

Warped

by Scott McCullar



Improvement fund sought

College funding reviewed

United Press International
AUSTIN — A proposed constitutional amendment to establish a capital improvement fund for state colleges and universities not covered by the Permanent University Fund drew the attention of both the House and Senate this past week.

Higher education officials and Gov. Mark White agreed that schools which don't share in PUF earnings need a source of funds for capital improvements. But sponsors of similar proposed constitutional amendments establishing the fund couldn't agree on a date for submission of the measure to state voters.

The House Higher Education Committee unanimously reported to the full House the measure proposed by Rep. Wilhelmina Delco, D-Austin, to dedicate at least \$125 million annually to non-PUF schools. Her amendment calls for an April 30 state referendum.

A similar measure sponsored by Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur, was held over by the Senate Education Committee after Parker said he wanted a November 1984 submission to voters. The legislators began working with White to reach a compromise.

Other legislative issues is summarized here:

• The Senate unanimously passed legislation outlawing armor-piercing bullets labeled "cop killers" because of their ability to pierce the bullet-proof vests worn by police.

Law enforcement officers fearful of criminal access to the Teflon-coated bullets lobbied for passage of the measure while the National Rifle Association opposed the legislation. The bill now goes to the House.

• The Senate passed legislation toughening qualifications for 15-year-olds to obtain hard-ship driver's licenses. Under the bill, youths who now receive the licenses as a matter of routine would have to pass an approved driver's training course and meet stiffer requirements for the special permit.

• The Senate sent to Gov. Mark White a bill establishing new guidelines on protective custody procedures for mental patients.

The bill, designed to iron out constitutional flaws in the state's mental commitment process, was prompted by a federal court order that ruled the state's old commitment law unconstitutional.

The new legislation cuts from 14 to three days the period of time an allegedly mentally ill person can be detained without a hearing.

• A proposed constitutional amendment to provide \$20,000 down payment loans for veterans seeking to buy houses drew support from White and Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and was hailed as a cost-free, job-creating measure by Land Commissioner Gary Mauro.

Mauro, who pledged to work for the measure during his campaign, said it would create 45,000 jobs and help build 25,000 houses for veterans. The amendment would expand the existing Veteran's Land Program under which veterans receive low-interest loans for rural land.

If the proposal is approved by voters in November, the state would issue \$500 million in bonds with veterans' payments used to retire the bonds. The amendment has the support of 81 members in the House and 22 senators.

• A Texas Department of Corrections emergency request for \$81 million in prison construction funding drew criticism from the governor, who said he was "disturbed by the seemingly unending requests" for money to build penal facilities.

The TDC request for money to complete several maximum security prisons prompted White to suggest "alternatives to that type of expensive construction" be investigated.

White also said the Texas Board of Corrections needed a membership change and vowed to be closely involved in the selection of new board members. The terms of three members expired last week and now goes to the House.

White said he will name his appointees as soon as possible.

• A bill to open state textbook adoption hearings to positive as well as negative comment drew approval from the Senate Education committee and was headed for debate by the full Senate this week.

The proposed bill, evolved from State Board of Education hearings earlier this month,

would change a current law which limits public input in the schoolbook selection process to critics.

Anti-censorship groups began pushing for the legislation last year. If enacted, the measure would limit the effectiveness of nationally-known textbook critics Mel and Norma Gabler who have dominated the hearings for 22 years.

Dog works as therapist for aged

United Press International
DAVENPORT, Iowa — A dog named Goldie will be spending her weekdays doing charitable work with the residents of a nursing home as a canine therapist and returning to her owner on weekends.

Goldie, believed to be abandoned when she was struck by a car six months ago, was the subject of news stories describing her work with the elderly at the

Ridgecrest Retirement Village.

Goldie's owner, John Streinz, saw the news reports and demanded his dog back. He said he thought the Labrador-Golden retriever was dead or had run away.

But after watching Goldie work with her patients, Streinz knew he couldn't take his pet away from her work.

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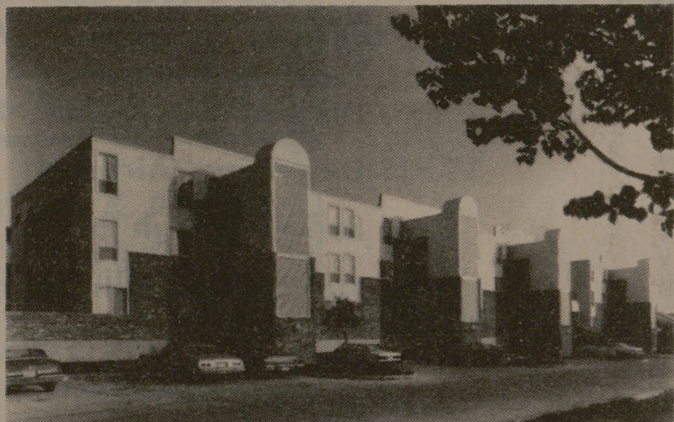
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