

# Board OKs workers' comp increase

## 'Abuse of system' forces insurance rates to rise 22 percent

AUSTIN (AP) — State insurance officials Thursday approved a 22 percent increase in workers' compensation insurance rates as lawmakers continued to battle over proposals to reform the system.

In adopting the rate increase, the State Board of Insurance blamed doctors, lawyers, employers and employees with soaring workers' comp costs, which already have risen 148 percent since 1985.

"Everyone is abusing the system," board member Richard Reynolds of Flower Mound said.

Board member Jo Ann Howard of Austin described the no-fault insurance designed to compensate injured employees as a quagmire dominated by special interest groups who are fighting attempts to change the system.

Gov. Bill Clements said even if the comp system is overhauled, Texas employers will be hit with increases for another two years, because the rates are based on past experience.

The new rates, upping premiums by approximately \$850 million, will go into effect no later than Jan. 1.

Clements was confident a business-backed comp reform bill by Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby would win House and Senate approval, but added, "We'll go through a little rocky stage here for the next two or three days."

In the middle of the fray are Hobby and Sen. Carl Parker of Port Arthur, who has co-written an alter-

## Issue divides 2 long-time political allies

AUSTIN (AP) — The workers' compensation reform debate has split two political allies, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and state Sen. Carl Parker, in a feud that has grown increasingly bitter.

The two Democrats are opposites in personality, but that hasn't seemed to stop them from getting along in the past.

Hobby is a self-deprecating man whose style is low-key. He is known as a negotiator and consensus builder in the back rooms of government. He generally runs from the spotlight.

A multimillionaire, Hobby's father was former Gov. Will Hobby and his mother, Oveta Culp Hobby, directed the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps during World War II and the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare during Dwight Eisenhower's administration.

Parker, a trial lawyer, is the son of a Port Arthur

mayor. He is cocky, confrontational and smart-alecky, with a wit often aimed at the midsection.

Hobby has made Parker chairman of the powerful Education Committee and has often helped his Democratic colleague push through legislation.

But on workers' comp, the two have gone in different directions.

Parker says Hobby has abandoned the working man by pushing a reform bill favored by the insurance industry, Republicans and unsafe employers.

And he has trotted out the common criticisms of Hobby — rich kid, country clubber. Hobby cannot understand the working people, Parker said.

Hobby and his lieutenants pushing the bill are "born rich, raised rich, raised in a sheltered environment," Parker said.

He challenged Hobby to a debate over their competing comp reform bills.

nate reform plan that is preferred by labor and attorneys who represent injured workers in disputed comp cases.

Parker criticized Hobby, saying his fellow Democrat has composed a measure that favors "those employers who have given Texas the worst record in the nation for industrial safety and deaths."

Parker challenged Hobby to a debate over their proposals on a local television show Thursday night, but the lieutenant governor said he had a previous commitment to attend a

fund-raiser in Galveston for Sen. Chet Brooks, D-Pasadena.

Hobby's plan was expected to be passed by the Senate Economic Development Committee later with the full Senate possibly taking action on the bill Monday.

The bill would then go the House, where it is supported by House Speaker Gib Lewis, D-Fort Worth.

After hearing of the Insurance Board's rate increase, Lewis said, "The system is begging for change and the time has come for all parties involved in reform to put their self-

serving interests aside."

Hobby told reporters the 22 percent comp increase was not high enough. He said some insurers are leaving the comp business because the Insurance Board has failed to set high enough rates.

Meanwhile, Insurance Board members said they will meet later next year to see if legislative reforms to the system and changes made to the pool for employers who can't purchase comp insurance on the open market would allow them to lower rates.

## Health Dept. warns against drug's use

### L-tryptophan shown to cause blood disease

AUSTIN (AP) — Anyone using L-tryptophan, a non-prescription amino acid, should stop, the state health department said Wednesday.

L-tryptophan products, used by some for insomnia or premenstrual symptoms, has a possible link with a severe blood disorder, eosinophilia, the department said.

The department said seven people in Texas have been identified as having the blood disorder, including two in both Austin and Houston and one each in Lubbock, Dripping Springs and Port Arthur.

All persons have experienced prolonged fatigue, muscle and joint pain, chest pain, sore throat, cough, low-grade fever and a rash, the department said.

The disorder has been reported in 17 states and the District of Columbia, with 96 cases reported as of Tuesday.

Makers of L-tryptophan are suspending distribution and sales of the dietary supplement pending further investigation, according to J. B. Cordaro, president of the Council of Responsible Nutrition, an industry group.

"This action should not be viewed as a product recall but an interim measure pending clarification of the causes of this outbreak," the industry group said.

"Public health agencies investigating have not been able to establish a scientific basis or isolate medical evidence that links L-tryptophan with this disorder," the council said.

"In addition, to date FDA and industry testing of L-tryptophan products have not identified any product contamination."

## Candidates swap accusations in bid for lieutenant governor

AUSTIN (AP) — A Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor called Thursday for electing the state's utility regulators and said he will make utility rates a key issue in his campaign.

Sen. Chet Edwards, D-Duncanville, said he has more faith in voters' ability to pick members of the Public Utility Commission than in the governors who appoint them under current law.

"The people of Texas have shown better judgment in electing regulatory board members than governors have in appointing them," Edwards said.

Edwards accused his primary election opponent, Comptroller Bob Bullock, of being an ally of utility companies.

He displayed a letter to Bullock written on Houston Lighting & Power stationery by HL&P Vice President Ray "Popeye" Snokhous promising "total commitment and support" in the race and saying "the folks at HL&P will work both sides of the streets" for Bullock.

"I think with the high utility rates we have today, what we need is a lieutenant governor who's not walking both sides of the street with utilities but someone who is standing up for utility ratepayers," Edwards said.

A spokesman for Bullock, Tony Proffitt, said Snokhous and Bullock have been friends since grade school and that the letter was a personal one. "I don't believe it refers to any corporate contributions at all," Proffitt said. "It refers to Popeye's personal commitment to help Bullock in his election."

Bullock later issued a statement saying Edwards had taken campaign contributions in the past from the same

utilities he now is criticizing, "proving that you can bite the hand that feeds you."

Bullock also accused Edwards of playing politics with the utility issue, charging that the lawmaker "is misusing his position in the Senate to grab headlines to further his personal political career by bashing utility companies at the expense of ratepayers."

Edwards likened the need for utility reform to efforts to overhaul workers' compensation insurance, a

**"We need a lieutenant governor who's not walking both sides of the street with utilities but someone who is standing up for utility ratepayers."**

— Chet Edwards, candidate

problem some officials say is keeping new businesses from moving to Texas.

"If we are going to talk about economic development in Texas, we must talk about utility rate reform," the lawmaker said. "High utility rates can hurt economic development just as much as high workers' compensation rates."

## Priests

(Continued from page 3)

on the Salvadoran government so that these type of attacks are looked into," Berra said.

He was joined at a news conference by Father Doug Marcouiller and Father Jose Idiaquez, who also worked in San Salvador before coming to Austin to attend UT.

The three men said they knew the six Jesuit priests, a housekeeper and her daughter, who were killed

Thursday after armed men entered their house at a leading university.

The priests in Austin backed a witness's statement that uniformed government troops were involved.

The government denied responsibility, condemned the slayings as "savagely and irrational" and said an investigation was under way.

"We've been in contact with our Jesuit brothers in Central America," Marcouiller said. He said he was told 30 armed, uniformed men carried out the attack.

"Their bodies were riddled with bullets, and their heads had been

smashed," he said. "This while an attachment of 80 soldiers was encamped about 100 yards away."

There has been "a series of threats" against the Jesuits, including placement of a bomb at the house, Marcouiller said. He said Jesuits have been denounced "as sources of subversion" on the radio.

The Jesuit house was not in a rebel-held zone, Berra said.

"We feel that as much international pressure that is brought to bear on the Salvadoran government will certainly benefit... those people who are coming under fire," he said.

### CUT AND SAVE

Do you have any of the following concerns?

- Improving an academic skill
- Finding a tutor
- Locating programs for academic assistance
- Establishing and clarifying academic goals

If the answer is YES, you may wish to utilize one of the following services.

#### ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE SERVICES\*

• **Academic Assistance Information Clearinghouse**—Located in the Student Counseling Service, this Clearinghouse consists of a file that contains the names, phone numbers and qualifications of people willing to tutor courses offered at A&M. It also contains information from many academic departments explaining procedures for obtaining extra academic help. Come to the Third Floor, YMCA Bldg., 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, to use this service.

• **Academic Burnout Prevention**—An academic life-style that includes social activities and physical exercise, as well as study, is generally considered the best method for maintaining academic motivation. Student Activities, Room 208, Pavilion (845-1133) and the Memorial Student Center Student Programs Office Room 216 (845-1515) will guide students to campus activities that fit the student's interests and social needs. The Intramural-Recreational Sports Office, Room 159, Read Building (845-7826) will guide students to physical activities that may help meet both a student's social and physical activity needs.

• **Concentration Problems Assistance**—Difficulties with concentration usually result from failure to establish a good study environment, from unfocused academic and life goals or from relationship and other personal problems. The Student Counseling Service (845-1651) and the Counseling and Assessment Clinic (845-8021) offer both individual and group programs to help students with these concerns. Most services at the Student Counseling Service are free to currently enrolled students who have paid the student services fee. The Counseling and Assessment Clinic does not charge a fee for services to students.

• **English Writing Lab**—Located in 152 Blocker Bldg., the Writing Lab offers help with acquiring effective writing skills. Call 845-2568 for information about current programs.

• **Handicapped Student Service**—Programs and services to help A&M students compensate for learning disabilities of a physical, mental or emotional nature are provided by this office located in Hart Hall, Ramp B (845-1637).

• **Learning Resources**—This service is located on the sixth floor of Sterling C. Evans Library. Over 120 micro computers, 500 software packages, and a great variety of audio-visual equipment and materials are provided for students free of charge. Facilities and staff assistance for using these resources are also provided.

Among the self-help materials available are programmed instructions for learning to use microcomputers and microcomputer software. In addition, short courses in the use of specific software packages are offered. A fee of approximately \$3.50 per hour is charge for these courses and most courses are 10 hours long. Call 845-2316 for information

• **Help Sessions**—Tutoring for all students needing assistance with course work is sometimes provided individually. Please call each department.

• **Mentors**—A large university like TAMU, filled with busy people can seem very impersonal. Mentors consist of more than 300 A&M faculty members who have volunteered to set aside part of their week to "just talk." This is an excellent opportunity for students who wish to have the guidance of someone on the inside of academia. Call your departmental office and ask about the Mentors Program.

• **Old Exam Files**—Professors and Student Government have placed copies of old exams in a file at the Sterling C. Evans Library Reserve Room. A call number, accessed through the computer terminals, is needed. Instructions are provided near the Library terminals.

• **Professors**—Very often, the most effective resource for academic assistance that students have available to them is the professor of the course in which they are having trouble. It is wise for students to visit with each of their professors, especially if they have any questions. A professor can often help a student early in the semester, but the week before finals is likely to be too late for anyone having serious difficulties. Professors have office hours and a student should arrange to meet professors during that time.

• **Study Skills Improvement**—The Department of Educational Psychology offers a course each semester called "Improvement of Learning" (EPSY 101). The Student Counseling Service, 3rd Floor, YMCA Bldg. (845-1651) offers to currently enrolled students, on a weekly basis, both individual and group study skills assistance.

• **Test Anxiety Remediation**—The Student Counseling Service (845-1651) has group anxiety management programs. Most services at the Student Counseling Service are free to currently enrolled students who have paid their student services fee.

• **Texas Rehabilitation Commission**—Provides assistance to Texas A&M University and Blinn College students with permanent or handicapping disabilities. Examples of the disabilities covered are learning disabilities, orthopedic deformities, emotional disorders, diabetes, epilepsy, heart conditions, etc. Call 845-0350, or go to Room 146, MSC for information regarding scholarships, financial assistance, tutors, diagnosis, treatment, and other services.

• **Volunteer Tutoring**—Phi Eta Sigma (Honor Society) offers free tutoring in most freshman courses. Go to the Student Activities cubicle area, Room 216, Pavilion for more information. Many departmental undergraduate honor societies will also offer free tutoring in freshman and sophomore courses. Contact the honor society's president through the appropriate academic department office or through Student Activities.

• **Academic Skills Program**—This program is designed to meet the academic needs of Texas A&M University students whose Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test results indicate basic skill deficiencies in the areas of math, writing, and/or reading. Various college credit developmental courses taught by specialists provide students with instructional aid and support while helping them successfully prepare for the TASP test and other academic coursework. Academic counseling and information regarding the TASP test are available. Contact this program at 305 Academic Building, or phone 845-2568 for further information regarding these services.

\* All services are subject to change. Please contact the service of interest for the most current information.

or  
**Student Counseling Service  
 Career and Academic  
 Resource Center  
 Third Floor, YMCA Building  
 845-1651**  
 or  
**Department of Student Affairs  
 103 YMCA Building 845-3111**

CUT AND SAVE

## KANM FALL BENEFIT CONCERT

3 Bands for \$3

Tonight, Friday, November 17th  
 at Sneakers (on Harvey Rd.)

Drawings for Free Albums & T-Shirts Will Be Held Throughout the Night

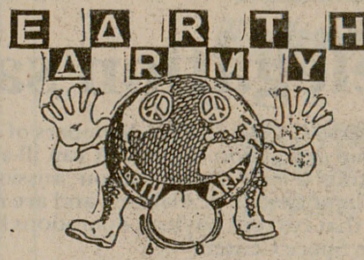
\$1 off Cover w/a KANM T-Shirt

### SPITTELFIST

"B/C'S' Own Progressive Rock Band Comprised Of Most Of The Former Members Of THE MONADS"



"Industrial/Progressive Dance Music From Dallas' Deep Ellum"



"Hardcore/Art Rock From Houston's Underground Scene"

★ KANM 99.9 FM CABLE - ALTERNATIVE STUDENT RADIO