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September 5, 1981

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State / National

Senate raises car registration fee

United Press International AUSTIN — Legislation raising the vehicle registration fee for small cars by \$5 a year and giving the bulk of the money to Texas counties sailed through the Senate on voice vote Monday despite protests it amounted to a \$22.9 million tax increase in 1982.

Sen. John Traeger, D-Seguin, the sponsor of the proposal, initially proposed increasing the share of the vehicle registration fees kept by counties for handling the registrations, but said that proposal would have taken about \$50 million out of anticipated state revenue.

To compensate for the expected loss, Traeger revised his bill and included a provision to increase the registration fee for vehicles weighing less than 3,500 pounds from the present \$12 to \$17 a year effective July 1, 1982.

He said \$22 million of the \$22.9 million that would generate in 1982 would go to Texas counties, and the remaining \$900,000 to the

state. In 1983, the total revenue to counties would total \$45 million, with \$3.5 million going to the state.

Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, tried unsuccessfully to shift the proposed registration fee increase from small cars to larger vehicles — those weighing 3,500 to 4,500 pounds.

"I agree that the counties ought

to have increased revenues. My concern is with placing the increase on those who have small automobiles and are doing their share to conserve energy while allowing those with bigger automobiles to retain the same fee," Truan said.

"I feel we ought not to penalize the people who are driving small automobiles and doing their part

to conserve energy." "The \$5 fee is not going to keep a person from buying a small car," Traeger replied. "He's still going to save."

Truan's amendment was rejected 26-5. Sen. Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin, told his Senate colleagues, "The bill is a tax bill. Whether Governor Clements likes it or not, we are increasing taxes."

Legislature has limits on bill

Measure spends all but \$75 million

United Press International AUSTIN — Speaker Bill Clayton reports there is one factor that severely restricts the changes lawmakers can make in the proposed \$26.5 billion spending bill now before the House.

The bill, drafted after weeks of public hearings before the Appropriations Committee, spends all but about \$75 million of the revenue expected to be available during the next two years, and if lawmakers add more than \$75 million to the plan, they'll have to raise taxes to support it.

"I think we can get through it in two days," Clayton said. "It's in better shape than I've seen it in several years. The Appropriations Committee did a good job of trimming. Also, we'll only have about \$75 million on the table and that minimizes the amount of increases we can put in."

The Senate's version of the spending bill is not expected out of committee until later in the week, and differences in the two plans ultimately must be resolved by a conference committee before the session ends June 1.

Rep. Bill Prenal, D-Bryan, agreed with Clayton's estimate the House might be able to complete work on the huge spending bill within two days, which would whittle down considerably the time spent on the bill two years ago.

"We think we're going to have very little problem with anything," Prenal said.

"I had thought we would have some trouble with school finance, but everybody seems to be signed off on that now."

This is the first time such items as teacher pay raises and state equalization aid to public schools have been included in the appropriation bill, rather than in a separate school finance bill that almost always has been caught in a last minute log jam at the close of the session.

When debate on the spending bill begins, Prenal said he would offer a "perfecting amendment" to increase by \$40 million the amount of money the state passes on to school districts in equalization aid, a move designed to help poor school districts.

Heart-lung patient breathing by himself

United Press International STANFORD, Calif. — Charles Walker, the latest recipient of a heart-lung transplant at Stanford University Hospital, was in critical condition Monday but was sur-

viving without a respirator. Walker, 30, "is breathing on his own now," said a spokeswoman late Sunday. "He remains in critical condition, but his vital signs are stable."

The Binghamton, N.Y., embryo Friday became the fifth person ever to receive the double transplant. The removal of the respirator, the test doctors said was crucial to his survival, was made late Saturday.

He was awake and visiting with his family Sunday, the spokeswoman said.

Walker's girlfriend, Carole Mitchko, a Binghamton, N.Y., nurse, said Walker "is doing well. He's bound to look sick from a major procedure like that, but every day will be a plus."

Walker, who at age 13 was told he had the lungs of a 90-year-old man, underwent the complicated 4½-hour surgery just 54 days after Stanford surgeons performed their first such procedure on Mar Gohlke, 45, a Mesa, Ariz., newspaper executive.

Gohlke has set a world survival record for a heart-lung transplant recipient, and the state of his health gives hope that heart-lung operations may become reasonably safe.

Walker, whose blood was not properly oxygenated because of congenital heart defect, received the new organs from an undisclosed donor.

His condition prior to surgery led to pulmonary hypertension and resulting deterioration of both his lungs and his heart. In recent years he has been mostly bedridden and required weekly blood transfusions. Without the transplant, he was given less than one year to live.

Three heart-lung transplants were performed more than a decade ago at other institutions. The longest survivor lasted only 23 days, and the procedure was abandoned.

The drug suppresses the body's immune reaction to foreign tissue without devastating its ability to fight infections, the chief killer of transplant patients. And unlike the steroids previously used, the drug does not inhibit healing of the windpipe after it is cut in the lung transplant.



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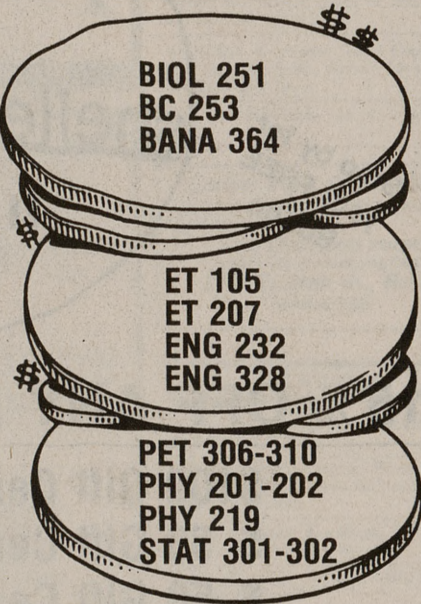
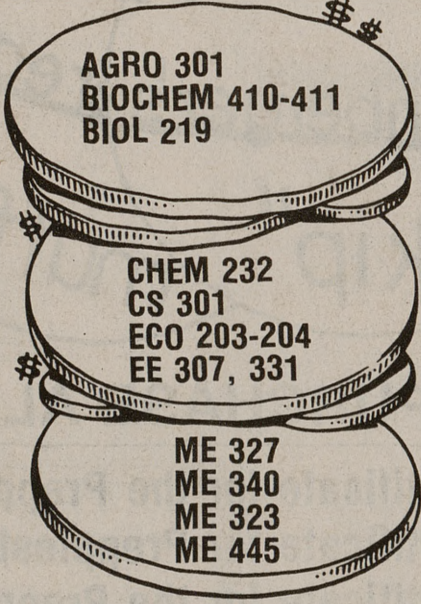
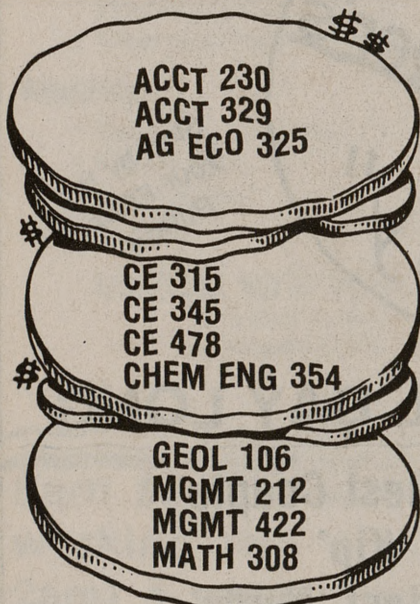
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