

Capitol Network News

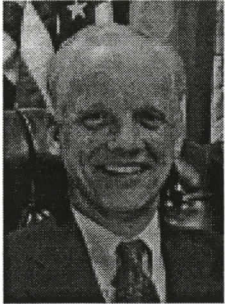
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SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO HEAR KEATING, LAWMAKERS' SUIT

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Oklahoma Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected a bid by Governor Frank Keating and two state lawmakers to have the state's highest court decide whether the legislature has violated the concept of separation of powers by making appointments to executive boards and commissions.

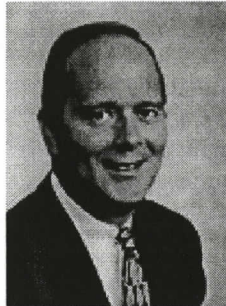


Gov. Frank Keating

The 5-4 decision means the lawsuit, which pits the governor and two Republican representatives against the Speaker of the House, the Senate's President Pro Tempore, a handful of Democratic lawmakers and other state officials, will be handled in district court, rather than by the state Supreme Court.

Governor Keating said he had not yet had time to review the court's opinion in impromptu remarks at a bill signing on Tuesday. The governor added that absent losing the case in court, he considered the ruling a victory. The governor also said he would continue to veto legislation that contains the controversial appointment powers provision.

At issue is whether the state's constitutional separation of powers doctrine is violated when the legislature vests in itself or legislative leaders the authority to make ap-



Sen. Stratton Taylor

pointments to executive branch boards and commissions whose function is the execution and administration of law.

Senate President Pro Tem Stratton Taylor said, "I'm pleased that the court accepted our arguments and de-

cided not to accept original jurisdiction in

the case. I think at this point, the best course of action for everyone involved, namely our state retirees, would be for Governor Keating to withdraw his lawsuit.

"Politicians of both parties," Taylor noted, "Democrat David Hall and Republican Claudette Henry, for example, have demonstrated what can happen when one person is in charge of huge amounts of state funds."

Writing for the five-member majority, Justice Robert E. Lavender said that the litigants showed no immediacy or urgency concerning the conflict which would justify the Supreme Court taking original jurisdiction over the case. Instead, the justice wrote, the court "must keep in mind its appellate na-

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SPEED LIMITS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AGAIN

By Brandon Beard
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The bill that would statutorily set Oklahoma's speed limits was sent back to its conference committee Tuesday with attached instructions to set speed limits on the state's interstate system at 75 mph.

SB685, by Senate Transportation Committee Vice Chairman Keith Leftwich, D-Oklahoma City, would encase the state's speed limits within the Oklahoma statutes.

The matter was originally addressed in an executive order from Governor Frank Keating when Congress gave the right to set speed limits back to the states late last year.

The bill would set the limits at 75 mph on turnpikes, 70 mph on highways and interstates and 65 mph in other locations. The measure also sets limits for hard-surfaced county roads at 55 mph and 45 mph for all others, unless otherwise posted. It also abolishes night-time speed limits and addresses truck and car speed limit issues.

Other provisions in the bill provide penalties for the destruction or defacing of traffic signs and clarifies what is the right-of-way on county roads.

Dodging flack from some members, Leftwich said in changing the 70 mph provision, members would be "effectively killing the bill."

"I don't believe this legislation will pass

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Sen. Keith Leftwich

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