

Oklahoma State Senate

May 11, 2010

Senate Review by Gary Stanislawski

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Work continues at the Capitol as we race for the finish. We have only three weeks remaining before Sine Die on Friday, May 28. As I mentioned before, these last weeks will consist of work on the budget and in conference committees to find agreeable language on the remaining bills.

As of Friday, the Governor had signed 210 bills into law and vetoed eight.

Some interesting bills have been approved in the Legislature recently.

SB 1941 creates the Innovative Funding for Oklahoma Roads Task Force to study and evaluate innovations, technologies, and new methods being employed to more adequately and equitably fund road and bridge infrastructure in the state. The Governor signed the bill into law this past week.

HB 2998 authorizes the Department of Corrections to implement a pilot program to provide diversion programs to reduce the high rate of female incarceration and provide re-entry services that employ evidence-based practices and techniques. This bill has been sent to a conference committee for further work.

SJR 51 proposes a constitutional amendment increasing from 10 percent to 20 percent of the General Revenue certification for the preceding fiscal year the amount of surplus funds to be placed in the Constitutional Reserve Fund. The House amended this resolution. Therefore, the Senate has to vote on it again and approve those amendments in order for it to go on the November ballot. Normally, the Governor has to approve joint resolutions, but not when they submit a question to a vote of the people.

SB 1759 adds funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to the Taxpayer Transparency Act. This is a tremendous bill in that, as taxpayers, we'll be able to see how every penny of the federal funding is being spent. The House amended this bill so the Senate will have to approve those changes before it can go on to the Governor. If the Senate doesn't approve the amendments, then the bill will go to a conference committee.

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SB 2259 requires the Department of Corrections to post on its website and to transmit to the Governor, Speaker of the House and President Pro Tempore of the Senate a report on the department's progress regarding its reintegration efforts through the use of work release programs. The House also amended this measure but the Senate didn't concur with those changes so it is headed to conference.

SB 2300 prohibits any person from obtaining or renewing a drivers license, identification card or motor vehicle registration if there is an outstanding warrant from an Oklahoma state or municipal court. This bill was also amended in the House and the Senate didn't concur with the amendments so this measure will next be heard in a conference committee.

I'm pleased to say that two more bills of which I was the Senate principal author of have been signed into law.

SB 2073 Allows consumers to sign a form requiring insurance companies to continue to release information to the consumers' insurance agent who represents that consumer.

HB 2671 Increases the age of consumers from 65 to 72 to be able to purchase burial policies.