

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

R-Midwest City, who proposed and won approval for the instructions concerning the abortion clinic rules.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
05/21/96

RYAN LUKE BILL WON'T SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma Public Employees Association (OPEA) is confident that the Ryan Luke bill will improve the state's child welfare system, but according to OPEA Executive Director Gary Jones, **HB2053** won't solve all the problems that currently haunt the system.

Jones is calling on legislative leaders and Governor Frank Keating to create a blue ribbon panel that will be charged with compiling a comprehensive plan to cure what ails Oklahoma's child welfare system.

"While OPEA believes **HB2053** will be helpful, the Association is putting Oklahomans on notice that it will not resolve all Oklahoma's child welfare problems," Jones commented this week. "While the bill addresses several important problems that must be resolved, many more issues still require attention and action."

Jones pointed out that OPEA has sent letters to the Governor, Speaker of the House Glen Johnson and President Pro Tem of the Senate Stratton Taylor, asking state leaders to take appropriate action.

—OPEA
05/21/96

GOVERNOR KEATING SIGNS RYAN LUKE BILL

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating signed **HB2053**, commonly called the Ryan Luke bill.

Among the key provisions of the law:

- ✓ Requiring monitoring by the court for one year after a child involved in an abuse or neglect situation is returned to parental custody

- ✓ Requiring training in child and domestic abuse issues for all judges involved in such cases

- ✓ Requiring court-appointed special advocates to be available in all judicial districts and appointment of an attorney to represent the interests of children in abuse cases

- ✓ Removing confidentiality from cases involving deaths and providing information to foster parents, law enforcement and child welfare agencies

- ✓ Requiring DHS to conduct criminal history investigations of prospective foster family members, and prohibiting placement of a child with any convicted sex offender or domestic abuser

- ✓ Permitting postponement of child placement rulings and reviewing when a child's welfare is endangered

"Growing up in this world is difficult enough for a child without having to worry about being abused by those who are supposed to love and care for you. I feel this new law goes a long way in making the system work on behalf of Oklahoma's children," the Governor said.

—THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
05/22/96

PUBLIC SAFETY

ZERO TOLERANCE BILL PASSES SENATE

■(GIT) "This is an effort at prevention," said Sen. Ben Brown, D-Oklaoma City, defending a measure he authored, creating a zero tolerance law for those under the age of 21 who drive while intoxicated. Members passed the measure, **SB1230**, Wednesday.

The bill states that persons under the age of 21 who have "any measurable quantity of alcohol" in their blood stream or breath may have their license suspended or revoked.

In addition, the measure allows for possible installation of ignition interlock devices in vehicles of offenders and requires the State Department of Education to administer drivers education programs in all schools in the state designed to increase awareness of drinking and driving dangers.

Maintaining the Education Department requirements only applied to schools that already have drivers education courses in place, Brown met with quick resistance.

"We can't have pay raises when we continue to mandate things to our schools that cost them more money," said Sen. Jerry Pierce, R-Tulsa.

"Before you can become a statesman you first have to get elected, and to get elected you have to be a politician pledging support for what the voters want."

Margaret Chase Smith
Declaration of Conscience, 1972

Sen. Mark Snyder, R-Edmond, echoed Pierce, calling the measure an unfunded mandate.

After adopting the measure's second conference committee report with a vote of 40 to 7, members passed the bill with a final vote of 42 to 5.

Brown lodged a motion to reconsider, giving him three legislative days to readdress the measure.

—BRANDON BEARD
05/22/96

LEGISLATURE APPROVES PARENTAL CONTROL OVER TEEN DRIVERS

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The State Senate has given approval to a measure giving parents a say in whether their teenagers can get a driver's license.

"Unfortunately, some teenagers simply are not mature enough or responsible enough to handle it. But under current law, even if a parent has a real concern about their child, there's nothing they can do to stop them from getting a driver's license as soon as they turn 16," said Sen. Brad Henry, D-Shawnee, principal author of the bill.

That would change if Governor Frank Keating signs **Senate Bill 1115** into law. Under **SB1115**, a parent would be able to file an objection with the local Department of Public Safety testing office to prevent their minor child from receiving a driver's license. Once a license is issued, parents would also have the ability to revoke a minor's driver's license until age 18. A revocation would remain in effect for at least three months.

The measure now awaits the Governor's signature.

—SENATE MEDIA
05/23/96

REVENUE & TAXATION

TUITION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS PASSED

■(GIT) A bill creating tax-free savings accounts to pay the costs of college passed the House on Monday, despite a Republican-driven effort to use the bill to increase the standard deduction and exemption of state taxpayers.

HB2059, by Rep. Laura Boyd, D-Norman, allows Oklahoma residents to deposit up to \$5,000 in so-called tuition savings accounts. The money deposited in the

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