

INHOFE INTRODUCES BILL TO REFORM CONGRESSIONAL PENSIONS

From US Sen. James Inhofe

■(WASHINGTON) U.S. Senator James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) announces the introduction of SB1776, legislation to limit pension benefits for members of Congress.

"This bill addresses the two most frequent appeals people make to Congress," Inhofe said. "First, that we have term limits, and second, that we have meaningful reform of the pension system. This bill does both and resolves these appeals forever. By limiting pensions, it will take away the financial incentive members have to stay insulated in Washington without going out and making a living in the real world."

Inhofe spoke at a Capitol press conference where he was joined by other co-sponsors in the House and Senate and by representatives of several citizens groups supporting the legislation. An identical bill has already been introduced in the House by Rep.

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REID-NICKLES BILL DENIES PENSIONS TO FELONS

From U.S. Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla.

■(WASHINGTON) U.S. Senators Harry Reid, D-NV, and Don Nickles, R-OK, are sponsoring legislation to cut off federal pensions to members of Congress convicted of felonies committed while in office.

"Taxpayers should not be paying retirement salaries to former members of Congress who have recklessly violated the public trust," Reid said. "If a congressman or senator becomes a convicted felon, they should relinquish their benefits gained through public office."

"Those who created the institution of the Congress of the United State would have been shocked to learn that former members convicted of felonies continue to draw their taxpayer-financed pensions," Nickles said.



Sen. Don Nickles

"The ability of the Congress to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities is damaged enough whenever a member is convicted of a felony. That damage is increased immeasurably when our citizens learn that the convicted members continue to draw their pensions. This bill will end that practice."

The Reid-Nickles Pension Forfeiture Act would halt the disbursement of pensions to members of Congress convicted of felonies related to their official duties. Crimes that would result in a loss of retirement benefits under this Act include bribery, perjury, and fraud. All crimes listed under the act are punishable by prison terms of more than one year.

"Someone who criminally abuses the power granted to them by the public should not be rewarded with a pension from the public they betrayed," Reid said. "Committing a felony while serving in Congress is a serious breach of duty and honor. This legislation is one small way to restore people's faith in the federal legislature."

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Before Anthony made his remarks, the House took the following actions:

HB2548, by Rep. Mark Seikel, D-Harrah, modifying language related to the Department of Human Services and claims or payroll, received a 94-0 passing vote, following the adoption of the bill's conference committee report.

Also receiving a passing vote was **HB2584**, by Rep. Randy Beutler, D-Elk City, which requires the approval of county commissioners for the sale by auction of properties acquired by the county under the provisions of the resale tax laws. The bill received a 99-0 passing vote with an emergency clause after House members gave their unanimous consent to the acceptance of its second conference committee report.

House members accepted the conference committee report for and gave a 87-12 passing vote to **HB2642**, by Rep. Bill Mitchell, D-Lindsay, exempting the sale of Oklahoma Magazine and production of merchandise for resale from the Central Purchasing Act; stating that specified services for the production of Oklahoma Today magazine shall also be exempt from the act; and extending petty cash fund usage to include the payment of bank charges and the purchasing of beverages and vending licenses. The measure in-

cludes an emergency clause.

HB2796, by Rep. Jari Askins, D-Duncan, received a passing vote of 99-0, following the adopting of the its second conference committee report. The measure provides that recordable instruments be written and printed in English and presented in a certain manner.

HB2971, by Rep. Russ Roach, D-Tulsa, clarifying language pertaining to the Oklahoma Police Pension and Retirement System, received a passing vote of 98-1 with an emergency clause following the adoption of the bill's conference committee report.

SB74, by Rep. Frank Davis, R-Guthrie, adding runaway child to the crime of contributing to delinquency, defining runaway child and criminalizing the harboring of runaway children, received a passing vote of 99-0 with an emergency clause following the adoption of its conference committee report.

SB680, the so-called bear wrestling bill, by Rep. Gary Stottlemire, D-Tulsa, received a passing vote of 99-0 with an emergency clause after the adoption of its conference committee report.

The bill prohibits bear wrestling and horse tripping events, as well as setting punishment for any individual who commits any assault and battery against a current or former spouse, an individual with whom the defen-

dant has had a child or former resident of the defendant's household.

SB719, by Rep. Larry Rice, D-Pryor, modifying the definition of record as it relates to the Oklahoma Open Records Act to include data files created by or used with computer software; modifying statutory references; exempting the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation from furnishing certain criminal history information, received a passing vote of 98-1 following the adoption of the bill's conference committee report.

SB1270, by Rep. Shelby Satterfield, D-Tulsa, defining wireless telephone company as it applies to the Nine-One-One Emergency Number Act, received a passing vote of 92-6 with an emergency clause following the adoption of its conference committee report.

A motion to reconsider the vote by which **HB2408** passed on Tuesday was tabled by a vote of 67-25. That means the bill is now headed to the Senate for consideration.

By unanimous consent, the House rejected the conference committee reports for the following **House measures** and granted additional conferences: **1621, 2059, 2143, 2512, 2812, 2893 and 2959.**

HCR1113 was withdrawn from the calendar and assigned to the House's Public Health Committee.