

(Continued)

rhetoric," Weese said. Patrons of Union School District are paying dearly from their own pockets, but the state is not contributing its fair share, he asserted.

Union filed a lawsuit against the Tulsa County Treasurer, but the proceedings were halted temporarily pending the outcome of SB707, Weese said.

"The only way Union can get any justice is to challenge the constitutionality of a law that clearly was targeted at one county," he said. "Obviously we can't get a fair hearing in the Legislature."

DHS BUDGET STRIPPED OF \$23 MILLION OPEA URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION BY EMPLOYEES

From Oklahoma Public Employees Association

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) This last week saw the passage of SB837, which dealt a severe blow to the Department of Human Services budget. The issue is this: Governor Keating's advisors say DHS spends too much on Medicaid administrative costs. His advisors propose cutting nearly \$23 million from the DHS Medicaid budget.

Both sides are at a stalemate. Rather than hold up the entire appropriations process, through, the legislature and Governor have taken the \$22.6 million in question, and have put it aside in a special account called the "Medicaid Administrative Cost Fund". Under this arrangement, the Governor can't spend the money and neither can the legislature. Efforts are underway by both OPEA and DHS to educate the Governor's advisors that DHS administrative costs are NOT excessive.

Fortunately, there will be at least one more DHS appropriation bill passed later in the session which could add the \$22.6 million back into DHS budget. For that reason, the Association is calling up every DHS employee to write or call the Governor's office to tell Keating's staff that the \$22.6 million budget cut is not workable and explain that the loss of 400 to 600 field staff will be a disaster not only for Medicaid assistance, but AFDC, Food Stamps and other programs, as well.

NICKLES CALLS FOR TAX EQUITY AMENDMENT TO HEALTH CARE BILL

From U.S. Senator Don Nickles, R-Oklahoma

■(WASHINGTON) Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles today announced a plan to make the health care tax deduction more fair for all Americans.

"Right now, the tax code only allows a partial health insurance deduction for the self-employed, but gives corporations a 100 percent write-off," Nickles said. "That isn't fair."

"We use the tax code to encourage people to buy a home by providing a mortgage interest deduction. But we don't design the home. We don't say it has to be a big house or a little house. Everybody gets this deduction. And it's not dependent on whether you work on your own or for someone else. But with health care, it is dependent on where you work and that doesn't make any sense."

"My amendment is the first step toward equalizing the tax code by raising the deduction rate to 50 percent for the self-employed," Nickles said. "This is a positive step toward a more fair tax code for all Americans."