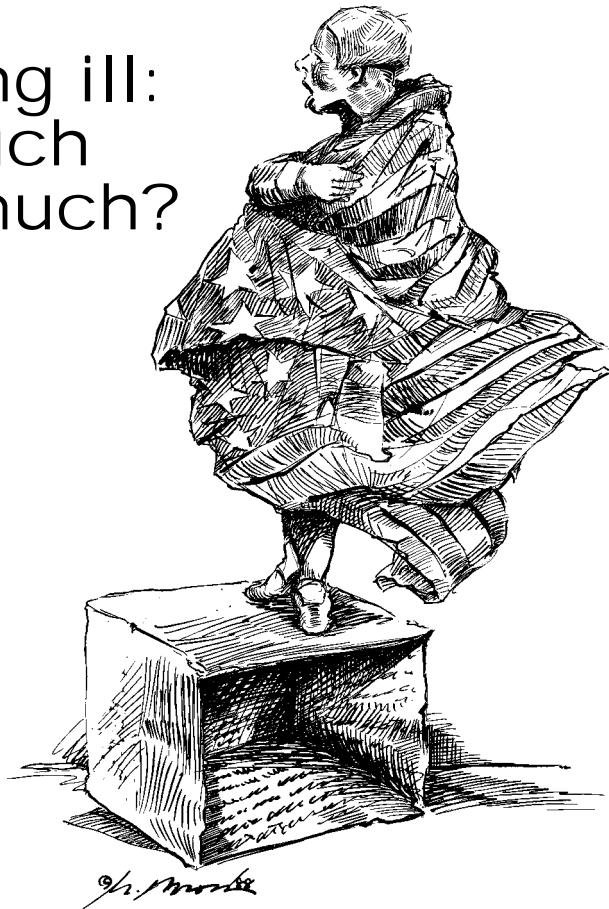


February 13, 2006

Speaking ill:  
 how much  
 is too much?



Budget & taxes	
Bush submits state-unfriendly '07 budget	5
Politics & leadership	
PA pay raise scandal reignites	7
Governors	
Blanco says it's time for hardball in LA	10
Bird's eye view	3
Hot issues	12
Once around the statehouse lightly	15

Top Story

*A series of caustic protests by a KANSAS church congregation at the funerals for U.S. war casualties has spurred more than a dozen states to hurriedly consider just how much free speech is too much.*

**SNCJ Spotlight**

*States moving fast to stop funeral protests*

**F**or most Americans, the freedom to voice dissent is one of the bedrocks of our society. But an ongoing series of increasingly vitriolic protests by members of a KANSAS church at the funerals of U.S. war casualties and others has spurred more than a dozen states to hurriedly consider legislation that would greatly limit such demonstrations.

According to the State Net database, at least 15 states have introduced legislation since the beginning of the year that would restrict when and where protesters could vent their feelings during funeral proceedings. Those states include IOWA (HB 2132 & SB 2103), ILLINOIS (HB 4532), INDIANA (HB 1201), KANSAS (SB 421), KENTUCKY (SB 93 & HB 333), MISSOURI (HB 1026 & SB 578), NEBRASKA (LB 773), OHIO (HB 484), OKLAHOMA (HB 2478, HB 2509, HB 2593 SB 1377 & SB 1020), SOUTH DAKOTA (SB 156), TENNESSEE (HB 2667 & SB 2660), VERMONT (HB 718), WEST VIRGINIA (HB 4317 & HB 4306) and WISCONSIN (SB 525).

Similar legislation in MISSISSIPPI (HB 1468) died in committee in late January. The legislation in Kansas would strengthen similar laws already on the books.

Most of these bills specify that protesters must stay a certain distance away from funerals or face jail time and/or a large fine for disorderly conduct. The distance and amount of the fine vary significantly between bills. West Virginia's HB 4317, for instance, requires protesters to stay at least 1,000 feet away, with a maximum potential jail time of 10 days. In Wisconsin, SB 525 requires only a 500-foot buffer, but violators face a maximum \$1,000 fine and up to 90 days in jail. Most measures also have time buffers similar to Oklahoma Senate Bill 1020, which prohibits demonstrating for one hour before and two hours after a funeral.

The sudden wave of legislation is a direct result of a string of caustic funeral protests carried out by the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) of Topeka, Kansas, long known for its vocal opposition to homosexuality. The WBC and its leader, the Rev. Fred Phelps, have in recent months targeted funeral services for soldiers recently killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, claiming that although none of the deceased soldiers were gay, their deaths are God's punishment on the U.S. for its tolerance of homosexuality. During protests, church members carry signs that say, among other things, "They turned America over to fags; They're bringing them home in body bags" and "Thank God for IEDs" (the improvised explosive devices used by Iraqi insurgents against U.S. soldiers).

The WBC has also not limited itself to picketing solely at military funerals. The group recently demonstrated at a memorial service for 12 miners killed in

## *The Week in Session*

States in Regular Session: AK, AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MO, MS, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, US, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV, WY

States in Special Session: AZ "a", CA "a", LA "a", PA "a", TN "a"

States in Budget Hearing Recess: DE

Special Sessions in Recess: OK "a"

States Projected to Adjourn: NM

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions  
Source: State Net, 02/10/06

the Sago Mine accident in West Virginia in January, carrying banners that said “Thank God for Dead Miners” and “Miners in Hell.” They followed that last week with a similar appearance in GEORGIA at the funeral for civil rights icon Coretta Scott King, whom they have long derided for her support of gay rights.

That kind of inflammatory invective has clearly touched a nerve with grieving families, lawmakers and military veterans. One such group, a Kansas-based motorcycle club calling itself the Patriot Guard Riders (PGR), formed last October specifically to “strategize and form a battle plan to combat Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church.” The reaction was swift, and according to their Web site, the group now has chapters in 48 states. Their strategy so far has been to attend funerals for soldiers killed in combat in order to act as a buffer between WBC protesters and grieving families.

So far, the PGR has kept its actions legal and non-violent, and

they have only attended services when invited by the families involved. But Oklahoma Rep. John Nance (R), who authored his state’s HB 2593, says he fears the peace between protesters and groups like the PGR won’t last if lawmakers don’t act quickly.

“The fact of the matter is, this is becoming a very dangerous situation,” he says. “If it continues, it probably will erupt in some kind of violence.”

Nance says he fears what might happen in the near future because he understands the emotions that are driving the issue, particularly for bereaved families.

## Bird’s eye view



### *Minimum wage on the rise*

Congress last raised the federal minimum wage in 1997. Since then, supporters of another increase have concentrated their efforts primarily in the states. MARYLAND recently became the 18th state to raise its minimum wage above the federal \$5.15-per-hour minimum when lawmakers there overrode a veto from Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. (R). Legislators in three states that already exceed the federal minimum — CALIFORNIA, MAINE and RHODE ISLAND — are looking to raise their wage even more, in part to avoid ballot box measures that would tie future increases to inflation. According to the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, efforts to place a minimum wage hike onto the November ballot are already being undertaken in ARIZONA, ARKANSAS, MICHIGAN, MONTANA, NEVADA and OHIO. The accompanying map shows the 18 states that currently have a minimum wage higher than the federal standard.



On its Web site, the church warns lawmakers that “Your standard is ‘reasonable, time, place and manner restriction.’ If you go one bit over that line we’re going to litigate, and request fees. When you pass your laws, you had better make absolutely sure they are content neutral and apply equally to all messages. Your proposals are rampant with blatant content-focus, so most likely you’ll end up in court.”

It would not be the first time they have taken their case to the courts. In 1995, the WBC successfully challenged the constitutionality of the Kansas Funeral Picketing Act, which led the state to amend the statute to prohibit picketing for an hour before and two hours after a funeral.

They will likely get their chance again this year as well. As of last week, the bills in Kentucky, Missouri, South Dakota and Indiana have all cleared the first legislative chamber, while the Wisconsin Legislature has sent SB 525 to Gov. Jim Doyle (D), who says he will sign it into law. In Oklahoma, Rep. Nance says he is sure many of the pending laws will get challenged, but says he is equally sure they need to move forward.

“You can’t avoid someone if they decide to challenge it,” he says. “But we’ve done everything we can to make sure these bills meet constitutional requirements. The protesters will still be able to do their thing. They just won’t be able to expose a grieving family to that kind of despicable act.”

— By *RICH EHISEN*

---

## Budget & taxes

**B**USH SUBMITS STATE-UNFRIENDLY '07 BUDGET: Last Monday, President George W. Bush sent Congress his budget plan for next fiscal year. The \$2.77 trillion proposal allocates a record \$493.3 billion for defense and renews Bush’s call for the Republican-controlled Congress to make his tax cuts permanent. To partially offset those expenditures — and make some headway towards halving the federal deficit (expected to reach \$423 billion this year) by 2009 — Bush has recommended \$65 billion in cuts over the next five years to entitlement programs, mainly the federal Medicare program for the elderly, but also the state-federal Medicaid program for the poor, which would be trimmed by \$13.6 billion. Federal education aid would also be reduced by \$3.1 billion, or about 5.5 percent from 2006 levels. NEW MEXICO Gov. Bill Richardson (D), an outspoken critic of Bush, zeroed in on those cuts, stating, “The president is shifting all responsibility to the states, shifting health care, education and basically providing a bare-bones budget. So states will now become the true laboratories of innovation because

the federal budget is not particularly helpful.” U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary and former UTAH governor Mike Leavitt countered that the federal government helped out states when they faced budget problems a few years ago, but now they are doing better financially and the federal government “is not in a position to help out states as much as before.” Some members of Congress, however, don’t appear to be in a position to help out the president. The ranking Democrat on the Senate Budget Committee, Sen. Kent Conrad of NORTH DAKOTA, unsurprisingly isn’t a big fan of the budget plan. “It represents the same reckless fiscal course the Bush administration has followed for the last five years.” But even some Republicans expressed strong reservations. Sen. Arlen Specter of PENNSYLVANIA called the plan “scandalous,” and said he would be a “nay” vote because of the proposed cuts to education and health programs. Sen. Olympia Snowe of MAINE, likewise, said she was “disappointed and even surprised” by the cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. Washington insiders say if those cuts are going to happen, Congress probably won’t make them until after the midterm elections in November. (WASHINGTON POST, STATELINE.ORG, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR)

**STATE TAXES RISING:** State tax burdens increased by an average of 41 percent over the last decade, according to new Census Bureau data. NEW HAMPSHIRE residents saw the biggest jump, with their tax burden more than doubling since 1994. (At \$1,544 per person, however, it’s still one of the lowest in the country.) Fiscal analysts attribute the increase mainly to the rising costs of education and Medicaid, as well as the widespread budget shortfalls earlier in this decade. One state did manage to buck the national trend; thanks to soaring oil prices, ALASKA was able to reduce the tax burden on its residents by 1 percent, to \$2,035 per person. (ASSOCIATED PRESS, BOSTON GLOBE)

**BUDGETS IN BRIEF: NEW JERSEY** Gov. Jon Corzine’s (D) transition team warned last week that as a result of rising expenses and declining revenues, the state could face a \$5.5 billion shortfall by the end of the current fiscal year unless something is done to avoid it. National budget-watchers say the Garden State’s fiscal predicament is matched by only a few others, most notably hurricane-ravaged LOUISIANA (STAR-LEDGER [NEWARK]). • **CONNECTICUT** Gov. M. Jodi Rell (R) proposed a \$16 billion budget that calls for the repeal of the car tax and a 25 percent reduction in the tax public utilities pay — and pass on to residents and businesses. The governor is seeking to win four more years in her appointed post this fall (BOSTON GLOBE). • Also in **CONNECTICUT**, House Speaker James Amann (D) proposed an ambitious \$6.2 billion, 10-year plan to improve the state’s



transportation infrastructure. The proposal would essentially implement the recommendations made by a bipartisan commission three years ago, ignored by then-Gov. John G. Rowland (R) and the legislature at the time because the cost was too high (HARTFORD COURANT). • The Baltimore Sun — the bane of MARYLAND Gov. Robert L Ehrlich Jr. (R) — reported last week that the Old Line State’s dramatic turnaround from \$4 billion deficit to \$2 billion surplus in the last three years was due more to tax increases and the general upturn in the economy than to the governor’s oft-touted government downsizing efforts. The Sun’s figures showed that 28 percent of the improvement was due to tax and fee increases, while only 18 percent was attributable to budget cuts (BALTIMORE SUN). • A Los Angeles County sheriff said last week a wave of racial violence at two CALIFORNIA jails earlier this month that left one prisoner dead and another 100 injured was the result of \$150 million in state funding cuts a few years ago. Those cuts forced the closure of jails and the release of nonviolent criminals, increasing the concentration of violent prisoners at the remaining facilities (ASSOCIATED PRESS, SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE).

*Upcoming Stories*

Here are some of the topics you will see covered in upcoming issues of the State Net Capitol Journal:

- Hospital infections
- Raising the minimum wage
- Health care workers: The right to say no?
- Illegal immigration: Targeting employers

And much more...

— Compiled by KOREY CLARK

---

# Politics & Leadership

**PAY RAISE SCANDAL REIGNITES:** Just when we thought it was over, last year’s brouhaha in PENNSYLVANIA over legislative and judicial pay raises flared up again last week. The fire took hold again in a federal court when the Keystone State chapter of Common Cause submitted new evidence in an ongoing lawsuit over the abortive pay-raise effort alleging that legislative leaders traded government funding for favorable rulings in two cases before the state Supreme Court. The evidence consisted of sworn affidavits from three state lawmakers recounting a closed-door meeting in June 1999 in which then-House Majority Leader John Perzel (R) pressed GOP caucus members to approve a bill providing funding for the county court system in order to ensure that a pair of Supreme Court cases would go their way. The cases, involving an increase in the gasoline tax and workers’ compensation reform, were two Perzel said “We cannot afford to lose,” according to the sworn statement of one of the



Republican legislators, Rep. Ed Krebs. The new allegations were added to the Common Cause lawsuit's preexisting claim that Chief Justice Ralph Cappy was "an active participant in secret negotiations drafting Act 44 [the pay raise]." As a result of that alleged pattern of behavior, Common Cause is seeking "to prohibit state justices and judges from engaging in discussions with members of the legislative or executive branches on legislation, since they may have to rule on such legislation at future times." The group's executive director, Barry Kauffman, forcefully expressed the basis for Common Cause's indignation over the entire affair. "The courts are the last line of defense citizens have to protect themselves from abuses by the legislative and executive branches of government," he said. "If judges and justices collude with the other two branches of government...then the representative democracy we cherish collapses." But the deputy court administrator of Pennsylvania, Thomas Darr, was just as vigorous in his remarks about Common Cause's latest court filing. "A preliminary reading shows the allegations to be preposterous, baseless and reckless and the relief sought ridiculous," he said. (PATRIOT-NEWS [HARRISBURG]), PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE)

**ETHICS BILL WALTZES THROUGH TN LEGISLATURE:** The FBI undercover operation called "Tennessee Waltz," which led to the indictment of five state lawmakers for extortion last May, produced the first rewrite of Volunteer State ethics laws in over a decade last week. Among other things, the new ethics rules establish an independent ethics commission, bar lobbyists from giving directly to political candidates' campaigns and prohibit the governor from fundraising during legislative sessions. Although they were passed overwhelmingly by both houses in special session last Monday, there were a number of dissenters in both chambers. Some wanted tougher regulations, such as an outright ban on cash contributions and a public financing system for campaigns. Others, including one member of the Republican majority in the Senate, protested that the legislation was forged largely behind closed doors. "Why was this bill that recommends open government hashed out in a secret meeting?" asked Sen. Brian Kelsey (R). But Democratic Gov. Phil Bredesen focused on the positive, saying, "I'm proud of the results, and we've done what the public has asked us to do." The comments of House Majority Leader Kim McMillan, also a Democrat, were a little more moderate and considerably more revealing: "No single member, party or chamber got everything they wanted, but, as I've said before, we cannot allow our pursuit of absolute perfection to prevent progress and this bill represents comprehensive ethics reform." Senate Speaker Pro Tem Mike Williams (R), meanwhile, was looking toward the future. "This is not the end — far from

it,” he said. “This is the beginning of the right direction where people of this state will be proud of what we’re doing.” (TENNESSEAN [NASHVILLE], NEW YORK TIMES)

**POLITICS IN BRIEF: WISCONSIN**

Gov. Jim Doyle (D) called a special session, beginning this week, in an effort to force lawmakers to provide \$6 million in heating assistance for Badger State residents making less than \$40,000 a year. Republican legislative leaders said they would convene as required, but without taking up the governor’s proposal, claiming the state can’t afford it (ASSOCIATED PRESS, JANESVILLE GAZETTE). • A group of **NEW**

**YORK** state Supreme Court judges, the state Republican Party, the Manhattan Democratic Party and the state Board of Elections are expected to file a joint appeal of a federal court ruling three weeks ago ordering judicial elections to be conducted through a primary system. The impending action means Empire State judges will likely be selected by political convention again this year (BUFFALO NEWS). • **COLORADO** lawmakers have introduced a resolution calling for more civility in the Centennial State Legislature. The measure’s Senate sponsor, Sen. Brandon Shaffer (D), said it was spurred by the resignation earlier this year of veteran Republican lawmaker Norma Anderson, whose decision was motivated in part by what she viewed as a lack of civility in the legislature since term limits were enacted in 1998 (ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS [DENVER]). • Following **GEORGIA**’s lead, **PENNSYLVANIA**’s Republican-controlled House passed legislation Feb. 1 that would require voters to show photo ID at the polls. The bill headed to the GOP-led Senate, but it doesn’t look as though it will go any further than that; a spokeswoman for Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell said he does not support the measure (PATRIOT-NEWS [HARRISBURG]). • The **NEW HAMPSHIRE** House also passed a voter ID bill, HB 345. But the partisan-charged measure is likely to meet the same fate in the Granite State, where, as in Pennsylvania, both houses of the legislature are controlled by the GOP, while the governor’s office is held by a Democrat (UNION LEADER [MANCHESTER]). • As a result of reshuffling in connection with **VIRGINIA** Democrat Mark R. Herring’s capture of a Republican Senate seat in a special election two weeks ago

*Upcoming Elections*

(02/09/06 - 03/02/06)

02/14/2006 Alabama Party Primaries  
House 001

02/14/2006 Kentucky Special Election  
Senate 037

02/14/2006 Texas Special Election  
House 048

02/21/2006 Michigan Special Primary  
Senate 023

02/28/2006 Alabama Runoff or Special  
General  
House 031

02/28/2006 New York Special Election  
House 008, 017, 059, 067, 074, 139  
Senate 060

02/28/2006 Texas Emergency Special  
House 106



(see AT THE POLLS in the Feb. 6 issue of *SNCJ*), the Democratic minority has gained an 8-7 majority on two committees: Rehabilitation and Social Services and Local Government (RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH). • Two national conservative groups, U.S. Term Limits and Americans for Tax Reform, have provided a combined \$100,000 to fund a signature-gathering effort to place a new term-limits initiative on **OREGON**'s November ballot. Oregonians overwhelmingly approved a term-limits measure in 1992, but it was declared unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court in 2002 because it amended multiple sections of the state Constitution (STATESMAN JOURNAL [SALEM]).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

---

# Governors

**B**LANCO SAYS IT'S TIME FOR HARDBALL: Embattled LOUISIANA Gov. Kathleen Blanco (D) gave the Bush administration an ultimatum last week — give Louisiana a larger share of oil and gas royalties from offshore drilling or face a roadblock to exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. It was the governor's strongest statement yet in her ongoing battle with the federal government over aid in rebuilding the hurricane-ravaged Pelican State. Oil and gas companies pay for the right to extract natural resources from the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana collects royalties and severance taxes on resources extracted within three miles of its border, adding hundreds of millions of dollars a year to the state treasury. But the state receives no share of the leasing fees on oil and gas reserves beyond the three miles, which are in federal waters. The federal government negotiates those leases, which give larger states like FLORIDA and TEXAS extended state waters. Blanco now wants to split the leasing fees 50-50. "If no effort is made to guarantee our fair share of royalties," she said, "I have warned the federal government that we will be forced to block the August sale of offshore oil and gas leases." Although it is unclear whether Blanco actually has the power to back up her threat, she made it very evident that she feels it is time to put all of her cards on the table in her dealings with Washington. "It's time to play hardball, as I believe that's the only game Washington understands," she said. Her comments came as she kicked off a special session of the Legislature at the New Orleans Convention Center, the site of significant suffering during Katrina. It marked the first time in 125 years that lawmakers have convened somewhere other than the statehouse in Baton Rouge. The opening-day meeting was mostly symbolic, as lawmakers



immediately returned to the Capitol for the rest of the session, which will deal with how Blanco wants the state to spend the \$7.7 billion in federal aid the state has already received. (TIMES-PICAYUNE [NEW ORLEANS], NEW YORK TIMES)

# Quoteable

“Why would a Republican pick a running mate from Mississippi? If a Republican doesn’t carry Mississippi, he won’t carry five states.”

— **MISSISSIPPI Gov. Haley Barbour (R) on why he does not want to serve on a GOP presidential ticket in 2008.** (WASHINGTON POST)

## NO POTOMAC FEVER FOR

**BARBOUR:** MISSISSIPPI Gov. Haley Barbour (R) said that despite rumors to the contrary, he will not make a run at the White House in 2008. Barbour cited his duties in guiding the Magnolia State recovery from Hurricane Katrina, saying “There’s no way I could run for president and do what I’ve got to do as governor. And, obviously, being governor comes first.” Barbour also emphasized that he is not interested in joining a GOP ticket as the vice presidential candidate. The governor did say he intends to seek a second gubernatorial term in 2007. Whispers of a potential presidential run started months before Katrina when a former lobbying partner registered two Web sites — haley2008.com and haleyforpresident.com. The buzz built after Barbour received wide praise for his handling of the Katrina disaster. (WASHINGTON POST)

**PERDUE SAYS EMINENT DOMAIN HIS TOP ISSUE:** GEORGIA Gov. Sonny Perdue (R) said last week that he will push hard for significant changes to the Peach State’s existing eminent domain laws, calling the issue “the most visceral that I’ve ever detected on the political scene.” Perdue proposed a constitutional amendment that would bar using eminent domain for economic development purposes but still allow it to be used for building roads and other public use projects. Perdue is also seeking to give property holders greater rights in eminent domain proceedings, including awarding attorney’s fees to land owners in failed eminent domain attempts and giving them the opportunity to repurchase land if it has not been used for its stated purpose within five years. Most legislative Republicans voiced support for Perdue’s proposals, but Sen. Jeff Chapman (R), who introduced similar legislation of his own last year, was a notable exception. “From what I’ve read of [Perdue’s bill], I am disappointed. It continues to leave Georgians vulnerable to eminent domain abuse,” Chapman said. Another observer, Lamar Norton of the Georgia Municipal Association, also claimed Perdue’s 23-page bill would not stop local governments from using eminent domain, although he did note they will have to “go through a lot more hoops.” (ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION)



ings about customers with criminal records. It now posts in the full House (QUAD-CITY TIMES [DAVENPORT]). • The **MAINE** House endorses a measure that would raise the Pine Tree State minimum wage to \$7-per-hour by October 2007. The Senate is already considering the legislation (PORTLAND PRESS HERALD).

**CRIME & PUNISHMENT:** The **NEW MEXICO** House unanimously approves HB 130, a measure that would force people arrested for most felony crimes to submit a DNA sample to authorities. The sample would then be compared to those in a state database for comparison to DNA samples from other crime investigations. The measure moves to the Senate (DAILY TIMES [FARMINGTON]). • DNA is also an issue in the **ILLINOIS** House, which approves legislation that would make DNA samples mandatory for anyone arrested for a felony. The proposal heads to the Senate (QUAD-CITY TIMES [DAVENPORT]). • Still in **ILLINOIS**, a House committee approves HB 4222, which would require convicted sexual offenders to wear a GPS tracking device for 40 years after they are released from prison. It moves to the full House (ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH). • AN **OKLAHOMA** Senate committee endorses SB 1020, which would make it a misdemeanor to picket within 500 feet of a cemetery or mortuary for one hour prior and four hours after the start of a funeral service (See *SNCJ Spotlight* in this issue). The proposal heads to the Senate (OKLAHOMAN [OKLAHOMA CITY]).

**EDUCATION:** A **UTAH** House committee narrowly approves HB 107, which would allow Beehive State school districts and charter schools to create voluntary full-day kindergarten in schools with large populations of disadvantaged students. The measure moves to the full House (SALT LAKE TRIBUNE). • That same **UTAH** House committee also endorses HB 96, which would require public school teachers to say the state doesn't endorse any specific theory involving the origins of species. The bill was changed from its original version that emphasized teaching intelligent design as an alternative to the theory of evolution. It graduates to the full House (SALT LAKE TRIBUNE).

**ENVIRONMENT:** The **IDAHO** Senate approves SB 1276, which would require that residents in counties adjacent to a proposed thermal power plant site receive notification and a chance to voice their concerns before building begins. The bill now goes to the House (TIMES-NEWS [TWIN FALLS]).





Democratic state Sen. Deanne Hanna of Lakewood has introduced a bill to fine Coloradans who try to feed squirrels, raccoons, foxes and other feral animals. Her rationale: Feeding wild animals can make them dependent on humans for food, and therefore potentially dangerous. So, let's make sure we understand this bill in context. If it passes, it will be legal in Colorado to use food to lure an animal to its death, but illegal to use food to lure an animal to lunch.

**PROTECTING AN INDUSTRY:** Is that syrup on your table *really* from VERMONT? New rules passed in the Vermont Legislature may help you find out. According to the *Rutland Herald*, syrup produced in the Green Mountain State now must be labeled as "Vermont grade" instead of "U.S. grade," "fancy" or "amber." And if, by some chance, the syrup comes from somewhere else but has the word "Vermont" in its name, the label must inform consumers about the product's origins. This only applies, of course, to syrup sold within the borders of Vermont. Labels on bottles, tins and jugs sold in NEW MEXICO can read "Vermont's Best Maple Syrup" even though the liquid inside comes from, say, Detroit.

**NO MULLIGANS ALLOWED:** The dust-up began innocently enough when Democratic Rep. Gary Lindstrom cast his vote on COLORADO'S proposed clean-air act — a bill backed by Democrats and environmentalists but opposed by Republicans and various business groups. Lindstrom, a candidate for governor, voted "aye," reports the *Rocky Mountain News*. Unfortunately, a confused Lindstrom voted "yes" not on the bill but on a GOP-sponsored amendment to kill the bill. Republicans, made aware of the mistake, refused to guarantee that a motion to reconsider would receive the needed two-thirds approval. Democrats then accused Republicans of "uncivil" behavior, and the firestorm ignited. The legislation will be reintroduced but must work its way back through committee before once again reaching the floor. And the next time it comes up for vote on the floor, Lindstrom likely will have a chaperone.

## In the Hopper

State Net's database tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states at any given time. Here's a snapshot of what's in the legislative works:

Number of 2006 prefiles last week: 686

Number of 2006 Intros last week: 6,798

Number of bills enacted/adopted last week: 566

Number of 2006 prefiles to date: 11,951

Number of 2006 Intros to date: 45,514

Number of enacted/adopted overall in 2006: 2,953

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(Measures current as of 02/02/06  
Source: State Net)

