

Interim Studies Review

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LOFT Bill Gives Legislative Watchdog Teeth

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McCortney Offers 'Simple Solution' to Age Gaps in Pre-K & Kindergarten

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Senate Bill Proposes Sales Tax Exemption for Veterans Organization

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OK Senate Legislative Update

LOFT Bill Gives Legislative Watchdog Teeth

Oklahoma State Senate President Pro Tempore, Senator Greg Treat, R-Oklahoma City, requested the first bill of the upcoming 57th Legislative Session. The requested measure has been dubbed the "LOFT Bill" because it creates the "Legislative Office of Fiscal Transparency." According to Pro Tem Treat, the purpose of the legislation is simple, "The Legislative Office of Fiscal Transparency (LOFT) will be the watchdog of the Oklahoma Legislature. It will provide both the Senate and the House with detailed and consistent financial information on our state agencies and help the legislature have more complete information when making budgeting decisions." Across the country 38 other states have already implemented a similar office as Senate Bill 1, the *LOFT Bill*.

McCortney Offers 'Simple Solution' to Age Gaps in Pre-K & Kindergarten

Senate Bill 11, requested by Senator Greg McCortney, R-Ada, is a second attempt at a fix to a common problem in Oklahoma Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms. The bill would amend the birthday cutoff date for schools from September 1 to July 1. In essence, this proposed legislation would increase the minimum... (Cont. Page 2)

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starting age for children to attend early childhood education programs and public schools. According to the bill's author, Senator McCortney, the actions of Senate Bill 11 are much needed and are a common-sense solution to a problem many Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers have been facing. One of the largest complaints Senator McCortney has heard from teachers is that many of them are not able to spend sufficient time with the entire classroom because much of their time is focused on children who have not yet been potty trained or have undeveloped language skills. By increasing the minimum age allowed to attend public education programs and schools, the hope is for younger education teachers to have the ability to spend more time with the entire classroom and less time focused on individual students.

Senate Bill Proposes Sales Tax Exemption for Veterans Organization

New Senate Appropriations Chair, Senator Roger Thompson, R-Okemah, has proposed the American Legion be exempt from the state sales tax. According to Thompson, organizations similar to American Legion that perform very similar tasks are already tax exempt, this legislation would simply put them on the same playing field as the other veterans focused organizations. He continued, "The American Legion continually works to improve the lives of others in my district, and does the same in other rural districts as well. It is an honor to be able to run legislation that will help them continue to change lives."