

Oklahoma State Senate

February 21, 2011

Senate Review by Gary Stanislawski

The second week of session was busy. Being that the first week was cut short, we did our best to get back on schedule in our committees. I'm pleased to say that 12 of my bills cleared their next legislative hurdle.

Before I discuss those bills, I need to tell you that the Senate has instituted a new committee procedure in order to slow the committee process down and ensure good bills are passing out of the various committees. Those bills that have a fiscal impact, but also make a change in state policy, are being double-assigned in committees.

This new procedure is a good system of checks and balances. We need to ensure that by the time legislation gets to the full Senate, committee members have had adequate time to understand the policy and fiscal impacts of a bill.

Several of my bills have been double-assigned including SB 80 and 279, which I discussed last week. They will now go before the full Appropriations Committee. Other bills I touched on last week that have moved forward are SB 109 and SB 280 which will now be heard by the full Senate.

Senate Bills 272, 397, 398 and 536 have all progressed to the Senate floor. SB 272 would prohibit a car manufacturer from charging back incentives and rebates earned by a new car dealer when the dealer cannot prove a newly purchased car (that had rebate/incentives) was actually titled in the purchasers name in this state. The bill would require the dealer to have proof of the actual purchase transaction to retain the rebate/incentives, but the dealer would not have to prove the purchaser completed title and registration after buying the car.

This is to address situations where manufacturers have been declining to pay rebates/incentives or make inventory adjustments when a dealer can't prove the new vehicle has been issued an original title and registration in the name of the purchaser in this state. Sometimes, the purchaser will take the vehicle to another state and title it there, or sometimes the purchaser will sell the vehicle to another person, or have it titled in another person's name.

Under current law these would cause the dealer to lose rebates, incentives and inventory benefits.

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SB 397 would require that courses and programs offered online for continuing education credit insurance producers and customer services reps be designed to present materials in a way that allows the participant to complete the entire course without a proctor.

SB 398 expands the definition of the state's Do Not Call List and would allow consumers to opt out of receiving unsolicited cell phone calls or text messages.

SB 536 establishes the Task Force on Creating Administrative Efficiencies to examine ways to reduce administrative costs and the impact of the reduction on school district operations and student learning.

Senate Bills 234 and 278 are awaiting consideration by the full Appropriations Committee. Currently retired members of OTRS can return to work and earn up to a specified amount without retirement benefit reductions. As a condition for returning to work, the employer has to pay in to OTRS the standard employer contribution (either 9.5% or 8.55%). SB 234 makes the employer (school district) also pay the 7% employee contribution.

SB 278 permits a charter school to be sponsored by the State Board of Education for the purpose of establishing a statewide Virtual charter school in which all students within the state are eligible to enroll.

SB 711 is awaiting consideration by the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government as well as the full Appropriations Committee. This bill authorizes the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to file an application with the U.S. Department of Transportation to assume all, or part, of the National Environmental Policy Act.

The deadline for bills that don't have a fiscal impact is Monday, Feb. 28 while double-assigned bills have to be reported from their second committee by Thursday, March 3. We then have until Thursday, March 17 to take floor action on all the Senate bills that were approved in committee. We'll then move back to our committees to start working on House bills.

If you have a question or comment about state government, you can contact me by writing to Senator Gary Stanislawski, Room 427A, State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Or you can call us at (405) 521-5624.