

PHILLIPS: LAWMAKERS CAN'T HELP PROTECT CROSSES

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) A state lawmaker would like to see the state legislature consider a measure that would protect municipalities with crosses on their city seals, but admits such an effort would likely be "moot."

"I believe the state legislature would pass something like that," Rep. Richard Phillips, R-Warr Acres, said. "I think the overwhelming majority of Oklahomans would support it, and I hope a majority of Americans would support it."

"But in the end, I don't think there's anything we could do. I think it would be moot, because the separation of church and state is something ultimately left to the Supreme Court."

While legislative action is unlikely and would probably prove unfruitful, Phillips is urging municipalities to protect such seals. On Tuesday, the Warr Acres lawmaker urged members of the Bethany city council to "re-

ject the pressure of liberal courts" and ignore demands to alter that city's seal.

In a letter to Bethany mayor Don Willis and members of the city council, Phillips asked officials to stand up to "a small vocal group of morally destructive attack dogs to influence a city that was originally created and made great by true believers in human decency and a love for the life God has bestowed upon us."

At issue is a demand by Rev. James Shields that the words "Southern Nazarene University" be removed from Bethany's city seal. Shields, a retired Methodist minister, says he thinks the phrase violates constitutional provisions for separation of church and state.

"Mr. Shields is part of a growing minority in our society that wants to challenge the most basic human need for a sense of belonging," Phillips wrote in the letter to Bethany officials. "The ideas of the people who launch these types of attacks are not the beliefs of the people who worked and sacrificed through the years to insure that their children and grandchildren could have a community that recognizes the values of hard work, a sense of giving, and most of all, a relationship with our creator."

A similar dispute in Edmond resulted in a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court which required that city to remove a Christian cross from its city seal earlier this year.

WORKING WOMEN COUNT!

From U.S. Dept. of Labor

■(WASHINGTON) Working women across the United States believe their pay and benefits should provide economic security, the workplace culture should support and respect families and that opportunities should reflect the value of women's work, according to a survey conducted by the Women's Bureau.

The Working Women Count! survey also reports that health and pension benefits are crucial issues to American women.

The survey included a popular questionnaire distributed to the public in all 50 states, the Virgin Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico. The Bureau also conducted a telephone survey with a scientifically selected, national random sample, from which it drew specific results for its report.

According to the survey report, many women in the United States are the breadwinners and some the sole support of their families. However, the women are not getting the pay and benefits commensurate with the work they do, the level of responsibility they hold or the societal contribution they make.

"Improving pay scales and health care insurance for all are the two top-ranking priorities for workplace change of respondents in both the scientific and popular samples," the report states.

Women make up half of the American workforce and many of those women have families that are very important to them, according to survey results.

"(The women) feel that neither their employers nor public policy adequately recognize or support women's family responsibilities," the survey report states. "They report that problems with child care are deep and

pervasive, affecting families across the economic spectrum."

In response to these concerns, President Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, which was enacted in 1993. He also signed the Head Start Reauthorization bill, which expands the number of eligible children and creates some full-day, full-year slots to better serve working parents.

Working women reported that they have valuable skills and on-the-job experience, but often do not get recognition and credit for what they can do. The women also report they do not have access to training to build their skills and increase their marketability.

"Time and time again, women describe a work world that still compensates women in almost every job and profession at a lesser rate than men, defines jobs done primarily by women as less valuable, and fails to acknowledge that women are mainstays in both the workplace and the home," the report states.

Of critical concern to many women are health and pension benefits. Forty-three percent of women who work part-time and 34 percent of women over 55 years old lack health care insurance. These percentages far exceed the 18 percent of the general population who lack health insurance, the report states.

Fifty-seven percent of the women surveyed give their pension plans negative ratings, including 23 percent who have no pension at all.

GOVERNOR ATTENDS AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT AT GM PLANT

From The Governor's Office

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating attended a ceremony Wednesday at the General Motors Plant in Oklahoma City where *Motor Trend Magazine* awarded its most prestigious honor — The 1997 Car of the Year Award — to the Chevrolet Malibu, being built solely at the Oklahoma City GM plant.

The Governor also addressed a crowd of state officials, auto industry representatives and General Motors employees who gathered for the ceremony.

"This is a tremendous honor for the state of Oklahoma and more specifically the Oklahoma City General Motors plant to host this landmark event and it's a credit to the thousands of local GM employees involved in the production of the new Chevrolet Malibu. The Malibu is produced solely by Oklahomans and it's obvious by today's honor from *Motor Trend* that the new Malibu is a quality product," the Governor commented.

"Oklahomans are known for their intense work ethic and the productivity of the Oklahoma City GM plant is certainly no surprise to me. I'm honored to have the privilege to assist in showcasing our plant and its employees to the rest of the country. This award is a true compliment to their efforts," the Governor said.

"To think is not enough, you must think of something."

Jules Renard, *Journal*, 1899