

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



cusing him of campaigning against all Democratic incumbent lawmakers by attempting to brand them with the "liberal" label.

Joining Benson and Adair in leadership positions was Rep. Fred Stanley, D-Madill, who was named caucus chairman by acclamation.

Named to the caucus' ethics committee were Rep. Betty Boyd, D-Tulsa; Rep. James Hager, D-Pawhuska; Rep. Bill Mitchell, D-Lindsay; Rep. Ron Langmacher, D-Carnegie; and Rep. Randall Erwin, D-Nashoba.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/07/96

HOUSE TURNOVER FALLS BELOW AVERAGE

■(GIT) The state House of Representatives saw its lowest turnover in recent memory as a result of Tuesday's general election, according to the director that legislative branch's media services, giving some credence to the idea that incumbency had its advantages.

"Usually, the turnover is from 22 to 25 percent," said House media services director Mike Ray. "This time it was only 15 percent."

More of the turnover, Wray noted, was the result of lawmakers' actions rather than the decisions made by voters at the polls. A total of six representatives retired from public service at the end of the 45th legislative session. Five others left their House seats in search of higher office.

Only three were defeated in Tuesday's general election.

Combined with one new lawmaker who will fill a previously-existing vacancy, that means 15 new faces will grace the House floor when the 46th Legislature convenes next year, including:

- Mike Wilt, R-Bartlesville, District 11;
- Bobby Frame, D-Checotah, District 15;
- Dale Turner, D-Holdenville, District 24;
- Terry Ingmire, R-Stillwater, District 34;
- Jim Newport, R-Ponca City, District 37;
- Wallace Collins, D-Norman, District 45;
- Raymond G. McCarter, D-Marlow, District 51;
- David B. Braddack, D-Altus, District 52;
- James Covey, D-Custer City, District 59;
- Hopper Smith, R-Tulsa, District 67;
- Darrell Gilbert, D-Tulsa, District 72;
- Phil Ostrander, D-Collinsville, District 74;

- Mark Liotta, R-Tulsa, District 77;
- Mary Easley, D-Tulsa, District 78; and
- Al Lindley, D-Oklahoma City, District 93.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/07/96

ELECTION IMPACTS REFORMERS, LIBERTARIANS

■(GIT) Tuesday's general election did little to change the face of the state legislature and gave the state its first 100 percent Republican-controlled congressional delegation.

But the election outcome's biggest impact may have been on the state's Reform and Libertarian parties. Preliminary results indicate that the Reform Party will retain its status as a recognized party through the 1998 election, while the Libertarian Party will cease to exist as a recognized party in the state.

State law mandates that recognized parties receive 10 percent of the vote in a presidential or gubernatorial election in order to maintain their status as recognized parties, State Election Board Secretary Lance Ward explained. The Reform Party's presidential candidate, H. Ross Perot, received 10.8 percent of Oklahoma's presidential ballots, while the Libertarian Party's candidate, Harry Browne, received only .46 percent of the votes. Those results are scheduled to be certified by the State Election Board on Friday.

Pending the results' certification, Ward said, "The Reform Party will remain a recognized party in the state, having received 10.8 percent of the vote. All that was required was that they receive 10 percent. The Libertarian Party will cease to exist once the results are certified."

That means, Ward added, that in order for the Libertarian Party to have candidates appear on future ballots that they will have to seek the signature of several thousand registered Oklahoma voters again.

There are two routes the party could go, Ward added. They could seek recognized party status, meaning voters could register to vote under the party's name, it could hold a primary and could field a candidate in any race, or they could become an unrecognized party, having only the right to have the party's candidates for president and vice president appear on the general election.

Becoming a recognized party requires the signatures of registered voters equal to or

more than five percent of the electorate participating in the general election. To become an unrecognized party, only three percent of those signatures is required.

The Libertarian Party was an unrecognized party in 1992, rising to recognized status for the 1996 election.

Those voters currently registered as members of the Libertarian Party, Ward added, will automatically become registered independents once the general election results are certified and the party is declared to no longer be recognized.

The Reform Party employed a similar manner to get a position on this year's ballot, obtaining the signatures of five percent of the number of voters participating in the last general election.

A new challenge, Ward noted, now faces the Reform Party:

It must field a gubernatorial candidate in 1998 or it risks losing its status as a recognized party.

"The law is clear," Ward explained. "To remain a recognized party, parties have to receive 10 percent of the votes in a presidential or gubernatorial election. If the party doesn't file a candidate, it can't get that 10 percent of the vote, and therefore, would cease to be a recognized party."

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/08/96

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

QUESTIONS SURROUND IMPLEMENTATION OF COFFMAN REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

■(GIT) George Miller hardly hesitates when he's asked about the recommendations made by a special governor's task force appointed to look into the death of an eight-year-old Cleveland County boy.

"We would love to carry out each and every one," said Miller, executive director of the Department of Human Services.

Then, however, he pauses.

"I'm doubtful we'll get all these things," he said, adding that the political environment is such that many want to privatize services, keep government out of peoples' lives and cut taxes.

"There's not many of the task force's recommendations that you can implement without crossing some of those lines."

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