



Capitol Network News

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FIERY DEMOCRATS CAUCUS, ELECT PRO TEMPORE

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Sixty-five fiery House Democrats caucused Thursday, dividing their time between serious legislative and caucus matters and attacks on Republicans, particularly the governor.

It was during the speaker pro tempore nomination speeches that the Democratic lawmakers' feelings began to be made known.

"We have just endured one of the most vicious political onslaughts in history," Rep. Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, said in his endorsement of Rep. Larry Adair, D-Stilwell, who went on to be elected speaker pro tempore, "and we have emerged with our integrity and a new sense of purpose to pursue a common sense, progressive agenda, which we will dare the governor to veto if he has the audacity to do so."

Steidley characterized Republican attacks during the just-ended political campaigns as "filled with untruths, half-truths, distortions and character assassinations brought forth in the name of religion and conservatism." The truth, Steidley said, was that those who advanced such positions were

"more intolerant, less compassionate and more regressive" than those they attacked.

Adair pointed his finger squarely at the governor, accusing him of leading the assault against Democratic lawmakers.

Rep. Jack Begley, D-Goodwell and Adair's challenger for the post, called the recent election a learning experience, particularly for his family.

"My family learned I voted to have condoms passed out to homosexuals, to release prisoners from prison to raise millions of dollars of fees, against teachers and small business and the taxpayers, apple pie and Chevrolet," Begley said.

That type of campaigning, Begley said, had to be stopped, adding that he was willing to sponsor legislation aimed at requiring political advertising be true and disclose from where certain information came.

By secret ballot, Adair won the post by a vote of 35 to 30.

Representative Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, who was named Speaker of the House-designate by acclamation during the caucus, also took the governor to task, accusing him of campaigning against all Democratic incumbent lawmakers by attempting to brand them with the "liberal" label.

"He came up with zero," Benson said to the applause of his fellow Democrats.

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.

HOUSE TURNOVER FALLS BELOW AVERAGE

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(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 Wray. "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 16 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.

Some of those new members will get a baptism by fire. Although not scheduled to be sworn in until later this month, Republicans and Democrat representatives were set to caucus on Thursday to discuss various matters concerning the 46th legislature.

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