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B-CS officials unsure of effects of overtime bill

By FRANK SMITH
Staff Writer

Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, is co-sponsoring legislation designed to save state and local governments in personnel costs, but officials in both Bryan and College Station said Tuesday they weren't sure how much savings their cities would experience if the bill passed.

Barton's bill would revise portions of the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding compensatory time off for state, county and local government employees. It comes in response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in February ordering these governments to comply with FLSA provisions requiring the payment of overtime wages.

Before the court's decision, municipal governments had the option of offering city employees compensatory time off in lieu of overtime wages for employees' overtime work. Barton is attempting to restore this option as long as the practice is authorized by a written agreement between employers and employees.

Georgia Langston, executive director of personnel for the city of Bryan, said compliance with the FLSA provisions costs the city \$120,000. However, she said, Barton's legislation fails to change a portion of the FLSA which is responsible for the majority of that extra cost in Bryan.

"It (the new bill) will help some, but I can't put a dollar mark to it," Langston said.

Karen Dickson, city personnel director in College Station, said the city hasn't tried to estimate the future costs of FLSA compliance.

Dickson said the city's police department and parks and recreation department were most affected by the February court ruling.



Senior Stack

The dishes continue to pile up as Maria Jimenez (far left) and Eva Benavides stack plates in the kitchen Tuesday night at the Senior Induction Banquet given by the Association of Former Stu-

dents for December graduates. John Ward, Assistant Catering Manager for the MSC, said he expected about 620 students Tuesday night and another 600 students for tonight's dinner.

Photo by WAYNE L. GRABEIN

Water plan will receive state funding

Associated Press

AUSTIN (AP) — Texans approved a \$1.43 billion water plan Tuesday, agreeing the proposal was crucial to the state's future.

With ballots counted in 239 of 254 counties, 73.8 percent of the voters said "yes" to Proposition 1.

Proposition 2, the second half of the water package, had support from 69.75 percent of the voters.

The vote total on Proposition 1, the amendment needed to enact the water plan, was 655,338 to 232,579, and the vote on Proposition 2, aimed at helping farmers buy water-saving equipment, was 605,459 to 262,586.

Gov. Mark White, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and Speaker Gib Lewis campaigned extensively in support of the package, which was approved this year by the Legislature.

"Texas is the winner, our future is secure," White said Tuesday night. "On the foundation of this victory every community in Texas can build a stronger future."

Proposition 1 would authorize the issuance of \$980 million in bonds for construction of reservoirs, pipelines, treatment plants and flood control projects throughout the state.

It also includes a \$250 million state insurance fund to back water bonds issued by local governments.

The state backing would erase virtually any chance of default on those bonds.

That would make it easier for local governments to sell those bonds.

Proposition 2 would authorize \$200 million in bonds for low-interest loans for farm equipment that would reduce water usage.

Nearly 70 percent of Texas' water goes for agricultural uses.

Because voters have defeated water plans proposed by lawmakers in the past, backers of the 1985 plan sought, and won, widespread, bipartisan support.

A mass mailing included statements of support from White and several of his potential Republican opponents — U.S. Rep. Tom Loeffler, former Gov. Bill Clements and former U.S. Rep. Kent Hance.

One environmental group — Earth First — said that bipartisan support was reason enough to be suspicious of the plan.

Corpus Christi state Sen. Carlos Truan called it "pork-barrel heaven for the water hustlers."

The financial interests of developers could run roughshod over environmental concerns, according to Truan and other opponents.

Whitmire re-elected mayor for third term

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Mayor Kathy Whitmire won a third two-year term Tuesday, building a comfortable margin over former five-term mayor Louie Welch in a campaign that focused on the city's response to the disease AIDS.

With 95 percent of the vote counted, Whitmire had 181,460 votes, or 56.8 percent, to Welch's 136,154 votes, or 42.6 percent.

"This is a wonderful moment," Whitmire told cheering supporters. "I believe tonight we've sent a message to the nation. Because of your love, we sent a message that Houston has made great progress, that we're working to make this city the best city to live, to work, to do business and to raise families. I believe it's time to put differences behind us and to move forward."

Welch blamed his defeat on a lower turnout than he expected.

"We have known all along that with any count (turnout) less than 400,000 it would be very difficult to win this race," Welch said in a concession speech. "It appears this 400,000 will not come. I want you to know that campaigns can change the city — even losing campaigns do change the destiny of a city."

Eight political newcomers calling themselves the Straight Slate sought City Council seats in a campaign based on adopting public health rules to protect residents of the nation's fourth-largest city from AIDS.

None of the candidates was close to leading.

In at least two races, however, enough votes were going to Straight Slate candidates to force a runoff.

Pre-election polls in the non-partisan race gave Whitmire, 39, as much as an 18-percentage-point lead over Welch, 66, who had been president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce since retiring from public office in 1974.

Langley wins judgeship in local election

A mere 16 votes gave attorney J.D. Langley the Brazos County Court at Law No. 2 judgeship over opponent Sonny Lyles in Tuesday's special election.

In the only race on the ballot locally, Langley, a Republican, garnered 2,722 votes or 50 percent of the votes over Lyles's 2,706 votes or 49 percent.

Langley, currently an assistant district attorney, is a former Texas A&M student and a 1983 graduate of the South Texas College of Law.

Langley, 33, will take over the judge position on Jan. 1 and must run for re-election next November if he wishes to keep the seat.

Pre-summit talks

Shultz says U.S., Soviet Union still far apart on arms control

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Secretary of State George P. Shultz wound up 14 hours of "vigorous discussion" with Soviet Leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev and other Kremlin officials Tuesday, saying the talks failed to narrow the superpowers' differences on arms control.

Shultz said that despite "serious disagreements, the two sides had pledged to work hard in preparing the Nov. 19-20 summit meeting be-

tween President Reagan and Gorbachev in Geneva.

"Basically, we have a lot to do," Shultz said.

In a news conference before departing for an overnight refueling stop in Iceland, Shultz tempered his downbeat appraisal of the two-day visit by observing "we see some positive developments" in the U.S.-Soviet relationship.

But he was unable to cite any major area of reconciliation or prospect of an accord for the first superpower

summit in more than six years.

In fact, Shultz said, he would not bet on an agreement in principle between the two leaders on how to pursue a treaty to curb the arms race.

Philosophically, Shultz said "life does not end in the middle of November." He said the possibility of additional meetings between the leaders was "before us but nothing has been settled."

He said later the four-hour session was "a very vigorous exchange that covered everything."

He twice described the talks as "frank," which in diplomatic parlance often means considerable disagreement.

But Shultz said, "It was far from a shouting match. The discussions were straightforward, always quite cordial and I think they reflected our desire to use the time well."

Besides arms control, Shultz singled out regional issues and human rights.

Soviet spy given permission to return to USSR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vitaly Yurchenko, the Soviet spymaster who slipped from the CIA's grasp after three months in America, was granted permission to return to Russia Tuesday after assuring U.S. authorities he was not being forced by the Soviet Union to go home.

Yurchenko, clenching his hands over his head like a victorious boxer, left the State Department after a

half-hour meeting and declared, "Yes, home!" when asked if he was heading back to the Soviet Union.

With four Soviet diplomats on one side and six State Department officials on the other, Yurchenko had his first face-to-face meeting with U.S. authorities since he walked away from their custody over the weekend, after three months in the United States.

Yurchenko had appeared at an extraordinary news conference at

the Soviet Embassy Monday, charging he had been abducted in Rome, drugged and pumped for secrets by the CIA. The State Department denied the charges, saying Yurchenko had voluntarily defected.

As a result of his meeting on Tuesday, "the United States government has decided that Mr. Yurchenko's decision to return to the Soviet Union was made of his own free will, and that he is now free to leave the United States," State Department

spokesman Charles E. Redman said.

"In arranging this meeting we wanted to satisfy ourselves that Mr. Yurchenko truly did wish to return to the USSR and that he made this decision freely and of his own volition," Redman said.

He said the meeting was held in an atmosphere free of the possibility of Soviet coercion and that Yurchenko was told he would not be subject to U.S. detention or returned to Soviet custody.

Cults offer religious alternatives to young adults

By SONDRICK PICKARD
Reporter

Say the word "cult" and thoughts of robed fanatics with shaved heads, selling flowers in airports and singing loud chants to promote an urgent cause come to mind.

This is not always the case.

Negative reactions to cults are sometimes justifiable, but the word itself and the majority of the groups classified as such are often misunderstood and unfairly judged by those practicing conventional religions.

J. Gordon Melton, author of "The

Cult Experience", terms them "alternative religions" and describes them as basically alien religions that are incompatible with the dominant cultural environment.

They are perceived as using sophisticated techniques of coercive behavior to recruit and hold members.

Although alternative religions may be inconsistent with the more traditional churches, few use the kind of "brainwashing" techniques that they are frequently accused of.

There are, according to Melton, more than 600 religious groups in the United States and Canada that

could properly be termed alternative religions, including the Church of Scientology, Zen Buddhism and the Unification Church. Membership in these groups is growing so fast that they are moving out of the alternative religion classification and into more conventional denominations.

With more than 600 alternative religions, or cults, in the United States, one begins to wonder why they are of such great appeal and to whom.

Dr. Richard Stadelman, professor of religious studies at Texas A&M, says cults offer people a type of meaning in life.

Cult members find acceptance in the group where they can't find it elsewhere.

"A young person can break free by denying the religious values of his parents," Stadelman says. "People that feel isolated and unwelcomed in their churches are offered love, harmony and acceptance."

"It's like a mighty football rally for most, only it continues even after the game's over."

The Jonestown incident was a tragic example.

Nine hundred people committed suicide under the leadership of the Rev. Jim Jones, reinforcing even

more the emotional charge the word cult connotes.

Stadelman says that the group had the same beginnings as many other alternative religions do.

"Jim Jones' initial success was a result of his reaching out to those who had missed the mainline boat," he says. "He picked a target group that had been left out of society including young drug abusers and older people who felt abandoned by everyone."

Since cults appeal to young, relatively isolated people looking for alternatives, college campuses are often typical recruiting grounds.

Although there have been a few cults in the past, Stadelman says A&M is certainly not a haven for alternative religions, probably because of a strong conservatism among the student body.

Three years ago, The Unification Church was represented on campus and the group's leader was a candidate for president in the Pre-Theology Club, he says.

Described by Melton as the best-known cult in America, Unification Church members have been termed

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