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# Texas A&M The Battalion

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## House gives tentative OK to fee hikes

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The House, working under a game plan aimed at avoiding a tax hike, tentatively approved a fee hike bill Monday that would bring the state \$106 million over the next two years.

The measure includes a \$2 increase in the cost of a four-year driver's license, which is now \$10. Also included are hikes in state court filing fees, solid waste permits, day care license and registration fees and milk inspection fees that could cause a fraction of a cent increase in milk prices.

Monday's vote was 97-44. The bill faces a final vote, probably today, before going to the Senate, where there is talk of a larger fee hike.

Though some House members said it is a tax bill, Speaker Gib Lewis said it is not.

"We passed a fee bill which tries to cover, and in some cases does not come anywhere close, the cost of what it costs the state to perform various duties," he said.

None of the fees would be higher than the cost to the state, according to sponsor Rep. Jim Rudd, D-Brownfield.

The Lewis plan for avoiding a tax hike this year includes the fee bill, a college tuition hike of about \$280 million and several minor money measures.

The appropriations bill — a proposed two-year state budget of \$36.4 billion — is set for House debate Wednesday.

The fee bill carries an amendment that kills the measure if lawmakers don't approve Belton Rep. Bill Messer's bill aimed at cutting about 20,000 state jobs.

During debate, several members referred to the measure as a "tax

bill," but afterward, one member who voted against it called it "a revenue enhancement measure."

"In a sense, it's a tax bill," said Rep. Gerald Geistweidt, R-Mason. "Somebody is going to be paying the greater cost of government."

"But as far as fee bills go it's probably a pretty fair and equitable one that doesn't take more than the cost of the service."

Geistweidt preferred tackling the appropriations bill, making all possible cuts and then looking for more money.

"It's a tax bill because in many of the items, like the milk inspection fee, we're putting an additional fee or tax on the industry and expecting them to pass it on to the customers," he said. "It's not much different than a sales tax in that regard."

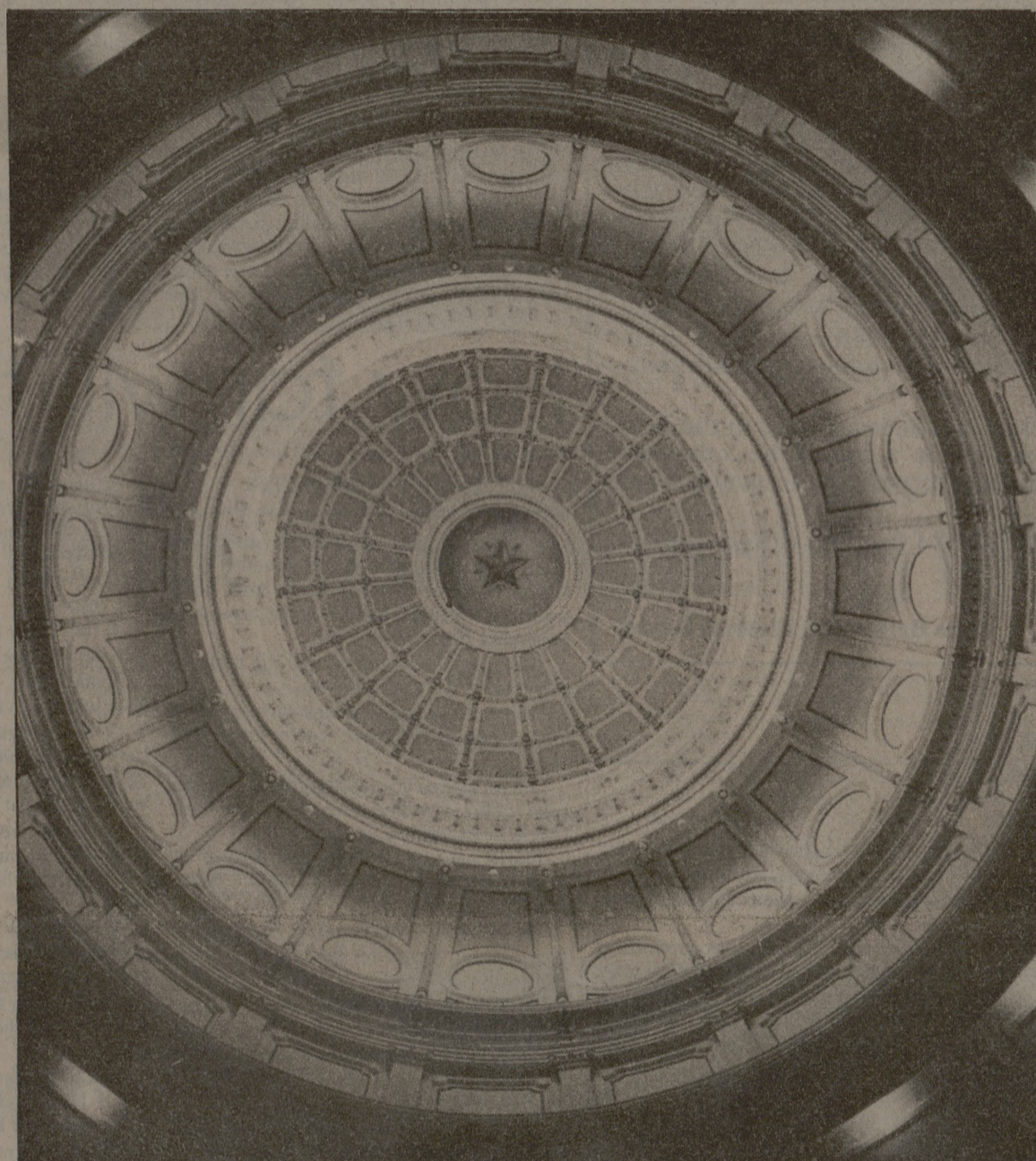
The milk inspection fee hike would translate into an increase of about one-twelfth of a cent on the retail price of a gallon of milk, said Cleburne Rep. Bruce Gibson, a dairy farmer.

Gibson, who voted for the measure, said he likes to call it a fee bill, not a tax bill.

"If this bill doesn't pass, the next one will be a tax bill, no question whatsoever," he said. "That's why I'm a strong believer that this is a fee bill."

Jim Turner, Gov. Mark White's legislative lobbyist, said White is "generally supportive" of the fee hike measure.

"He also is aware there's a fee bill being put together in the Senate that may be significantly larger than this bill," Turner said. "The governor's posture is he has to be in a position to help forge that compromise between those two fee bills for us to get out of here this session."



Star Gazing

Photo by WAYNE L. GRABEIN

Standing on the bottom floor in the center of the Texas State Capitol the T, E, X, A and S surrounding the center star can barely be

seen on the dome's ceiling. The capitol in Austin is fashioned after the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

## Committee looks at aid to colleges

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The Senate Finance Committee voted Monday to set aside \$5 million for colleges that might lose enrollment if tuition goes up and to open law school doors to more out-of-state students.

The votes were taken as the committee moved closer to adopting a two-year state budget proposal of approximately \$36 billion.

The budget would balance without new taxes only if tuition is increased significantly and state service fees, such as for a drivers' license, also are raised.

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby once again sat in on the committee session, at the elbow of chairman Grant Jones, and Sen. John Traeger, D-Seguin, asked, smiling, "I can't hear what's going on in the subcommittee. Is the microphone set on mumble?"

Legislative Budget Board staffers acknowledged that in estimating the revenue from a proposed tuition increase they had not considered a possible drop in college enrollment because of the higher cost.

"My indications are that there will be some reduction in student enrollment," said Sen. Ed Howard, D-Texas, "and \$5 million won't cover but a few (schools)."

Jones, D-Abilene, said most other states also are raising tuition so the increase in Texas "would not be as dramatic ... as it appears to be."

Hobby, who proposed the three-fold tuition increase for September, said, "We don't even know that there will be a loss at any of them."

Sen. Ray Farabee, D-Wichita Falls, won 3-2 approval of a special budget provision that would raise the number of out-of-state students who can be admitted to Texas law schools. The current restriction is 10 percent, and Farabee suggested 20 percent.

"We can't have a national or international law school," said Farabee, a graduate of the University of Texas Law School. "We need to loosen up a little bit."

Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur, responded, "I can understand new blood teaching but tell me why we need new blood learning?"

Farabee said with the increased tuition out-of-state students "would be carrying their own."

Parker said when "A" Texas students apply to UT and someone from New York or New Jersey is occupying the place "that puts the frosting on me."

## Attorneys hiring 'spies' to observe trials

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Trial lawyers are hiring courtroom observers — otherwise referred to as surrogates, mirrors, shadows or spies — to let the attorneys know what a jury wants to hear.

"They are being used more and more, especially in big cases with complicated fact situations," said Byron McCoy, a professor at the University of Houston's Bates College of Law.

"In a trial, communication is critical," he said. "These mirrors are

able to give lawyers day-to-day feedback. It's too late after a trial is over to ask the jury if they understood the facts of the case."

Hired observers were used last month by lawyers representing Attorney General Jim Mattox in his commercial bribery case. Mattox was acquitted.

"We found out from them what the jury was tired of hearing and what they wanted to hear more of," said Austin lawyer Roy Minton, who defended Mattox.

Mirrors currently are being used

in Galveston where a federal court jury will decide if a dozen corporations are liable for damages to 50 men who worked with products that contained asbestos.

The three men and a woman hired by the asbestos company created a stir during pretrial discussions when plaintiff attorney Robert Ballard expressed concern the mirrors, who are designed to simulate jurors, might interfere with the presentation of his case.

U.S. District Judge Hugh Gibson met privately with three of the mir-

rors and after learning that two of them had spoken with some members of the jury, Gibson warned the mirrors, "Neither of you is to contact, accost, talk to or have any relations with members of the jury."

In both the Mattox and asbestos case, the mirrors were hired without any knowledge of whom they were working for.

"This keeps them objective," said Minton, who hired an Austin firm to hire the eight mirrors he used in the Mattox case.

At the end of each day of testimony, a trial consultant, also hired by Minton, would ask the mirrors to judge the lawyers' performance. The consultant would then meet with the lawyers and tell them if they were getting their point across.

"I'd use them again," said Minton, who acknowledged their use is expensive at \$10 an hour. "In the Mattox case, they confirmed for us that the jury was sick and tired of hearing tape recordings and wanted to hear more from the defendant (Mattox)."

## In the midst of a renaissance

# China opening to Western ideas

Associated Press

PEKING — From disco to Disney, and British rock idols to bluejeans, China is opening to the outside world on an unprecedented scale.

Though Deng Xiaoping's communist regime warns against letting foreign decadence poison its economic reforms, it's exposing China's one billion people to alien pleasures, products and technology denied for decades.

"What we are doing today is audacious," 80-year-old Deng told Japanese visitors last month. "However, if we do not do it, our future will be difficult."

The government is cracking down on pornography, lotteries and other "unhealthy tendencies," but the overall relaxation is profoundly affecting what Chinese buy, eat, play, watch, and wear.

Television advertisements — once considered a capitalist evil — now bombard consumers with messages about Chinese-made trucks, refrigerators, instant noodles and underarm deodorant.

Entertainment ventures include plans for a Walt Disney-type fun-

*Young men in the cities are scrambling to purchase three-piece suits, flashy neckties, leather shoes, tight bluejeans, tape players and motorbikes, status symbols in a society that still moves mostly by bicycle.*

land, a Hollywood-style film city and a racetrack, without gambling, named after the Mongol conqueror Kublai Khan.

Bowling alleys have opened in Shanghai and Peking. Billiards, formerly banned as a bourgeois pastime, is now played in the streets and in the teahouses of southern China.

The vast majority of Chinese still dress in ordinary blues and grays, living frugally in a society where 80 percent of the people are peasants who earned an average of \$122 per capita in 1984.

But young men in the cities are scrambling to purchase three-piece suits, flashy neckties, leather shoes, tight bluejeans, tape players and motorbikes, status symbols in a society that still moves mostly by bicycle.

In the southern city of Canton,

long-haired youths hang out on Japanese motorcycles, smoking American cigarettes.

Urban women crowd shop counters to buy cosmetics and perfume. In Shanghai, China's largest city and fashion capital, the rage is mascara, pierced ears and fur coats.

China's clothing craze is the envy of visitors from other communist countries, especially the Soviet Union. Russian train crews from the trans-Siberian line haggle with Peking hawkers over bell-bottom pants and high-heeled shoes.

Family-run beauty parlors dot streets from Peking to the sub-tropics of Xishuangbanna near Burma. Department store fashion shows attract standing-room-only crowds.

Last month, the Communist Youth League sponsored China's

first beauty pageant since the 1949 revolution, with a field of nearly 700 young men and women vying for honors in a Canton hotel ballroom.

Couples are unabashedly cuddling on park benches and attend dances at workplaces and schools, habits considered blasphemous only last year.

Among the most obvious softening is the official approval for Western pop music, underscored by the unprecedented tour of Peking and Canton by the British group Wham! early this month.

The All-China Youth Federation, which was permitted to invite the rock group, said it is considering a tour by Britain's queen.

This change is astounding in a country where pop, jazz and rock were reviled in Mao Tse-tung's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution and again in a campaign against "spiritual pollution" early last year.

As if to allay fears that dancing will be banned again, the state-run Peking Hotel has turned its main lounge into a nightly disco, with blinking lights and ear-splitting loudspeakers.