

# Capitol Network News

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## GOVERNOR ISSUES LINE-ITEM VETOES

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Appropriations of 'new money' to six state agencies were vetoed by the governor on Tuesday.

Governor Frank Keating vetoed the appropriations "because the appropriations contained in those items exceed the Executive Budget. The excess funds must be preserved for future budgetary needs in order to offset fiscally irresponsible spending in other parts of the budget," he wrote in his veto message for each of the bills containing a line item veto.

Agencies having their funding vetoed include the Office of the Auditor and Inspector and Oklahoma Tax Commission, **HB1787**; the Human Rights Commission and the Indian Affairs Commission, **HB1800**; and the State Election Board and State Ethics Commission, **HB1812**.

The appropriation to the Auditor and Inspector's Office included \$235,570 for the employee salary increase; \$30,664 for the OPERS increase resulting from the pay hike; \$200,000 for the replacement of revolving funds; \$50,000, moving expenses; \$35,000, county government commission; and \$80,000, data processing equipment up-

grades.

In the case of the Oklahoma Tax Commission, the appropriation included \$1.6 million for the employee salary increase; \$63,055 for the OPERS increase; \$135,000 for the administration of **HB2102**; and \$45,000 for a tax on demand distribution system.

In his budget recommendations for the 1997 fiscal year, the governor proposed an \$80,000 increase for the auditor and inspec-

tor to make up for a one-time loss of the same amount during the 1996 fiscal year. Keating also proposed a \$200,000 increase in funding for the tax commission for what he called "programming and policy changes needed to implement the Governor's tax cut proposals."

HB1800 appropriations to the Human Rights Commission, which totaled \$57,013 was earmarked for the employee salary in-

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## WORKERS COMPENSATION REFORM MEASURE PASSES SENATE

By Brandon Beard  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) A measure reforming the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Act passed the Senate Tuesday. The bill, **SB1310**, by Sen. Bernice Shedrick, D-Stillwater, received unanimous support, despite early opposition from a handful of members.

The bill is the result of a House interim study conducted late last year concerning the State Insurance Fund. A report was issued with recommendations to the Legislature on the course of action it should take with then pending legislation.

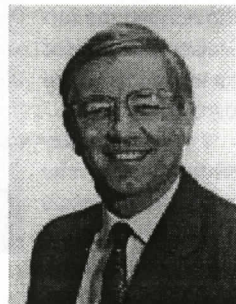
Calling the measure "premature," Sen. Howard Hendrick, R-Bethany, told Shedrick it was unfair to expect the Senate to vote on a measure "when the author of the bill has not even read the report."

Hendrick referred to the fact that Shedrick had not read the issued report and had difficulty answering questions about the bill. She claimed that the bill represents an agreement by all parties involved, including the State Insurance Fund.

Under the measure, insurers, except for the State Insurance Fund, must provide access to a certified workplace medical plan. After 60 days written notice to its insurance carrier, insurers may choose a plan of choice and contract for one year.

Also, if the State Insurance Fund fails to contract with at least three certified workplace medical plans, each covering at least 50 counties in the state, then the insured may contract for one year with a carrier of choice.

If an employee elects not to enroll in the certified workplace medical plan, they may choose from a list of physicians who meet



Sen. Howard  
Hendrick

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