

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

How many bills will cross lawmakers' desks is uncertain, even among those who deal with the measures.

"It's just too hard to guess" how many measures will be filed, Larry Warden, chief House of Representatives clerk, said. "Each of the past few years they have set a new record, but that doesn't mean it's been a tremendous increase, just a slight increase."

"With only 15 new members in the House," added Warden, "we could see the number being held down, because the already established members are more focused and know which issues they want to deal with."

Of the 1,884 measures introduced during the second session of the 45th Legislature:

- ✓ The governor signed 355 bills and 12 joint resolutions, including 207 House bills and 148 Senate bills, eight House and four Senate joint resolutions;

- ✓ An additional 132 simple and concurrent House and Senate resolutions were adopted and filed with the Secretary of State; and

- ✓ One House bill and one Senate joint resolution were sent to the Secretary of State rather than the governor because they called for statewide elections on constitutional amendments, including the recently-adopted ad valorem reform proposals and Crime Victims' Bill of Rights.

At the same time, Governor Frank Keating issued a total of 52 vetoes, including 17 line-item vetoes, during the 45th's second session and his second legislative term as governor. When added to Keating's single-year record of 57 vetoes at the end of the 45th's first meeting, the governor's two-year total stands at 109, outpacing many of the state's former chief executives.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/20/96

ELECTION BOARD BEGINNING PURGE PROCESS

■(GIT) The enactment of the so-called Motor Voter Law put an end to voter registration purges in Oklahoma as they were once known, but now the State Election Board is gearing up to implement a new process that could result in some voters having their names dropped from the rolls.

Three groups of non-voters, Ward said, have been identified and will be sent letters that, combined with the voter registrants' own actions, will determine whether their names remain on the voting rolls.

The first group, Ward explained, are the potential duplicates, individuals who for one reason or another are registered in two or more different precincts.

Those individuals, the state election board secretary explained, will be asked to identify their correct place of residence. If they fail to respond and fail to vote in the next two general elections — 1998 and 2000 — their names will be removed from the voter rolls, Ward said.

The second group will be made up of those to whom the election board has sent first class mail, including such things as voter registration cards and absentee ballots, and the mail has been returned. If they fail to respond to a letter from the board and fail to vote in the next two general elections, Ward said, their names, too, will be removed from the voting rolls.

The final group is made up of those registered voters who have not voted in the past two general elections, 1994 and 1996. They will receive a letter, according to Ward, asking that they confirm their place of residence.

"Everyone who responds to that letter," Ward said, "will remain on the voter rolls. If, however, they fail to respond and do not vote in the next two general elections, they, like those in the other two groups, will be removed from the rolls."

Once a person is removed from the rolls, Ward added, they are not completely removed from the election process. They are free, he explained, to re-register and to vote in future elections.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/20/96

PHILLIPS: LAWMAKERS CAN'T HELP PROTECT CROSSES

■(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 "reject 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.

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.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/20/96

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

THE DIABETES THREAT TO OKLAHOMA

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) In a 1994 report on Oklahoma, it was estimated that 183,000 Oklahomans have diabetes, and only half have been diagnosed. Oklahomans with diabetes face not only a shortened life span but also suffer significant diabetes related complications.

"The 1993 data reflected that 641 deaths were due to diabetes," said J.R. Nida, M.D., commissioner of health, "and the cost of diabetes to Oklahoma was estimated at \$1.2 billion in both medical care (direct) and lost productivity (indirect) costs." Diabetes is a chronic disease that impairs the body's ability to use food properly.

"While there is no cure for diabetes as yet, it can be controlled," said Nida. "The main goal of diabetes treatment is to control blood glucose levels and keep them in the target range. The specific kind of treatment used to control blood glucose depends on the type of diabetes a person has."

Type I (insulin dependent) Diabetes oc-

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