

Oklahoma State Senate

Communications Division
State Capitol
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

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A Senate Review by Senator Bill Brown

The 1st Session of the 53rd Legislature has come to a close. In my opinion, this was the most successful session I've had the privilege of being a part of since I got into office in 2006.

Even in the face of a \$500 million budget shortfall, we were able to pass a budget that will protect our most vital state services like education, transportation, health and human services, and public safety. The budget demanded a lot of our attention this session, but we worked hard and were able to pass numerous reforms that will save our state money and make it more attractive to businesses.

Originally, there were over 2,700 House and Senate bills filed in December. After staff researched the measures for constitutionality and whether certain issues had already been brought up in the past as well as getting rid of duplicates of filed bills, the number was whittled down to just over 2,200 bills.

By the time May rolled around that number had been cut significantly and only 396 bills made it to the Governor's desk. She signed 385 into law and vetoed 11 of them. Of that total 196 were Senate bills and 200 came from the House.

This year, I filed 24 Senate bills and was the Senate principal author on 18 House bills. I was so pleased that seven of my Senate bills were signed into law as well as seven of the House bills; and I'd like to briefly discuss each of those.

SB 324, which went into effect when it was signed, lowers the blood alcohol concentration from .10 to .08 for the determination of being under the influence while boating. Being that my family owns a marina and we've have seen firsthand the tragedy that can result from drunk drivers on the water, this has been a measure I've fought for from the day I got into office. The law also provides that any person who operates a vessel on Oklahoma waters has given consent to blood or breath tests to determine alcohol concentration. This is an important bill that is going to keep our waters safe for everyone to enjoy.

SB 412 requires an entity that provides health insurance in Oklahoma to accept the Okla. Health Care Authority's (OHCA) right of recovery and assignment of rights and prohibits charging OHCA or its agents any fees for processing claims or eligibility requests. This law will go into effect on November 1.

SB 426 authorizes a technology center to delegate approval of change orders to public construction contracts up to \$40,000.00 or 10% of any contract, whichever is less, to such technology center's governing

body, with any approved change orders reported to the governing body. This law will go into effect on November 1.

SB 563 modifies the Health Insurance High Risk Pool Act by including in the definition of creditable coverage the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP), a temporary high risk pool offered pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, and by exempting from the 18-month creditable coverage requirement an individual whose most recent coverage was under the PCIP. The measure also requires a weighted average to be used to calculate certain standard risk rates. The law will become effective August 26.

SB 577 amends language related to the Oklahoma Police Pension and Retirement System to keep the System compliant with requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. The law went into effect when the Governor signed it.

SB 584 amends language related to the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Retirement System to keep the System compliant with requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. This new law also went into effect when it was signed.

SB 965 makes changes to the statutes to allow the Insurance Department to transition to a new software system. It clarifies that an individual holding a professional bondsman license is required to provide an annual financial statement and an annual county assessor's written statement. It requires such annual financial statement to be of a date not earlier than 90 days prior to the last day of the birth month of the bondsman, instead of prior to submission of the license renewal application. It also modifies examination requirements within the Oklahoma Producer Licensing Act by removing the requirement that applicants pass an examination, the requirement that such applicants held a certain license or participated in a training program, a provisional license fee, and subject requirements for continuing education. It decreases the time a producer may reinstate a license from 24 to 12 months from the due date of the renewal fee.

SB 965 also modifies exemptions from the adjuster examination and reexamination requirements within the Insurance Adjuster Licensing Act, and removes subject requirements for continuing education. Finally, it modifies license requirements for bail bondsmen by providing that such licenses will expire biennially, instead of annually. Applicants are authorized to apply electronically on forms approved by the Insurance Commissioner. The law will become effective August 26.

If you have ideas for legislation for next year's session, please contact me this summer or fall. We'll start requesting bills in October and all of our requests have to be made in early December.

To contact me at the Capitol, please write to Senator Bill Brown, State Capitol, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd. Room 413A, Oklahoma City, OK, 73105, email me at brownb@oksenate.gov, or call (405) 521-5602.