

# Gun control plan met with hostility

AUSTIN, Tex. (AP) — A hostile crowd greeted Rep. Paul Ragsdale Wednesday night as he outlined his plan for gun control before the House Transportation Committee.

Ragsdale, D-Dallas, said his bill, which does not affect ownership of rifles and shotguns, would control handguns and specifically outlaw the cheaper weapons known as "Saturday-night specials."

Speaking before a packed committee hearing where over 40 persons had registered to speak on the bill, Ragsdale said he had no opposition to people who use handguns properly.

Rep. Joe Salem, D-Corpus Christi, brought cheers from the audience when he said, "Taking away my guns is not going to solve the problems of murders. If a per-

son wants a gun, he's going to get one."

The measure provides for punishment ranging up to a two-year jail term and a \$10,000 fine for a person possessing a handgun without a license issued by the Department of Public Safety.

Exemptions under the bill include law enforcement officers, gun collectors and retail and wholesale gun dealers.

The proposed legislation also says the state will pay up to \$50 for anyone willing to turn in his handgun to the DPS.

O.C. Modesette, a DPS inspector, said the requirement that every owner of a handgun must register his weapon within 60 days after the effective date of the act will be a problem for the DPS.

# Pay freeze hurts VA

WASHINGTON (AP) — Veterans Administration hospitals are losing experienced doctors and are running into difficulties recruiting recent medical school graduates as the result of a salary freeze, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Tex., said Wednesday.

"Many highly skilled, experienced doctors are leaving VA for better paying jobs elsewhere," Bentsen said in a Senate speech. "Many more are planning to leave."

Bentsen introduced a bill to permit pay increases of up to 25 percent for doctors and dentists now at the maximum salary level of \$36,000. A companion measure was introduced in the House by Rep. David Satterfield, D-Va.

The increase would put Veterans Administration medical staffers

near the level of doctors with the armed forces and the Public Health Service. The VA pay freeze has been in effect since 1971.

"Because of the severe restrictions on what they can pay, the Veterans Administration is not able to compete for the services of top-flight doctors and the American veteran is the loser," the senator said.

Bentsen said the administrator of one Veterans Administration hospital in Texas estimated that 60 percent of the doctors and dentists at administration have either left or are contemplating leaving their jobs because of the freeze.

He said Veterans Administration figures indicate that 50 of the nation's 131 veterans hospitals have lost their chiefs of surgery since the freeze went into effect.

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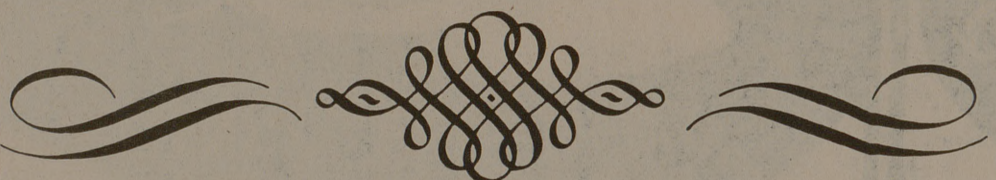
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