



Senate Review by Gary Stanislawski

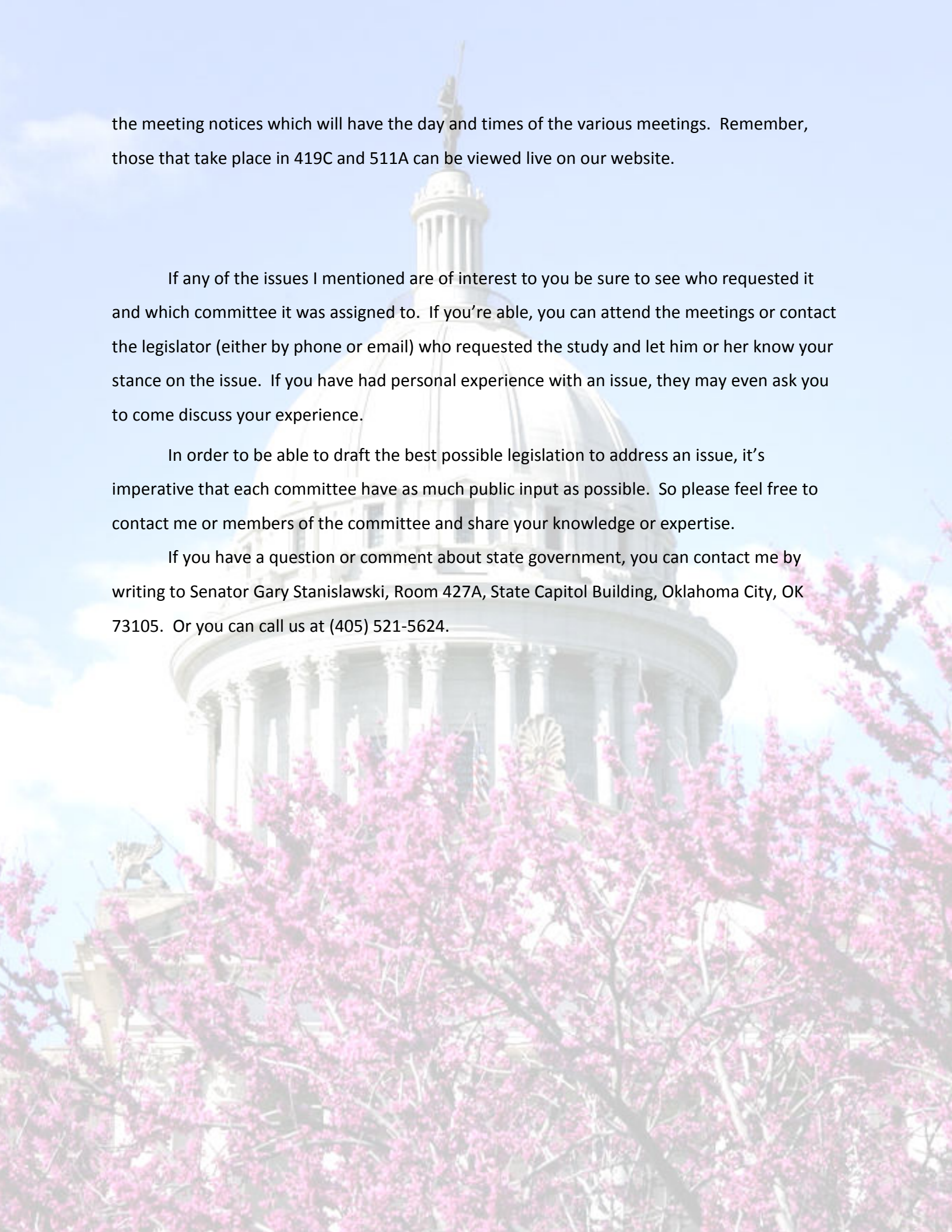
August 2, 2011

Even though session is over, our work continues at the Capitol. The interim, which runs from June to December, is an important time for legislators. This is when Interim studies and Task Force meetings take place. These are public meetings where the House and Senate bring in experts and private citizens who have knowledge or personal experience with the various issues. These individuals give presentations or talk about how they have been affected by a particular issue. The committee members then have the opportunity to ask them questions and, if needed, they'll have the House or Senate staff conduct further research on the issues.

Committee members will then work to come up with a solution to the issue they were working on. If they can agree, together they will have staff draft a bill. Sometimes, legislators also have differing opinions as to how an issue needs to be addressed so we'll end up with more than one bill on a particular issue. Our colleagues will then have the opportunity during session to decide for themselves which is the best way to address an issue and they'll vote for that particular bill.

This year, the Senate will conduct 29 interim studies on a wide range of issues. These include, among others, capital bonds; water issues; in-state and out-of-state contractors; mental health; privatizing state parks; bail bondsman and insurance; workers comp; breast cancer programs; capital improvements; energy policy; rural fire departments; library funding; insurance; car tags; the state lottery; meth; uses of gross production tax revenue; courtroom security procedures; higher education; the problem of juvenile "sexting"; daycares; and senior nutrition funding.

A complete list can be found on the Senate website at www.oksenate.gov under "Committees" and then "Interim Studies". There you'll find a description of each study, who requested it and in which Senate committee it will be heard. On our homepage, you'll also find

The background of the page is a photograph of the Oklahoma State Capitol building. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent central dome topped by a statue. The building is surrounded by lush greenery and pink cherry blossom trees in the foreground, which are in full bloom. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a spring day.

the meeting notices which will have the day and times of the various meetings. Remember, those that take place in 419C and 511A can be viewed live on our website.

If any of the issues I mentioned are of interest to you be sure to see who requested it and which committee it was assigned to. If you're able, you can attend the meetings or contact the legislator (either by phone or email) who requested the study and let him or her know your stance on the issue. If you have had personal experience with an issue, they may even ask you to come discuss your experience.

In order to be able to draft the best possible legislation to address an issue, it's imperative that each committee have as much public input as possible. So please feel free to contact me or members of the committee and share your knowledge or expertise.

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.