

Votes on consumer, health care issues criticized

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Some House and Senate leaders have drawn low ratings for their votes by a group that advocates for more protections for health care consumers and nursing home residents.

The 2008 Legislature drew an overall rating of "average" from the Oklahoma Foundation for Consumer and Patient rights.

The group cited the defeat of bills to require insurance coverage for children with autism and for seriously ill patients who undergo clinical trials and legislation to require nursing homes to carry liability insurance.

"During the last session, help for cancer patients, children with autism and nursing home residents failed to overcome powerful, selfish interests. The poor, sick and the elderly continue to suffer because of it," said Jeff Raymond, executive director of the foundation.

Guy Thiessen, Tulsa attorney, said a task force appointed by Gov. Brad Henry in 2006 showed more than half of the state's nursing homes had no liability insurance. He said patients and their families suffer as a result in abuse cases.

He said some nursing home operations are able to, in effect, thwart lawsuits through multiple corporations that allow owners to hide assets.

Senate Co-President Pro Tem Glenn Coffee, R-Oklahoma City, voted only 43 percent of the time for bills supported by the foundation. A spokesman in

THE DETAILS

HOW THEY VOTED

Following are the scores of Edmond-area legislators on a rating from the Oklahoma Center for Consumer and Patient Safety based on 16 votes in the House of Representatives and 13 votes in the state Senate in the 2008 legislative session. To see the full report card, go online to www.okccps.org.

Sen. Clark Jolley, R-Edmond — 53 percent

Sen. Todd Lamb, R-Edmond — 61 percent

Rep. Jason Murphey, R-Guthrie — 56 percent

Rep. Marian Cooksey, R-Edmond — 68 percent

Rep. Ken Miller, R-Edmond — 57 percent

Rep. Randy McDaniel, R-Oklahoma City — 62 percent

Rep. Lance Cargill, R-Harrah — 70 percent (but was not in office for six of the votes)

Coffee's office said the senator was not available for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Several House and Senate members voted only about half the time for issues backed by the group. House Speaker Chris Benge, a Tulsa Republican, voted 62 percent of the time.

Rep. Ken Luttrell, D-Ponca City, had the only 100 percent score.

Several lawmakers had scores in the high 80s and 90s. House Democratic

leader Danny Morgan of Prague had a score of 87 percent and Senate President Pro Tem Mike Morgan, D-Stillwater, had a 90 percent score.

Raymond said lawmakers did do some good things this past session, including passing bills to toughen penalties for elder care abuse, inform consumers when their confidential information has been breached and require child care centers to carry liability insurance.

But he and others expressed disappointment that lawmakers did not take final action on such bills as Steffanie's Law, which was approved in the Senate but failed to receive a hearing in the House.

Steffanie's Law would require insurance companies to pay for the routine medical care of people who have insurance, but who take part in clinical trials in a last-ditch effort to find a cure.

It is named for Steffanie Collings, who died in March at the age of 18 after a four-year battle with brain cancer. Her family incurred debt of \$400,000 after their insurance carrier would not pay for her routine medical bills.

Monte Collings, Steffanie's father, said routine coverage should not be canceled just because seriously ill patients take part in clinical trials.

"If we quit paying our premiums then we would lose our coverage, but we pay our premiums as they tell us to, so why don't we get what we pay for?" Collings asked.

Forensic scientist famous for work on O.J., JonBenet cases to speak at UCO

The University of Central Oklahoma will welcome renowned forensic scientist Dr. Henry Lee for an engaging presentation on his high profile work at 7 p.m. Oct. 7 in Constitution Hall of the Nigh University Center. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Lee's testimony figured prominently into several closely watched trials, including O.J. Simpson's murder trial and the infamous Connecticut "Woodchipper" murder case. He also assisted local and state police in the investigation of JonBenet Ramsey's murder in Boulder, Colo., the 1993 suicide of White House Counsel Vince Foster and in the reinvestigation of President Kennedy's assass-

ination.

"Dr. Lee is among the most respected and knowledgeable individuals in forensic science today," said Dwight Adams, director of the UCO Forensic Science Institute.

"He will offer keen insight into the science of investigating and solving crimes, while sharing his inspiring personal story of his journey from China to the United States."

The presentation is a part of UCO's "Passport to China" semester. The UCO Passport program celebrates the culture and people of different nations throughout the world each fall semester with a series of campus events.

Lee was born in China and grew up in Taiwan. He reached the rank of captain in the Taipei Police Department before moving with his wife to the U.S. in

1965. He then completed a forensic science degree from John Jay College and a master's and doctorate in biochemistry from New York University.

Lee is currently the chief emeritus at the Department of Public Safety in Meriden, Conn.; chairperson of the Forensic Science program at the University of New Haven; founder of the Henry C. Lee Institute of Forensic Science, also at the University of New Haven; and Director of the Forensic Research and Training Center in Branford, Conn.

Lee lectures throughout the world, has authored hundreds of articles, co-authored more than 25 textbooks covering areas such as DNA, crime scene reconstruction and trace evidence and has received numerous honors and awards for his professional accomplishments.



Lee

COMMUNITY

YOUR NEWS

MOPS to host craft fair and bazaar

Mothers of Preschoolers will have a Craft Fair and Bazaar as their fall fundraiser from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 11 at First Presbyterian Church of Edmond, 1001 S. Rankin.

Booth rentals are available. For more information about renting booths, call Robin James at 844-6559 or e-mail robin_djames@hotmail.com.

The group meets at the church every second and fourth Friday. For more than 35 years, MOPS has

been creating communities where moms gather to experience encouragement, support and hope.

For more information about MOPS International or to find a group that is in the Edmond area, visit www.MOPS.org.

Register to vote before Oct. 10

Oct. 10 is the last day to apply for voter registration in order to be eligible to vote in the Nov. 4 elections. Persons who are U.S. citizens, residents of Oklahoma and at least 18

years old may apply to become registered voters.

Voter registration applications postmarked after that time will be accepted and processed, but the application will not be approved until after Nov. 4. Any person who has submitted a voter registration application and who has not received a response within 30 days should contact the County Election Board office at 713-1515. Application forms are available at the County Election Board office at 4201 N. Lincoln Blvd.

2008

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