

BILL TO LIMIT TAX EXEMPT BONDS FOR POLITICIANS

By Brandon Beard
Staff Writer

■(GIT) A measure aimed at halting public officials' involvement in tax exempt bond negotiations passed the Senate Thursday, which sparked political dart throwing among members.

The bill, **HB1238**, by Sen. Kevin Easley, D-Broken Arrow, prevents elected officials and their spouses from participating in the bond transactions if they have a "direct or indirect financial interest in the project."

Calling the measure a "bullet," aimed at his professional livelihood, Sen. Charles Ford, R-Tulsa, said many elected officials in the state would be affected by its passage.

"It bothers me when we have people who have professions who chair committees who give life and death to legislation that directly affects their businesses," said the Tulsa real estate investor.

Other members felt the bill would hinder entrepreneurs from running for elected office.

"Don't vote for legislation that is going to hinder some young business men and women who want to run for office," said Sen. Dave Herbert, D-Midwest City.



Sen. Dave Herbert

Herbert, the focus of past media attention for a contract he once held with University Hospitals, suggested changing the bill to allow public officials to use the

tax-exempt bonds if they have not participated in related business dealings for four years.

"If someone is going lie, cheat and steal in a bond deal, then they are going to lie, cheat and steal whether it's illegal or not," he said.

Herbert said the measure would narrow public servants down to those who could afford to live on salaries paid by those who elected them. The former mayor of Midwest City reminded members he was only paid \$100 per month for that office.

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GOVERNOR TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PAY RAISE

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Governor Frank Keating or his successor could be paid more if lawmakers, as expected, consider and approve a bill increasing the office's salary.

Rep. Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, revealed late Thursday that a bill to increase the \$70,000 annual salary paid to the governor is likely to be brought before legislators.

"Some consideration is being given," Steidley told House members, "to introduction of legislation to increase the governor's salary and rightfully so."

The revelation came during questions concerning **SB804**, which appropriates money to the state's judicial system. A component of the bill gives judges from the associate district judge level to the justices on the Supreme Court a pay increase of 6.6 to 12 percent, Steidley said in response to a question from Rep. Wanda Jo Peltier, D-Oklahoma City.

And that means, Rep. Wayne Pettigrew, R-Edmond, said, that elected statewide office holders — such as the lieutenant governor, auditor and inspector, state treasurer and others — would receive a pay increase. That's because legislation passed in 1994 ties

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Rep. Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, reiterated that the problem had been addressed, by both the university and the legislature which on Wednesday passed a resolution prohibiting obscene material on state computer systems.

"Sometimes," Benson said in reference to the OU situation, "people have to have things called to their attention before they can take action. That's what happened here."

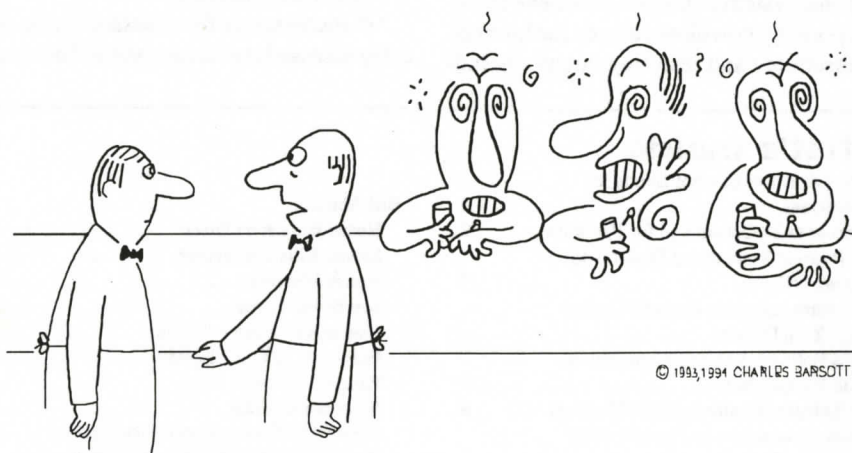
"I still think it's a question of management," Perry said before House members voted to approve the bill's conference report and gave the bill a 91-9 passing vote.

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"It looks like it's been another late night for the Legislature."