

# STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

Oklahoma's foster children by focusing our community efforts on their needs."

—FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
04/29/96

## DUCHESS OF YORK DELIVERS SECOND CHECK

■(GIT) In a presentation Monday at the Oklahoma University Health Sciences Center, Great Britain's Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, presented a check for \$150,000 to OU President David Boren. The funds come after a promise she made during a visit immediately following the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building.

During last year's visit, the duchess presented a check of the same amount from Koch Industries, a contribution to the construction of the new Center for Children's Health in Oklahoma City. She promised then to match the donation through her New York-based charity, Chances for Children.

The center will be an out-based pediatric facility, dedicated as a memorial to the children lost in the April 19, 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

"There will be a need in the next few years, as we move away from the traditional in-patient care," said Jake Lowery of the Children's Hospital of Oklahoma.

Dr. Terrence Stull, Department of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Oklahoma, said treating children in the appropriate location, allowing them to remain close to their families was key.

OU President David Boren called the new ambulatory center "important."

"The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and the people of Oklahoma City and our state extend our gratitude to Chances for Children and Koch Industries for their generosity," he said. "The new ambulatory care center is an important initiative for our hospital — the only full-service hospital dedicated to children in our state — and it will be a vital asset for all the children of Oklahoma."

No estimations have been made as to the completion date of the facility.

—BRANDON BEARD  
04/29/96

## ACTION ON RYAN LUKE BILL TEMPORARILY DELAYED

■(GIT) Hopes of winning passage of the so-called Ryan Luke bill faded temporarily on Tuesday when a fiscal analysis of the bill's

impact by the Department of Human Services reached representatives' desks.

Ironically, however, consideration of the bill and its likely passage is expected on Wednesday, the same day the man accused of killing the two-year-old toddler may have his fate determined by a Pittsburg County jury.

Rep. Laura Boyd, D-Norman, had hoped to win **HB2053**'s passage on what had been proclaimed as Child Abuse Prevention Day. But those hopes were dashed when, Boyd said, a DHS fiscal analysis put the costs of implementing the bill some \$550,000 higher than a similar House staff projection.

Boyd met with various members of the House during its morning session, apparently explaining provisions of the bill, as well as addressing the financial concerns.

The DHS fiscal analysis put the cost of implementing the bill at \$915,000, while the House projection was only \$370,000.

Boyd said the tremendous difference resulted from DHS' failure to take into account funding included in another bill that would increase the number of DHS case workers.

In addition, the Norman Democrat noted, the bill's Nov. 1 effective date means it will only have to be funded for two-thirds of the first year, rather than a full fiscal year as outlined in the department's analysis.

Boyd said she planned to meet with representatives from DHS on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the differences in the fiscal analyses, prior to taking the bill before the House on Wednesday.

Major changes in the conference committee version of the bill compared to the original legislation include extended monitoring of cases by the Department of Human Services for up to one year and a modification to child abuse case confidentiality standards allowing DHS, district attorneys or the Commission on Children and Youth to release a summary of facts and actions related to cases resulting in a child's death.

—SHAWN ASHLEY  
04/30/96

## DHS ASKS FOR OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE

■(GIT) An opportunity — That's what the Department of Human Service's executive director told members of the General Conference Committee on Appropriations' subcommittee on health and human services was needed for the agency to make improvements

in its efficiency and performance.

"I hope if you don't hear anything else today," George Miller, DHS executive director told the subcommittee members, "that you hear this — All we want is the opportunity to improve our efficiency and performance."

Miller appeared before the panel to discuss the recommendations contained in a recent study of the agency by the independent consulting firm of Peat-Marwick. A key component of the consultant's findings are the labeling of more than 200 DHS jobs as "questionable" and that those positions be considered for elimination.

Currently, Miller told the subcommittee, a committee from the Commission on Human Services, the department's governing board, is examining the consultant's recommendations and meeting with department division heads to determine which recommendations would be implemented.

Miller said a number of steps had already been taken in that direction, including discussions with legislators over a possible severance package for DHS employees who lose their jobs, talks with representatives from Oklahoma's peer states over successful programs there, the creation of an administrative task force to develop a business plan for the department and talks with vendors over the possible outsourcing of certain "non-core" functions.

"We can do better," Miller reiterated, "and we would like you to give us that opportunity."

Miller revealed that the department was currently examining the future elimination of some 295 field clerical positions. That, he explained, would be made possible by the use of new technologies.

Asked what other positions might be eliminated, Miller said he would not know until the commission's committee had time to review the report and speak with division leaders.

—SHAWN ASHLEY  
05/01/96

*"That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that History has to teach."*

Aldous Huxley