee Democrats and the opposition of Republicans, the measure was passed with a vote of 3 to 2. A vote is expected before the full Senate sometime next week.

Also addressed by the committee was **HB 2381**, by Sen. Dave Herbert, D-Midwest City, which modifies and limits the distribution of the Oklahoma Register. The bill was passed with a vote of 5 to 0.

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