

Filibuster delays debate

AUSTIN (AP) — Senate debate on a proposal to streamline state government by \$1.1 billion was delayed for more than 12 hours Tuesday when Sen. Cyndi Krier of San Antonio blocked approval with a filibuster.

Longtime Senate staffers said Krier almost certainly is the first woman in Texas to lead a filibuster.

Krier expressed no opposition to saving money. Indeed, she is a member of the Republican legislative minority which has orchestrated a campaign against higher spending and taxes.

Her complaint was that the Legislative Budget Board, which is controlled by Democrats, has ignored for years a constitutional provision that limits the rate of growth of state spending except in emergencies.

She said the 1978 provision "provides very clearly that in no biennium shall the rate of growth of appropriations from state tax revenues ... exceed the estimated rate of growth of the state's economy," currently about 15.4 percent.

"I'd like to take some time today to bring this matter to the attention of all Texans to see if it bothers them, to let them know that their constitution is being ignored," she said.

Krier's delaying tactics, consisting of lengthy discussions with other Republican senators, began at 11:42 a.m., after the Senate rejected her amendment on the state comptroller's authority to certify spending.

It lasted until shortly after midnight.

Official supports increases

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put into the University.

Lawrence said if universities want to keep current services funding — enough money to provide the same services as the year before including inflation and growth — it would be in their best interest to support a modest increase in tuition.

Kevin McHargue, press secretary for Sen. Jim Turner (D-Crockett), said Turner is against raising tuition considerably and definitely against doubling it.

He said even if there is an increase in financial aid along with the tuition increase, as has been proposed, some middle class students will be forced out of higher education because of the increased cost.

Ogden said he will have to see how a tuition increase is framed before he takes a position on whether to vote for it.

Presently, there is no raise in tuition written into either the House or Senate revenue bills. If there is a tuition raise, it will be added later during the special legislative session, probably as an amendment to one of the revenue bills.

Ogden said he would support a modest increase in tuition if the universities are allowed to keep all of the increase.

"A \$4 increase will be self-defeating if the state takes it away," Ogden said.

He said he wants to make sure A&M can continue to keep quality education and could see raising tuition to maintain that quality.

E. Dean Gage, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs, said the University recognizes there is a need for an increase in tuition and that if it is increased significantly there should be a phase-in period.

Gage said even if a tuition increase were to be phased in, it would probably be much lower than the \$20 figure discussed just days ago.

The final number on the tuition increase could be decided by as early as the end of this week, though Ogden said the debate may go on well into next week.

DOE hears weapons debate

AMARILLO (AP) — The battle lines were clearly drawn as Department of Energy officials began hearing testimony Wednesday about the proposed expansion of the Pantex nuclear weapons assembly plant.

Farmers whose land surrounds the Pantex plant, about 20 miles northeast of Amarillo, carried signs reading "NO!" while most business and city leaders wore buttons reading "YES."

More than 350 people have signed up to testify at the two-day hearing, expected to conclude Thursday night.

State and city officials as well as local residents took turns speaking to two DOE panels in separate rooms at the Amarillo Civic Center all day Wednesday.

Pantex is one of five weapons plants nationwide being considered for expansion as part of

downsizing of the country's nuclear weapons complex.

Among the proposals would be the relocation of the plutonium processing from the Rocky Flats plant near Denver to Pantex, the nation's final assembly point for nuclear weapons.

Reports of plutonium, a lethal carcinogen used to make triggers for nuclear warheads, seeping into the groundwater near the Rocky Flats plant have raised the fears of local farmers who draw water from the Ogallala Aquifer running beneath Pantex.

City officials, who see the expansion as a needed boost to pull the economy out of a tailspin caused by a depressed oil market, feel the DOE should be given a second chance to build state-of-the-art facilities.

Position could expand, Ogden says

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students, and I believe having a voice on the board of regents of a university will ultimately improve the quality of service the students receive."

The potential to expand the

student regent's powers exists, he said, but a conservative approach was taken for the amendment.

"This is only a small step, but voting (rights) is ultimately not out of the question," he said. "It is important not to ask for more

than what is politically possible."

Ogden said he expects the student regent proposal to be successful if implemented. He said the next logical step would be to include voting privileges for student regents.

The Battalion
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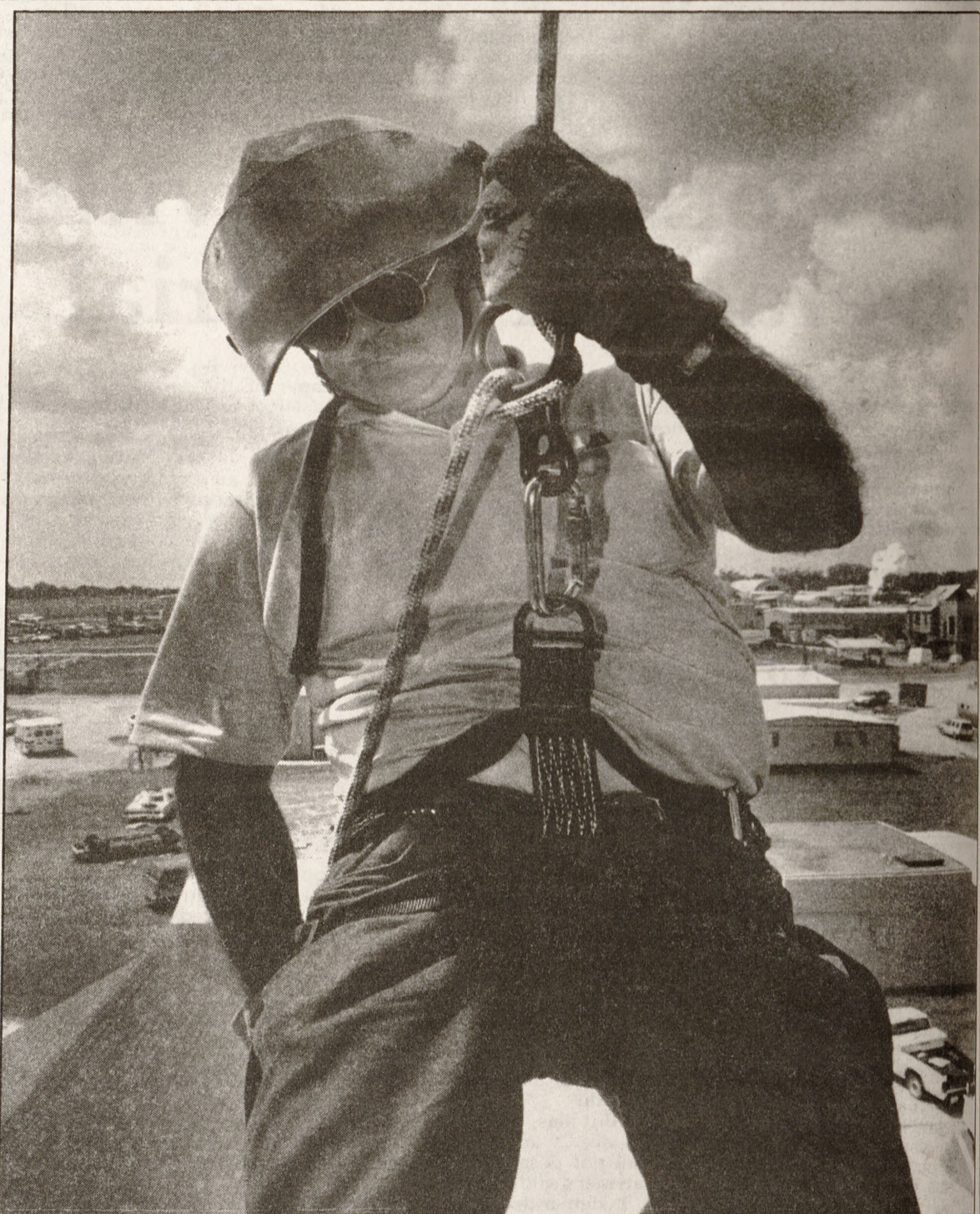
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Grand jury finds no wrongdoing in open meetings case

PORT LAVACA (AP) — A Calhoun County grand jury Wednesday found no wrongdoing among state legislative leaders who met privately last month on remote Matagorda Island to discuss the state budget.

The June 26-27 meeting, which included Gov. Ann Richards, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and House Speaker Gib Lewis, among others, may have violated provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the public watchdog group Common Cause complained.

The case was no-billed by the panel, meaning no action will be taken, Calhoun County District Attorney Jack Whitlow said Wednesday.



RICHARD S. JAMES/The Battalion

Hanging by a thread

Ernest Smith, Chief of the Shady Oaks Volunteer Fire Department near Athens, Texas, rappels down the tower at the Brayton Fireman Training Center Wednesday.

Firefighters from all over Texas and the world are at the training center for advanced and refresher training during the one-week Texas Firefighter school.

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Nerd House by Tom A. Madison



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