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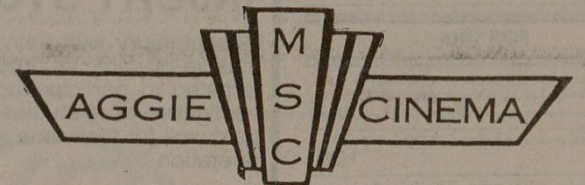
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MSC Visual Arts Committee presents

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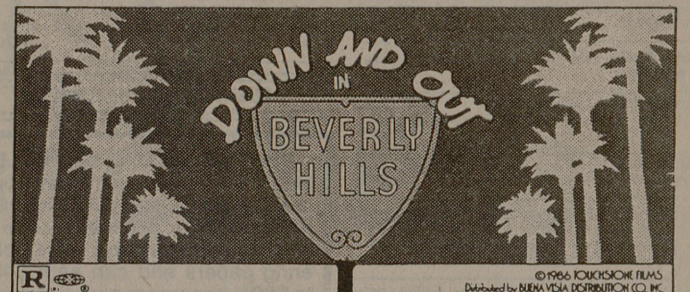
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Lewis becomes White's ally in tax hike battle

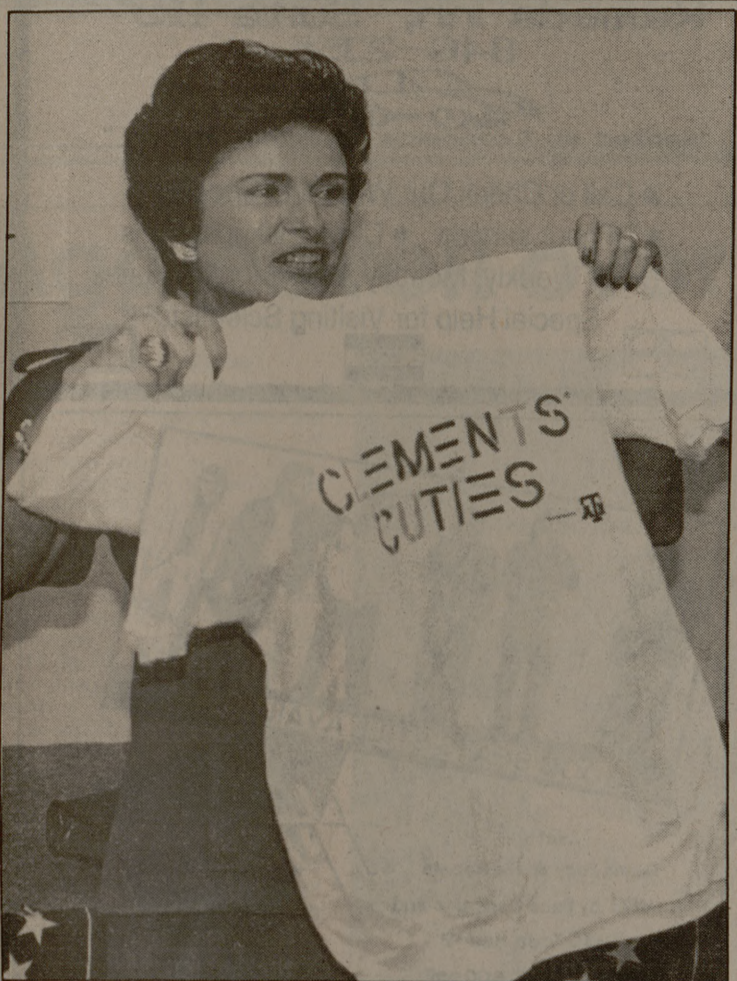


Photo by Tom Ownbey

This Side Up

Rita Clements, wife of Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Clements, receives a T-shirt from Clements Hall residents Wednesday. The state's former first lady, who stopped in College Station on a campaign tour of 50 phone-bank headquarters throughout the state, said the main issue in the race is the state's economy, particularly the unemployment situation.

AUSTIN (AP) — Speaker Gib Lewis signed on Wednesday as an important ally in Gov. Mark White's battle for a temporary increase in the state sales tax.

Lewis, who Tuesday conceded that a tax hike is inevitable, said Wednesday the state sales tax, now 4 1/4 percent, should be raised to 5 1/4 percent until September 1987.

That matches the plan White has called for since he summoned lawmakers to Austin in August to attack the projected \$2.8 billion budget deficit.

"My personal preference is the 1 1/2 percent increase in sales tax and let that be it and that it be temporary," said Lewis, D-Fort Worth.

Also Wednesday, the House Ways and Means Committee reluctantly listened to assorted tax ideas.

"We're here today to discuss the Senate tax bill," Chairman Stan Schlueter said as the hearing began.

No votes were taken, and no specific bills were discussed. Schlueter, D-Killeen, said the committee would not consider a tax bill until House and Senate conferees agree on spending cuts.

Several tax proposals were offered. Rep. Bill Hollowell, D-Grand Saline, wants to raise the 4 1/4 percent state sales tax to 5 percent, with all the money going to prisons.

Sen. Bill Sarpalius, D-Amarillo, proposed a sales tax that would fluctuate, based on the price of oil. Rep. Al Luna, D-Houston, sought sup-

port for his bill reflecting White's plan.

Bob Lanier, chairman of the state highway commission, backed a 5-cent per gallon increase in the motor fuels tax.

But C.A. Stubbs of San Antonio, representing the Texas Association of Concerned Taxpayers, said taxpayers cannot afford to pay more.

"The state and federal and local tax authorities must not take money from the taxpayers faster than they make it," Stubbs said. "This is the stuff of which tax rebellions are made."

The speaker's original plan called for spending cuts and revisions in state cash management that he said could get state government through the current money crunch without a tax hike. He now says not enough of his program will win legislative approval.

"In a way I guess it would be a defeat for me because we had a proposal that we feel could get us through this current biennium without a tax increase," Lewis said. "But we are being forced to now consider a tax increase because of the inactivity that has taken place."

Lewis said the portions of his program that have been approved will save up to \$1 billion in taxes.

Although a majority of the House Ways and Means Committee opposes a tax bill, Lewis predicted such a measure would get to the floor.

House fails to approve bill banning state income taxes

AUSTIN (AP) — The House failed by one vote Wednesday to approve a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit state corporate or personal income taxes.

Speaker Gib Lewis, who voted for the measure, predicted it would get the necessary 100 votes today and advance to the Senate.

The vote Wednesday was 99-31, with 20 House members absent.

In 1985, a similar proposal passed the House with 106 votes but died in the Senate.

"This bill is going to the Senate to die there," Rep. Paul Moreno, D-El Paso, said. "I think we are going against the will of the people. All

polls show people are for a corporate profits tax."

Rep. Bill Haley, D-Center, one of the bill's sponsors, argued, "This merely lets the voters have the last say."

"The people of this state should have the opportunity from now on so that if we get to the place we have to have a corporate or personal income tax, they will do it themselves."

If finally approved by the Legislature, the proposed constitution change would be on the November 1987 ballot.

Haley said, "If we find we need an income tax, the people can change the constitution again."

Rep. Al Price, D-Beaumont, ar-

gued, "This is very bad public policy. It closes the door on some very viable options, options that legislatures of the future may need to keep the state solvent."

Haley said, "If you want to do away with a county treasurer or create a hospital district, the constitution has to be changed. But under current law, the most onerous taxes ever imposed could be levied by this Legislature. The people should have the last say."

The House again voted against another proposed constitutional amendment that would allow state funds to be invested in businesses that create jobs in Texas.

Late appeal spares inmate from death

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — A condemned killer was spared from death Wednesday when federal courts agreed his sentence may be discriminatory because he is black.

Raymond Riles, 36, faced lethal injection for the 1974 robbery-slaying of a used-car dealer in Houston.

Riles set himself on fire in his death row cell last year and has blamed God for the shooting death of car salesman John Henry.

His attorneys also had sought to have the execution halted because they questioned his sanity.

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