

# STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

The instructions threatened the bill, Deuschendorf said, because Senate members of the conference committee would not agree to attach the amendments. That would result in the bill remaining in conference committee, effectively killing it.

If that happened, Deuschendorf would have the option of asking the House to release the instructions. In a story published in the Lawton Constitution, the Lawton lawmaker said he would ask the House to do just that.

"I am not unreasonable about this," Webb said. "If there was no way for this bill to go forward with the amendment attached, I believe the House would have released the conferees from the instructions."

"The problem is that Thursday was the deadline for him to have that motion. He didn't and if the bill dies, it is Abe Deuschendorf's fingerprints on the murder weapon."

Webb said he wants the bill to pass — with its original provisions and his amendments — and he encourages Deuschendorf to continue backing the bill.

—HOUSE MEDIA  
05/09/96

## MURCER "ANTI-SMOKING" AMENDMENT COULD STILL BECOME LAW

■(GIT) In a press conference held by the Oklahoma Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees), Sen. Ed Long, D-Enid, said an amendment to **HB2494**, inspired by former New York Yankees baseball legend Bobby Murcer, would allow municipalities to enforce harsher penalties on merchants who sell tobacco to minors. However, the amendment was excluded from the bill when it was considered by the Legislature, and although the bill has now been transmitted to the governor for approval, Long said he will try to include the amendment in other legislation.

Although the Jaycees and Long said **HB2494** is good legislation, they believe that municipalities should be given more options for enforcing anti-smoking legislation in their communities. The Jaycees, in accordance with their anti-youth smoking program, are asking merchants statewide to sign a pledge restricting the access of tobacco products to minors.

Jaycees President Teresa Mullican commented on the Murcer amendment, explaining that it would allow cities to prohibit

placement of tobacco vending machines and self-service displays in areas accessible to minors. "The amendment would also establish a licensing requirement subjecting tobacco retailers to a seven-day license suspension for reoccurring violations," she said.

Barbara Nickles, Jaycees project manager for the "Against Youth Smoking" program, said that 21 Jaycee chapters are participating in the "Responsible Merchant Pledge" campaign. "If merchants lock up liquor, then they should lock up tobacco, it is a drug too," she said.

Nickles said that over 300 stores in Oklahoma, such as Git-N-Go and Seven-Eleven, have already signed the pledge. She explained that the Jaycees did accept an "unrestricted" grant from the R.J. Reynolds tobacco company to help fund their anti-smoking programs.

Dean Henderson, a former smoker and current policy chair for the Tobacco Free Oklahoma Coalition, said that tobacco lobbyists were part of the problem. "We need to take laws away from tobacco lobbyists ... it is time for lawmakers to tell tobacco lobbyists to take a hike."

Henderson said, in addition to lobbyists, a certain segment of the Oklahoma Grocers' Association was not taking anti-minor smoking issues seriously enough. "Out of the \$400 daily tobacco product sales by store owners, **HB2494** would only fine them \$25. That fine is too easy."

In response, Nance said he was "extremely" supportive of **HB2494**. "That law will go a long way in keeping tobacco out of the hands of youth," he said. In fact, Nance explained that when he was in the Legislature, he was the first to endorse legislation that prohibited merchants from selling smokeless tobacco to youth.

—MARTA MCCLOSKEY  
05/06/96

## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS SERVICES

■(GIT) A group of lawmakers and employees from state agencies involved in providing various human services in Oklahoma meet on Monday to discuss ways to improve those efforts.

While no specific plan was adopted, those on the panel agreed to work together toward creating a plan that gives greater control to local agencies and unifies state agencies behind a common set of goals.

At issue is **SB1237**, by Rep. Sean Voskuhl, D-Marshall, and Sen. Penny Williams, D-Tulsa, which creates the Family Centered and Community Designed Services Act.

A similar piece of legislation was vetoed last year, those on the panel noted, and those involved this year hope to draft something that will be acceptable to the governor, as well as the heads of those state agencies involved.

A consensus of the group, however, is that state agencies have resisted efforts to be unified behind a common set of goals.

Tom Kemper, executive director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, said Oklahoma, unlike a number of other states, does not have a cooperative effort at the state level. That means, he explained, there are no funding priorities set and political influence, rather than needs, determines which programs are pushed each year.

"Until the state decides to set its priorities," Kemper said, "we won't have coordinated efforts."

While that assessment was echoed by many in the meeting, Secretary of Human Services Ken Lackey noted, "I think we can come up with some broad, shared goals, but in terms of developing a statewide plan, I don't think we can do that."

Lackey urged the committee to guard against developing another layer of government involvement and to allow successful local programs to continue their work.

Members of the committee expressed a hope to review programs implemented by other states before moving forward in the writing of any further legislation.

The committee is expected to meet again next Monday.

—SHAWN ASHLEY  
05/06/96

## RYAN LUKE BILL PASSES HOUSE

■(GIT) House members voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday in favor of the so-called Ryan Luke child abuse prevention bill, moving the matter to the Senate for its consideration.

Consideration of the measure, **HB2053**, by Rep. Laura Boyd, D-Norman, had been delayed nearly a week while its author and conference committee members worked out concerns over the possible costs of the pro-

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