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statewide employee pay raise, vice chair Danny Hilliard, D-Sulphur, told the subcommittee during its first meeting.

Asking for additional pay raises were the ABLE Commission and the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

ABLE director Ron Willis told the subcommittee that his agency's request was the result of a study conducted by the Office of Personnel Management. Created in 1984 with the passage of liquor-by-the-drink, the agency has since seen its responsibilities expanded to include enforcement of charity gaming and tobacco laws.

The proposed pay raise, Willis noted, would affect only field agents and would not impact those in management positions. Willis estimated the cost of the pay raise at \$261,576 annually.

The request drew immediate criticism from Sen. Herb Rozell, D-Tahlequah. Rozell

repeatedly asked Willis whether the request was based on additional work being done by the agents.

Ultimately, Willis said it was, explaining that the agency's added responsibilities have meant the filing of more reports, more record keeping and a general greater workload.

A similar argument was made by OSBI director DeWade Langley. The agency director asked the subcommittee to consider approving a 5 percent pay increase that would affect some 230 employees in the agency.

The cost of the raise, Langley said, would be approximately \$379,260.

In addition to the agency's additional workload, Langley pointed to the small difference in salaries for new agents and career agents, which he estimated was just over \$200 per month. Also, the director noted, the agency was no longer competitive with the private sector, as well as other law en-

forcement agencies in Oklahoma and other states. That fact, Langley told the subcommittee, had been borne out by every agent who had left the agency for another law enforcement or related job.

Langley faced none of the questioning endured by Willis, partly because subcommittee vice chair Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, made it clear to the panel's members that such requests would be considered at a later meeting of the subcommittee.

Exactly when those requests will be heard is not yet clear. The subcommittee will meet again on Monday to hear from at least some of the six remaining agencies under its jurisdiction. Once the panel has heard from each of the agencies and gone through the steps of approving funding of the statewide employee pay raise and related benefits increase, it is expected to move into consideration of other additional funding requests, such as the OSBI and ABLE pay raises.

ATTORNEY GENERAL: DENTAL SPECIALISTS MUST BE DENTISTS FIRST

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Individuals planning to practice a dental specialty must first be licensed dentists, according to an opinion released this week by the state attorney general.

Responding to a request from Linda C. Campbell, executive director of the Oklahoma Board of Governors of Registered Dentists, Attorney General Drew Edmondson wrote, "An individual must first

obtain a general license to practice dentistry under 59 O.S. 1991, Section 328.21 before a license to practice a specialty can be issued under 59 O.S. 1991, Section 328.22"

The State Dental Act, 59 O.S. 1991, Section 328.1 to 328.73, Edmondson wrote, establishes the requirements for receiving a license to practice dentistry under the act. That statute makes clear, the attorney general wrote:

"No person, unless currently registered to practice dentistry or dental hygiene in this state at the effective date of this act, shall begin the practice of dentistry or dental hygiene for himself, a dentist, any institution or individual without first applying for and obtaining a license from the Board of Governors (of Registered Dentists) . . ."

The statute also requires, Edmondson wrote, "The issue of a specialists license by the Board of Governor is a special privilege granted to that member, which allows him to announce to the public that he is especially qualified in a particular branch of dentistry. Any member granted this special privilege must limit his practice to the specialty in which he is licensed, or said specialist's license may be revoked or suspended, as herein provided."

Attorney general's opinions are interpretations of the law, and do not have the force and effect of a court decision.

NICKLES, INHOFE PRESS USDA FOR ACTION ON DISASTER DECLARATION

From US Sens. Don Nickles
& James Inhofe

■(WASHINGTON) Oklahoma Senators Don Nickles and Jim Inhofe today called upon Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman to act quickly on a disaster declaration request submitted by Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating nearly four months ago.

In the letter, Nickles and Inhofe urged Glickman to allow farmers who have suffered crop losses to qualify for badly needed low interest loans through FSA.

"Oklahoma continues to suffer from excessively high temperatures and very little rainfall. Under these circumstances, we are concerned with your department's complacency in failing to provide relief to farmers in our state," the U.S. Senators wrote. "For many, it may already be too late. We urge you to act on this vital matter without any further delay."

*Enjoy the present hour,
Be thankful for the past,
And neither fear nor wish
Th' approaches of the last.*
Abraham Cowley

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