

**House Sustains**, continued from page 1  
sections dealt with important issues with which he felt there was general support.

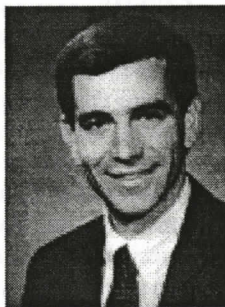
"This is an important part of the budget to insure that we have ethics and integrity in our elections," Steidley said, referring to the ethics commission appropriation. "This will send a bad message if we fail to override this veto.

"This seems like logical, common sense spending," Steidley added. "This may be a case where we need to save the governor from himself."

House Majority Leader Rep. Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, who also referred to the process involved in writing the state budget, turned some of his attention to the governor's advisors, some of whom were seated in the House gallery, arguing that the veto may have been the result of bad advice.

"If everyone stands up and votes their conscience," the majority leader said, "we can send a message to the governor's advisors. I don't think the governor would do this if he understood the consequences of his actions."

In response to the Democrats' arguments, Rep. Jim Reese, R-Narden, accused Democrats of packaging additional appropriations with the state employee pay raise in hopes of winning the governor's signature.



Rep. Jim Reese

"If anyone had asked, the governor is

more than happy to pay for the pay raise, but he had no choice. He had to veto the entire package," Reese said.

"I know members on both sides of the aisle know we're spending all of the state's money and who know we shouldn't be doing it," Reese added.

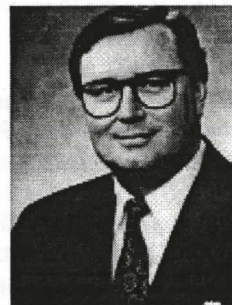
Asked whether Republicans might be portrayed negatively if they helped sustain a veto of ethics commission funding, Reese replied, "I don't think any one of us has anything to worry about. We've cast enough votes to prove we're for stronger ethics in government."

Rep. Leonard Sullivan, R-Oklahoma City, also accused House Democrats of irresponsible spending, saying they were waving a red flag in the governor's face.

"You're spending the state into bankruptcy," he said, "and we're looking at a shortfall next year. But the governor has given us an out, an opportunity to save face, but it looks like some of us would prefer to wave the red flag one more time."

Democrats, Sullivan added, were wanting to deny the governor his role in the governing process. "The governor has got to represent all of the three million people in the state," he said.

The most impassioned argument during the debate came from Speaker of the House Glen Johnson, D-Okemah, who also referred to the House effort as just another part of the budget process. Johnson also challenged Republican members to recall their vote on the bill last week, noting that it had passed by a 94-0 vote.



Rep. Glen Johnson

"This vote today is a vote on the process," Johnson emphasized. "When we brought this bill out here it did not result in a party line vote. It passed unanimously, 94-0.

"Today, I want to ask you, 'What has changed?'"

Additionally, Johnson said, "This vote is about commitment, about our commitment to the employees of this state and to the pay raise we have all gone on record in supporting."

Referring to the members of the governor's staff in the gallery, Johnson said that not only were they watching the outcome of the vote, "but the state of Oklahoma is

also watching.

"We voted unanimously for this bill last week, and not one word, not one line has changed," Johnson intoned. "Your vote today will say whether your vote is an independent vote or a vote subject to the whim of the governor when he decides he wants to veto something," Johnson said in conclusion and to applause from House Democrats.

Johnson's impassioned plea, however, was not enough, and along party lines, the House voted 64-36 on the override motion, four votes shy of the two-thirds vote needed to override the veto.

The vote was essentially the same late Wednesday evening when Democratic lawmakers set their sights on line-item vetoes in HB1800, where section 7 dealing with the Human Rights Commission and section 10 had been vetoed by the governor.

In launching what would become perhaps the most fiery speech of the legislative session, Rep. Don Ross, D-Tulsa, said, "I take this vote and the governor's veto personally. This is an absolute insult to a class of people in our state."

Picking out Republican members of the House by name, Ross reminded those on the

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would take \$31.5 million from OSEEGIB to help provide the \$71.4 million for higher education.

The governor also pledged in his statement that his vetoes will in no way effect pay raises for state employees.

"All state employees will get their pay raises despite the dangerous and irresponsible spending practices of the legislative leadership. I have always been supportive of the raises and, in fact, fought the leadership to make sure the raises took effect July 1," the governor said.

"If the legislature sends me back bills with my budget recommendations plus the pay raise money in them and no additional spending, I will sign them" Keating added. "It's too bad the legislative leadership chooses to play pork barrel politics with state employees' pay raises."

Whether such bills will make it to the governor's desk is yet to be seen. When GCCA chairman Jim Hamilton, D-Poteau, was asked if there was any other vehicle in which the vetoed employee pay raises could be incorporated, he replied: "Why? We've already given you this bill."

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