



Capitol Network News

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WHAT A DIFFERENCE AN HOUR MAKES: HOUSE CONSIDERS 11 PIECES OF LEGISLATION IN FINAL HOUR

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Members of the House of Representatives did anything but drag their feet Friday in the waning minutes of the second session of the 45th Legislature.

In the session's final 60 minutes, House members disposed of 11 pieces of legislation, including the education reform bill, truth in sentencing-community corrections, creation of the state infrastructure bank and an education bill that includes a school-to-work provision.

The lawmakers' final hour followed a sometimes contentious debate over House Democrats' efforts to override the governor's line-item veto of funding for the attorney general's office and Oklahoma Indigent Defense System included in **SB802**.

Republicans, too, found their efforts to address issues raised by the governor's vetoes scuttled in just under 15 minutes.

As the House's final hour got under way, members were asked to consider **HB2821**, a minor appropriations bill for expenses of various executive, legislative and judicial agencies. Continuing an effort begun on Thursday, Republicans attempted to have the bill sent back to conference committee with instructions that would have funded the em-

ployee pay raises vetoed by the governor.

Governor Frank Keating, as well as GOP members of both legislative houses, maintained throughout the week that they supported funding for the \$1,200 annual state employee pay raise despite the governor's line-item vetoes in several bills that included that funding.

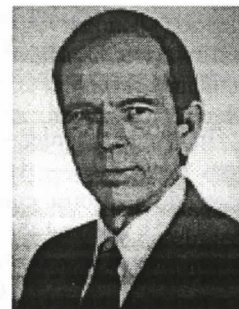
Rep. Chris Hastings, R-Tulsa, asked the bill's author, Rep. Jim Hamilton, D-Poteau, whether he was aware the pay raise instructions were on the clerk's desk for consideration. Hamilton told Hastings he was not aware of that, but then pressed the bill's con-

sideration.

Using a parliamentary maneuver, Hamilton successfully deterred Hastings' effort to have the bill discussed and the Republicans' effort to have the bill sent back to committee.

Faced with no other alternative, Republicans joined House Democrats and gave the bill a

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Rep. Jim Hamilton

SENATE OVERRIDES VETOES, HOUSE SUSTAINS

By Brandon Beard & Shawn Ashley
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■(GIT) Senate lawmakers overrode seven of Governor Frank Keating's vetoes Friday, but the House did not follow suit. The bills appropriating, among other things, the mandated employee pay-raises passed earlier this year, were struck down by the governor recently. The actions are expected to force many state agencies to take cuts in operating expenses and furlough employees to come up with money to fund the required salary increases.

With the exception of one, the overrides became moot issues when the House of Representatives failed to take them up, leaving the governor's actions intact.

The one veto taken up by both House and Senate was the line-item veto of **SB802**, appropriating funds to the Office of the Attorney General and the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System. Though passed in the Senate, House members defeated the initiative.

One override attempt failed in the Senate, **SB800**, appropriating funds to various educational entities. The governor vetoed two sections pertaining to the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation and the State Board of Vocational Technical Education.

The Teacher Preparation Commission lost \$1.5 million in operating expenses.

"The governor authorized \$1.8 million," said Sen. Darryl Roberts, D-Ardmore, "and the Legislature approved \$1.5 million. It is a little hard to understand why he would veto this."

The State Vo-Tech board received a cut of \$1.4 million in operating expenses.

SB805 would have deposited funds from the State Judicial Retirement Fund into the Supreme Court Revolving Fund until such time as the contribution required to pay the

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