



Capitol Network News

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HENRY, WILLIAMS TAKE COMMITTEE POSTS

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Two of the Senate's most powerful committees will be lead by new faces when the 46th Legislature convenes.



Sen. Brad Henry

Sen. Brad Henry, D-Shawnee, will assume leadership of the Senate's Judiciary Committee, while the Senate's Education Committee will be lead by Sen. Penny Williams, D-Tulsa. Henry takes over the post vacated by Bernice Shedrick when she resigned from the Senate, while Williams' appointment comes on the heels of committee chairman Ed Long's defeat during the Nov. 5 general election.

The appointments were made by President Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor, D-Claremore.

"In many respects, this is one of the most powerful committees [Judiciary] in the legislature," said Taylor. "Some of the most difficult issues facing our state are first addressed by the committee that Senator Henry will chair. His proven leadership in other committees, his legal expertise and strong concerns about Oklahoma families made him the perfect choice for this chairmanship."

A chair of the committee, Henry will oversee legislation relating to civil laws and most constitutional amendments. The panel is also responsible for bills dealing with the state judicial system and pension programs.

"I'm very honored to have this opportunity to take on yet another challenge in the state Senate," Henry said, "and look forward to working with the public and fellow lawmakers as we strive to develop policies and legislation that will protect our citizens and continue to strengthen our great state."

Williams, too was praised by Taylor.

"Penny Williams has been fighting for quality education from the first day she

stepped into the legislature," Taylor said. "This is a well-earned, battlefield promotion and no one deserves it more than Penny Williams."

As chair of the committee, Williams will lead the panel through its work on bills dealing with common education, higher education and vocational-technical education.



Sen. Penny Williams

"We need to renew and strengthen our commitment to public education to create a dramatically greater range of educational choices for students and parents," Williams said. "We've made some great strides in education in just the past few years, but we have to continue those efforts if our children are truly going to be ready for the challenges of the 21st Century."

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SENATOR FISHER FILES 46TH LEGISLATURE'S FIRST BILLS

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Sapulpa's Democratic Sen. Ted Fisher laid claim to the Senate's first and second bill numbers Friday by prefiling two pieces of legislation.



Sen. Ted Fisher

SB1 would create a new section of law that would require the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics to solicit proposals and award grants for pilot projects that develop and establish model programs implementing advanced science and math curriculum at local vo-tech or school sites by distance learning. The bill would also create an advisory

council made up of local superintendents to establish student participation criteria in such pilot programs, determining the curriculum needs and to work in the recruitment and hiring of faculty for the pilot program, all in conjunction with the School of Science and Mathematics.

The bill carries an emergency clause.

SB2, which has a proposed Nov. 1, 1997 effective date, would increase the membership of the Physical Therapy Committee from three to five and would require that foreign-trained applicants for a license to practice physical therapy or as an assistant to a physical therapist would have to satisfy the State Board of Medical Licensure that they have completed the necessary education and training. The bill would also require the licensure board to establish a program of continuing education for physical therapists and their assistants.