

**WCPA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT
BY
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WCPA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

The 2001-2002 legislative session ended on March 14th. The legislature is currently in special session to address the budget deficit. The Assembly and Senate have passed their individual versions of a budget repair bill. The differences in the two versions are substantial. The next step in coming up with a budget repair bill is for the Conference Committee to negotiate a compromised budget which will be submitted to the Governor for his signature. The Conference Committee consists of three members from both houses, typically the leadership of both houses. Both the Assembly and Senate budget repair bill versions protect state revenue funding for the fiscal year 2002. The Senate version retains state revenue funding for municipalities and counties into the foreseeable future or at least through 2003. When they will actually pass a state budget is anyone's guess at this point. Additionally, the Senate budget version includes an early retirement provision, which has not been warmly received by the Republican Party.

There is one disturbing provision added to the Senate version of the budget repair bill. The Senate included Senate Bill 185 to their budget bill. Senate Bill 185 is an arbitration proposal which we worked very hard to have stopped in the Assembly and were successful in doing so. This provision would allow Police and Fire Commission's disciplinary decisions to be appealed to an arbitrator, thus effectively eroding the Police and Fire Commission's authority. We will work to have this provision removed before the Conference Committee version of the budget.

There were only 55 bills concurred by both houses during the session. This is by far the fewest number of bills ever passed during a legislative session. Speculation is that the legislature's attention was diverted by several large issues facing the legislature. First, of course, was the 1.1 billion dollar budget deficit, second the legislative caucus investigation, and third campaign finance reform. In some respects this prevented a number of bad bills from passing, yet on the other hand many important bills didn't get the consideration they deserved.

Our association sponsored and worked very hard over the past several years to get AB157, the body armor bill, to pass both houses. We were successful in accomplishing our goal during this session and are currently waiting for the Governor to sign the bill into law. This law will prevent someone who has been convicted of a serious felony from purchasing, possessing, or using body armor.

Carrying a concealed weapon legislation passed the Assembly but was defeated in the Senate. This is the fairest that any concealed weapons legislation has made it through the process in the past 6 years. The primary sponsors of the legislation in both houses have already indicated they will re-introduce their legislation early in the 2002-2003 legislative session.

The following is a list of law enforcement bills that have been signed into law and others that passed one house but not the other.

It has been a busy session, and all in all, I believe the law enforcement community did well in managing proposed legislation by working with the legislature and making sure that our positions were heard.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns feel free to e-mail me at dpettit@vil.oregon.wi.us or call me at (608) 835-6250.