



Capitol Network News

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Daily Edition, Wednesday, May 29, 1996

HOUSE SUSTAINS THREE LINE-ITEM VETOES

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) House Democrats were unsuccessful in three attempts on Wednesday to override Governor Frank Keating's line-item vetoes.

The action came as the House, as well as the Senate, appeared to become acutely aware of Friday's sine die deadline and rushed through a number of pending measures.

Four votes was all that separated two of the attempts from success on **HB1812** and **HB1800**. Five votes was the gap on **HB1792**, when Rep. Charles Gray, D-Oklahoma City, broke ranks and voted with Republicans in sustaining the governor's veto of additional funding for the Merit Protection Commission.

The Democrats launched their attack before noon on Wednesday, targeting first **HB1812** and the governor's veto of sections one and four. The sections appropriated funds to the State Election Board and the State Ethics Commission. The effort would ultimately fail 64-36, reflecting a straight party-line vote.

In urging the override, House Democrats referred repeatedly to the process of writing the state budget, reiterating several times that attempts to override a gubernatorial veto were comparable to the recommendations

made by the governor concerning the budget. In urging that the veto be sustained, House Republicans accused the opposing party of "trying to spend every dime they could get their hands on."

Rep. Tommy Thomas, D-Atoka, argued that the legislature and the governor needed "to put the money where their mouth is," saying Keating and lawmakers had endorsed a state employee pay raise and that part of

the money in the sections vetoed by the governor was appropriated for those raises.

"I would encourage each one of you to step up to the plate and override this veto," Thomas said.

In arguing for the override, Rep. Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, said he found the governor's veto message to be "not understandable." He added that the vetoed bill
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GOVERNOR ISSUES MORE LINE-ITEM VETOES

By Shawn Ashley
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■(GIT) Only hours after House members sustained one veto and minutes before they would vote to sustain two others, Governor Frank Keating on Wednesday vetoed seven line items in five bills.

The vetoes included:

✓ **HB1809**, section eight, appropriating \$114,921 to the Physician Manpower Training Commission;

✓ **SB802**, section one, appropriating \$975,287 to the Attorney General, and section 10, appropriating \$919,155 to the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System;

✓ **SB810**, section nine, which reappropriates \$75,000 to the State Department of Health for a statewide trauma system, and section 32, appropriating \$1.4 mil-

lion to the University Hospital Authority;

✓ **SB812**, section one, appropriating \$313,140 to the State Banking Department; and

✓ **SB818**, section one, appropriating \$229,610 to the Alcoholic Beverage Law Enforcement (ABLE) Commission.

Echoing the message of his previous line item vetoes, the governor wrote that the sections were vetoed "because the appropriations contained in those items exceeded the Executive Budget. The excess funds must be preserved for future budgetary needs in order to avoid fiscally irresponsible levels of overall spending."

In a prepared statement released Wednesday afternoon, the governor said he is prepared to veto as many non-essential line items as necessary to make up for what he called "reckless spending practices of the legislature."

"It's a very simple concept. We can't be loading up this year's budget if we can't pay for it again next year. That's exactly what the legislative leadership has done with higher education and I want to make sure Oklahoma's colleges and universities aren't left with a huge budget hole next year," the governor said.

Ironically, the governor signed off on a provision of **HB1809** which contained an additional \$71.4 million for higher education. What the governor has yet to do, however, is to sign or to veto **HB1810**, which

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