

(Continued)

One bill was motioned for report progress. **SB762**, authored by Rep. Gary Taylor, D-Dewey, modified language and statutory references relating to hunting and fishing licenses. It also modified the percentage of disability required for resident veterans to be exempt from licensing requirements to fifty percent from sixty percent.

SENATE VOTES — MARCH 28, 1996

By Brandon Beard
Staff Writer

**HB 2213 Passed w/
emergency clause**
**HB 2647 Passed w/
emergency clause**

■(GIT) Thursday, in addition to legislation, members of Senate voted to confirm three of Governor Frank Keating's appointments to the Board of Regents of Rogers State College.

With a vote of 40 to 0, members confirmed Timothy Best of Skiatook, James Henry Morrison of Tulsa and H.E. Reynolds of Coweta to the board.

Members also passed **HB2213**, by Sen. Robert M. Kerr, D-Altus. The measure modifies the description of geographic areas represented by the Red River Boundary Commission. The measure and its emergency clause passed with a vote of 42 to 0.

HB2647, by Sen. Dave Herbert, D-Midwest City, also passed as an emergency measure with a vote of 42 to 0. The measure amends title language relating to The Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority providing funds for repairs to Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department properties.

The Senate is scheduled to convene at 10:30 on Monday, April 1, 1996.

EMPLOYEE PAY RAISE BILL PASSES IN HOUSE SESSION

By Marta McCloskey
Staff Writer

**SB 876 Passed, w/
emergency clause**
SB 907 Passed
**SB 1128 Passed,
Amended**
SB 1147 Passed
HB 1138 Sent to GCCA

■(GIT) After a great deal of debate Thursday, House members voted 95 to 4 in favor of **SB1128**, authored Rep. Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore. The measure is an act that would raise the salaries of all state employees. The fiscal impact of this move would cost \$21.4 million over a period of six months. Steidley and Speaker of the House Glen D. Johnson, D-Okemah, said the Oklahoma Public Employees Association (OPEA) supports the bill. The bill was amended by Rep. Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, to begin administering raises January 1 opposed to June 1, 1996. This changes the provision from a fiscal to calendar year. The amendment was adopted by a vote of 53 to 46.

Members debated the bill. Rep. William Paulk, D-Oklahoma City, told fellow members that the Legislature can write the most "beautiful words," but now they needed to act. "In the Bible, it says that a show of faith can accomplished through words and by works." He continued, "They (state employees) have shown us that, therefore, I ask for members to support the bill."

Rep. Dan Webb, R-Oklahoma City, was first to debate in opposition of the bill. "A couple of years ago, I had dinner with former legislator, Clem McSpadden...he told me there was no difference between the state and federal governments, calling Oklahoma a little Congress." He added, "I sure hope if this passes, there will be enough funding left to cover education."

Also in opposition, Rep. Don Weese, R-Broken Arrow, told members that many times, bills go to conference and come back out completely different. "This gives the governor reasons to veto the bill," he said. "Will the Senate make this an opportunity to put the burden on the employees' backs." Weese suggested striking the title of the bill and the Benson amendment. "I believe it would be appropriate to reject this bill at this time." He added, "Let us stop using state employees as hostages...let's amend this bill and give employees every red cent."

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