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### ***The Silver Bullet(in)*, Volume 1, Number 9**

Texas Silver-Haired Legislature

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# THE SILVER BULLET(IN)

VOL. 1

12 JUNE 1987

NO. 9

## THE PARTY'S OVER!

The 70th Legislature's regular session has ended. A special session was called immediately, involving tort reform, and ended a day and a half later. A second special session is scheduled to begin June 22nd at which time it is hoped, for the good of Texas, that all game playing will cease, all posturing will cease, and full attention will be given to the passage of an acceptable budget for our great State to operate under during the coming fiscal years. The 70th did not have an easy task --what with the economy of the State under siege--but no one promised them a rose garden, either. That the 70th sat on its hands cannot be said, tho, as well over six thousand pieces of legislation were filed--6,250 to be exact! It went something like this (for those interested in trivia): House bills=2,632, Senate bills=1,547; House joint resolutions=114, Senate joint resolutions=57; House concurrent resolutions=240, Senate concurrent resolutions=148; House resolutions=793, Senate resolutions=719. Where did all this effort leave Texas' First Silver Haired Legislature? Well, first, we had better prepare a mass grave for all the bills that died! Starting with the last first:

PRIORITY #6--SAFEGUARDING THE HOMESTEAD ACT. Millard Guess, Ch. None of the many bills filed having to do with home equity lending made it--HB 231-Hammond, HB 2147-Evans, SB 421-Glasgow/Krier--among others--Score a victory on this one. That is not to say it won't ever come up again--you know better than that! We must continue to advocate the protection of our Homestead Act.

PRIORITY #5--PROHIBITING THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM. Thelma "T" Galyean, Chairperson. While HJR 43-Denton and SJR 28-Barrientos died, this was to be expected due to the State's economic crunch. Had we been "older and wiser", we might have postponed our efforts for a better climate but at least we made our position known. On the plus side for retired teachers, tho, was the sending of HB 2623-Denton/Harris,

relating to the rate of state contributions and increase in benefits for certain annuitants of the Teachers' Retirement System, to the Governor.

PRIORITY #4--FREEZE OF AD VALOREM TAXES ON SR. CITIZENS' HOMESTEADS;

Jack Griffin, Ch. Jack could have used a crystal ball on this one since he nor anyone else could have divined what Judge Harley Clark would rule regarding "poor" school districts. Here's a good example of the baby getting thrown out with the bath water! So, let's bury HJR 50, 75 and SJR 30, 38, HB 892, 1626 and SB 723 and 1014. They all died. The good news, however, is passage of HJR 48-Schlueter, limiting school tax increases on homesteads of surviving spouses even tho they may not be 65. This constitutional amendment will be on the November ballot for voters to decide. You will support this, I'm sure!

PRIORITY #3--CATASTROPHIC HEALTH CARE INSURANCE; Forest Scott, Ch. Call this one a draw. While no legislation pertaining to this issue per se was filed, a step in the right direction was made with the passage of HCR 98-Schoolcraft/Brooks signed by the Governor which creates a commission to study "Health Care Reimbursement Alternatives" and to make recommendations to the next Legislature.

PRIORITY #2--MEDICAID INCOME ELIGIBILITY CAP: Lucille Biegel, Chairperson. Hats off to Lucille and her committee whose well-organized efforts and diligence paid off with the passage of HCR 99-Kuempel signed by the Governor May 28th and Lucille has the pen to prove it! (SCR 64-Brooks was the Senate version.) Bear in mind, this only expresses the intent and does not provide any funding. An appropriation bill does that and work begins June 22nd on one.

PRIORITY #1--COMMUNITY SERVICES FUNDING, ETC.: Bob Doolittle, Chairman. SCR 66-Brooks was sent to the Governor June 1st. Score one for the Gipper!

So, how did we do? I would say not bad. In my opinion, we could claim about 70% success--and that's the national norm. And for a first time ever session, that's really great. And now that we have had the experience, we can pass on our knowledge to the next group so they can hopefully avoid some of the pitfalls and pratfalls, and do even better!

\* \* \*

REMINDER: Take this opportunity now before June 22nd, the lull before the storm, to write or convey a note of thanks to your Representative and Senator, as well as the Governor, for their efforts on our behalf. We were well received and kindly treated, I'd say. Also, it is my thought

that in addition to thanking them, we should also let them know we understand their position in dealing with increased demands for State services and struggling with decreasing State revenues. Therefore, we should be supportive of them in raising the necessary revenue. (If you recall, Priority #7 passed by us called for supporting a broadened sales tax base.) We cannot afford to put ourselves in the position of forever taking but never giving. That's hypocritical, to me.

\* \* \*

OTHER LEGISLATION OF INTEREST: Some of our members were quite active in issues that concerned us but did not fall into the top six priorities. For example, Dr. Raleigh Jackson put out a lot of effort regarding Alzheimer's bills and was rewarded with the signing by the Governor of SCR 75, 76, 85 and HB 420-Kubiak, (effective 8/31/87, relating to the training of employees of nursing homes, custodial care homes, and related institutions, concerning the care of persons with Alzheimer's.). (Dr. Jackson's wife suffered from Alzheimer's and recently passed away.) Ruby Hawk knocked herself out getting SB 200 sent to the Governor 5/26. (This calls for criminal background checks on new nursing home employees.) HB 1238 re senior citizen license plates died. HB 1435 re higher education without cost for senior citizens died. HB 1739-Schoolcraft, re dental care for those in nursing homes, was sent to the Governor 5/30. Helen Walter worked tirelessly on this one. HB 1066-Evans, relating to establishing a Texas Council on Alzheimer's Disease, etc., was signed by the Governor and takes effect 9/1/87. Bills we should wish died are SB 229, deregulating AT&T. Sen. Parmer's amendment was removed by the House but the compromise is that AT&T must first show it is not a dominant carrier (!). This was sent to the Governor as was SB 444-Farabee which will permit 25% annual rate hikes in phone service categories for small rural companies without PUC hearings! (You can still contact the Governor on these as he has until June 21st to sign these into law or veto them. If he doesn't sign a bill, it automatically becomes law without his signature.)

\* \* \*

JUNE 22ND is D-Day (Deadline Day) for Deno Tufares receiving your picture for the composite to be made for the Capitol. GET ON THE STICK if you haven't done this yet. Another reminder about the pins and pendants, too. Get your orders in to Dian Bowers NOW!!.

Don't forget July 1st is National Centenarians Day. Reread Silver Bullet(in) No. 8, please, re the TDOA public hearing in Waco 6/25, etc. Paula Johnson will be introducing her intern, Chris Parker, a graduate of Baylor holding a double degree in Sociology and Gerontology, who is writing a book to be used as resource material for other states, as well as a guideline and reference, which will be a comprehensive summary on the first year of the Texas Silver Haired Legislature's efforts. I'm impressed--and I hope you are and I hope she will be! (See enclosure.)

\* \* \*

Not hearing from anyone regarding any special meetings of the ad hoc committees, I assume none have been set for the immediate future. So, there's nothing to report there. I'll still try to get another report out to you near the end of the month since the special session will be opening June 22nd. In the meantime, do your dangdest to get that \$ per sr. citizen in your district. I really believe we each have the duty, the strongest of duties, to get the Foundation drive to a successful conclusion. We'll be receiving packets around July 1st with material to help do this but you don't have to wait. Come up with some project of your own, if you like, in addition to the brochures for the local banks. Elizabeth Logan has met with such success in the past. One of the keys is her enthusiasm, another is her belief in the Silver Haired Legislature itself. All of us pulling together as a team will get the job done--you know that. Don't get discouraged, just keep plugging. We can become a much more vital group with the Foundation in place. WE CAN DO IT!

30 for now,  
Aliceanne