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98-0 passing.

The situation was repeated during the House's consideration of its next bill, **SB849**, which appropriates reserve funds to agencies receiving federal funds and calls for reimbursement of reserve funds when federal funds are received. Despite efforts by Rep. Jim Reese, R-Narden, to slow the bill's consideration and have it returned to committee with the pay raise instructions, the bill was considered after very few questions and no debate. The bill received a passing vote 73-25.

In very short order — with neither questions nor debate — House members then adopted two House concurrent resolutions, **HCR1123**, creating the Task Force on Prevention of Genetic Discrimination; and **HCR1124**, directing the Oklahoma Tax Commission to draft minimum standards for fair and equitable guidelines for assisting county assessors and county excise boards in determining a fair cash value of privately owned broiler houses, poultry barns and swine operations for ad valorem tax purposes.

With just over three-quarters of an hour remaining, the House turned its attention to **SB1100**, the once controversial education reform bill. Removed from the bill were its most eye-raising provisions, such as charter schools, textbook selection changes and most of the repealers. What was left, Rep. Calvin Anthony, D-Stillwater, told his fellow House members was a bill that gave local school boards greater control in running their districts.

As it became obvious that some points of contention remained and that adoption of

the bill's conference committee report would be a matter of possibly significant debate, an unsuccessful effort to limit debate to three minutes per side failed. That led Hamilton to move previous question — a vote on whether the House would vote on the previous question, the conference committee report, with no further questions or debate.

The maneuver worked and the bill's conference committee report was adopted by a 56-34 vote, with Republicans casting the negative votes.

Realizing their desire to mount an opposition to the bill was on the verge of being crushed, Republicans asked for unanimous consent to limit debate on the bill to three minutes per side. While permitting very little time for debate on the bill, the move did allow an opportunity for the bill's opponents to express their opposition if only briefly.

Three Republicans rose to speak against the bill, leaving each with one minute of debate. Rep. Reese argued that the early childhood provision of the bill would divert some \$48 million from common education, rather than a lower amount claimed by the bill's proponents. That, Reese said, was because estimates on the number of eligible children for the program were simply too low.

Reese also accused the Senate of forcing the measure "down our throats in the final

minutes of the session."

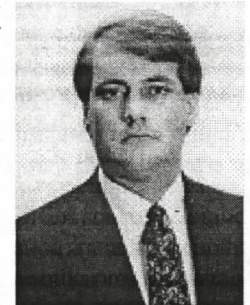
Rep. Mike O'Neal, R-Edmond, also expressed frustration with the way in which the bill was being handled and criticized the measure for falling short of his purported goal — education reform.

"There's not one reform in this bill," O'Neal charged. "All this bill does is let the government take responsibility away from kids' parents."

Rep. Richard Phillips, R-Warr Acres, used his one minute to not only condemn the bill up for consideration, but to chastise Democratic leaders in both houses for allowing so little time to the bill, as well as funding of the state employee pay raise.

Rep. Mike O'Neal

"This is not some Johnny-come-lately



Rep. Richard Phillips

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total normal cost for the year has been fully funded as determined by the system's actuary. The funds deposited into the Supreme Court Revolving Fund were to be used for the purposes of Supreme Court computer automation and security enhancements.

Keating declared the transfer to be unconstitutional, citing a section of the State Constitution that prohibits public retirement funds from being diverted for any other purpose other than providing benefits.

The governor also cut \$8.1 million from the State Department of Agriculture, contained in **SB814**, claiming the cuts were necessary to "avoid fiscally irresponsible levels of spending."

The funds were targeted to sustain such programs as the state employee pay-raise, the Rural Development Council and the Rural Fire Operations, which was to take \$1.6 million out of the state's Rainy Day Fund.

The governor's action on the bill also removed \$303,170 from the Horse Racing Commission.

By vetoing all of **SB816**, the governor cut \$29.4 million intended for the Oklahoma

Educational Television Authority (OETA), the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the State Arts Council.

Section one of **SB818** was also vetoed, taking \$229,610 out of the operating budget of the Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement (ABLE) Commission.

The funds were intended to provide additional secretarial support and to pay for data processing charges from the Office of State Finance.

"They have agents doing secretarial work over there," said Sen. Paul Muegge, D-Tonkawa.

By vetoing sections 9 of **SB810**, the governor removed \$75,000 from the State Department of Health's budget intended to implement a statewide trauma response system.

"Oklahoma does not have a comprehensive statewide trauma system," said Sen. Larry Dickerson, D-Poteau, a key figure in the measures creation. "That means that precious time is often lost for patients who've been injured in serious accidents. We are talking about life and death situations."

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