



Pierre Report

The End Of The Session

BY STATE SEN. TOM JONES
D-District 17 (Viborg)

The final week of our 2013 session has finished in a flurry of bills, amendments and monetary decisions beginning on Monday and ending Friday.

In the Senate Appropriations Committee on Monday, we passed HB 1060 which we “back-filled” the 2012-13 fiscal year. Many dollars were used to pay debts occurred during the year that were not in the original bill. One of the major adjustments that was made was taking out of the General Fund \$5 million that was to pay for two corporations that enlarged or just entered South Dakota. Instead, these obligations are to be paid from the “Futures” Fund.” As you already know, these dollars, if taken from the General Fund, would reduce dollars available for two major areas which are dear to me: education and health care.

We also passed HB 1184, which gave South Dakota a new state park to the tune of \$2 million, \$1.5 million for a new State Game Lodge in Custer State Park, and \$500,000 for an extension to the Mickelson Trail in the Black Hills. This bill was bumped around quite a bit. The above numbers were decreased to \$1 by the Senate and passed to the House. The House, in turn, returned the bill back to the Senate Appropriations Committee in its original form. The amendment to the bill passed in the Appropriations Committee 5-1 with me being the dissenting vote. Then the amended bill passed our committee 5-1 with me again being the dissenting vote. These millions of dollars are taken out of the General Fund.

We also had the privilege to meet the first graduates of the JAG Program. This pilot program for South Dakota produced 11 graduates from Wagner that, without this program, quite possibly would not have finished high school, let alone already being accepted into the college. What a big step in the right direction for these individuals.

We acted on most of the remaining bills that contained local requests. The Senate side passed legislation amounting to \$21,254,318. The best part was approving \$5,829,319 for K-12 education on a per-student basis for fiscal year 2013. This bill was HB 1137 and amounts to approximately \$45.50 per student in public schools. I'm proud that we did this as all of our schools need these monies after the disastrous cuts of two years ago.

Also, we approved \$6 million for the demolishing of buildings at the Human Services Center in Yankton; \$2 million for the additional health care costs for the Board of Regents; \$2 million for Pine Beetle suppression in the Black Hills; and \$475,000 to help rural counties recruit attorneys.

Friday, the last day of this year's regular session, was a long one for everyone. The House of Representatives ended their session by passing HB 1185, which is the General Funding bill that does all of the final adjustments to the 2014 fiscal year. Forty-five minutes later, the Senate passed it also. The time was 11:45 p.m. The Joint Appropriations Committee met all morning, afternoon and evening to put the last numbers and amendments into the bill. In all, there were 58 written amendments and one unwritten. The House vote was 7-2 and the Senate side of

Pierre Report

A Growing South Dakota Problem

BY STATE REP. STACE NELSON
R-District 19 (Fulton)

My dear fellow South Dakotans,
I have not met one of you who is not concerned about a US Congress that has spent this country to the brink of financial ruin with a runaway national debt of \$16 trillion and growing. This debt exploded by Congress passing omnibus bills that created countless new programs that grew our federal government to the top-heavy, taxpayer-crushing size it is today.

South Dakota started this session with a surplus of your tax dollars, and were one of the top states in the nations, even as we face sequester cuts. The Legislature/governor GREW state government and changed that, though, by passing omnibus bills containing numerous new programs with more than 120 new full-time employees, that you were somehow doing without before, to include a similar “economic development program” voters overwhelmingly defeated in 2012’s RL14.

Omnibus bills SB70, SB90, SB235, HB1060, and HB1185 were special interest favorites that were chocked full of new program spending that did not even attempt to hide the fact they made a mockery of



Jones

Joint Appropriations voted 6-3 to approve the amendments. I was one of the “no” votes on the Senate side.

A few of the amendments are listed here:

1. Tabled funds for Early Head Start Program — \$1,094,221.
2. Passed funding for distribution to the universities for providing grants for research — \$1 million.
3. Tabled funding for a feasibility study regarding the treatment of invasive species at McCook Lake-initial request was \$75,000, reduced to \$20,000 — still tabled.
4. Tabled an increase and FTE (employee) to add salary and benefits for a Supreme Court Law Clerk — \$73,155.
5. Passed a transfer of General Fund money to the Cement Plant Trust Fund — \$2 million.
6. Passed a transfer of General Fund money to the Future Fund — \$2 million. These monies were for payments to corporations that came into our state or expanded their operations here. The House earlier pulled a request for money. The Senate earlier pulled a request for money. Last November, the voters of South Dakota rejected such a proposal.
7. Approved an upgrade for technology in K-12 — \$500,000.
8. Turned down a request for a pool for one-time funding to health providers based on their reliance on Medicaid funding — \$5 million General Funds; \$5,917,030 federal funds; and \$18,558 Other Funds for a total of \$10,935,588.
9. Tabled to eliminate State Health Insurance funding for the proposed FY14 Wellness Initiative — \$3 million General Funds; \$1.7 million federal funds, and \$3.4 million other funds for a total of \$8.1 million. If we hadn't tabled this amendment, the employees would have had to pick this up.
10. Tabled to expand South Dakota's Medicaid program in accordance to the Affordable Care Act — \$1,499,482 General Funds; \$58,294,779 federal funds — \$59,294,779. (Yes, the numbers are correct.)
11. Passed at the rate of 1/2 percent an increase to provider rates for Medicaid as on-going money-1/2 of each of the following: \$3,654,870 General Funds; \$3,956,638 federal funds and \$13,915 other funds — \$7,625,423.

One of the last amendments we approved was for \$500,000 for legislator travel and possible hiring of two more in the Legislative Research Council. This request was unwritten and was passed after a recess and reconvened. If my math is correct, I take \$500,000 and divide that by our number of legislators (105) and that amounts to just under \$5,000 per legislator. That is more than what we, as a state, support per-pupil education in South Dakota. I did vote against this.

I will conclude by saying “THANK YOU” for allowing me to be your state senator. I have learned and enjoyed being on the Appropriations Committee. I have tried to spend your tax dollars, not frugally, but wisely.



Nelson

state Constitution Article III Sec § 21, and Article XII Sec § 2 — prohibitions against such omnibus packaging. As with the federal government, this type of fiscal irresponsibility diverts proper support to essential public infrastructure needs (education, roads, etc), creates a further tax burden on you and grows an ever-expanding government on your shoulders.

In support of this government expansion, several tax increases were passed that will be taking more of your money. Roughly \$100 million in new spending was passed at a cost of approximately \$120 per every man, woman, and child in the state.

I opposed this wholesale expansion of government, on your backs, the best I could. Sadly, many legislators who campaigned claiming to be fiscally conservative went along to get along, and these bills were all passed. Spending all but the crumbs left of your tax dollar surplus, and raising your future taxes, to expand South Dakota's government on your back, is NOT fiscally conservative.

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861
Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

OPINION | OUR VIEW

A ‘Lost Winter’ At The Legislature

In another time, South Dakota's legislators could probably look back on the main run of the session just concluded and say they did their job well. They balanced the budget, dished out some increases for things like education and Medicaid, and even managed to squirrel away some money in reserve for whatever uncertainties may loom ahead.

But in THIS time and place, it feels like a different story. The list of accomplishments of this session doesn't match up particularly well with the list of needs coming in. While there were some good works done (such as funding some scholarships, toughening the standards for teen drivers and providing incentives for wind energy projects), this session might be seen in general as a lost winter in Pierre.

For instance, while education did receive a roughly 3 percent increase in funding, plus a shot of one-time money, the gesture doesn't do much to begin making up for the crippling cuts schools endured two years ago. The loss of one-time money from last year means this year's increase is somewhat deceiving. Also, banking on one-time money is no way to make future budgeting plans. So, schools are again confronting severe financial headaches, the consequences of which will be endured for yet another year.

There was an increase in Medicaid spending, but the state failed to join the federal Medicaid expansion that could have helped up to 48,000 South Dakotans who cannot afford health care. A joint hearing held recently attracted overwhelming support for the plan, but the idea was ultimately sidelined amid the promise that it would be reviewed in a summer study session. However, it's still a year lost, a year of federal funding forfeited and some needed help not forthcoming.

(Curiously, a bill to expand prenatal health care was defeated on the grounds that the Affordable Health Care Act could sufficiently handle the job beginning next year — which seemingly embraces the health care overhaul. However, Medicaid expansion, another provision of the health care act, was pushed aside, albeit to a summer study limbo.)

There also seemed to be a pattern in this session that saw lawmakers pursue particular courses of action despite what the public seemed to be saying.

The school sentinel bill, which Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed into law last week (and which got South Dakota a lot of national headlines) is one example. We have yet to find any educators or school officials who support the plan; we've also had a hard time finding any law enforcement (who must sign off on the idea in each school district) who are fans of the idea. No matter; the measure was approved and will become law, although with its option of local implementation, we would be surprised if more than a handful of districts embrace it.

There was also a bill that would have made it more difficult for people with certain mental illnesses to get guns. Like the school sentinel bill, this measure sprang up in response to the Newtown massacre. There was a lot of testimony supporting the measure and just one dissenting voice. But that's all it took for the committee to kill the bill.

And on Feb. 27, a proposed ban on motorists texting while driving was dismissed 8-5 in a House committee even though there was sometimes emotional testimony provided for the measure during the hearing, and not a soul testified against it.

Lawmakers did come up with an economic development plan late in the session that seemed to be pulled out of thin air. This bipartisan package appears to bear a lot of promise, but there is little transparency and few concrete details at this point.

Finally, on the last day of the session's main run, while lawmakers rejected nearly 60 proposals that would have cut funding in some areas in order to bolster education and health care for the poor, the legislators approved \$500,000 to increase their own expense compensations, plus possibly hire additional staff. It breaks down to an increase of about \$5,000 per lawmaker, which, as State Sen. Tom Jones (D-Viborg) points out elsewhere on this page today, is more money than the state allocates per student for school funding.

In another time and place, this might have been a reasonable way to end a reasonable season in Pierre.

But today, it must be viewed as a winter of lost opportunities and intriguing choices. And that doesn't generate much optimism for the future.

kmh

THE VIEWS PAGE

The PRESS & DAKOTAN Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, March 12, the 71st day of 2013. There are 294 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 12, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered the first of his 30 radio addresses that came to be known as “fireside chats,” telling Americans what was being done to deal with the nation's economic crisis.

On this date: In 1664, England's King Charles II granted an area of land in present-day North America known as New Netherland to his brother James, the Duke of York.

In 1863, Italian writer, poet and politician Gabriele D'Annunzio was born in Pescara.

In 1864, Ulysses S. Grant was promoted to the rank of general-in-chief of the Union armies in the Civil War by President Abraham Lincoln.

In 1912, the Girl Scouts of the USA had its beginnings as Juliette Gordon Low of Savannah, Ga., founded the first American troop of the Girl Guides.

In 1913, Canberra was officially designated the future capital of Australia.

In 1923, inventor Lee De Forest publicly demonstrated his sound-on-movie-film system, called “Phonofilm,” in New York.

In 1938, the Anschluss merging Austria with Nazi Germany took place as German forces crossed the border between the two countries.

In 1943, Aaron Copland's “Fanfare for the Common Man” had its world premiere with Eugene Goossens conducting the Cincinnati Symphony.

In 1951, “Dennis the Menace,” created by cartoonist Hank Ketcham, made its syndicated debut in 16 newspapers.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson won the New Hampshire Democratic primary, but Sen. Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota placed a strong second. The African island of Mauritius became independent of British rule. (On this date in 1992, Mauritius became a republic.)

In 1980, a Chicago jury found John Wayne Gacy Jr. guilty of the murders of 33 men and boys. (The next day, Gacy was sentenced to death; he was executed in May 1994.)

In 1993, Janet Reno was sworn in as the first female U.S. attorney general. A three-day blizzard that came to be known as “The Storm of the Century” began inundating the eastern third of the U.S. A series of bombings in Mumbai, India, killed 257 people (the explosions were allegedly masterminded by India's most wanted man, Dawood Ibrahim).

Ten years ago: Elizabeth Smart, the 15-

year-old girl who'd vanished from her bedroom nine months earlier, was found alive in a Salt Lake City suburb with two drifters, Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee, who are serving prison terms for kidnapping her. Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was assassinated. Author Howard Fast died in Greenwich, Conn., at age 88. Actress Lynne Thigpen died in Los Angeles at age 54.

Five years ago: New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer resigned two days after reports had surfaced that he was a client of a prostitution ring. Former Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, a liberal Ohio Democrat who challenged big business, died near Fort Lauderdale, Fla., at age 90. Space shuttle Endeavour docked with the international space station, kicking off almost two weeks of demanding construction work. Lance Mackey won his second consecutive Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, completing the 1,100-mile journey in just under 9 1/2 days.

One year ago: A day after the weekend massacre of Afghan civilians allegedly carried out by a U.S. soldier, President Barack Obama called the episode “absolutely tragic and heartbreaking,” while Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called it “inexplicable.” Greece implemented the biggest debt write-down in history, swapping the bulk of its privately-held bonds with new ones worth less than half their original value.

Today's Birthdays: Playwright Edward Albee is 85. Former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young is 81. Actress Barbara Feldon is 80. Broadcast journalist Lloyd Dobyns is 77. Singer Al Jarreau is 73. Actress-singer Liza Minnelli is 67. Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney is 66. Singer-songwriter James Taylor is 65. Former Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., is 65. Rock singer-musician Bill Payne (Little Feat) is 64. Actor Jon Provost (“Lassie”) is 63. Author Carl Hiaasen is 60. Rock musician Steve Harris (Iron Maiden) is 57. Actor Jerry Levine is 56. Singer Marlon Jackson (The Jackson Five) is 56. Actor Courtney B. Vance is 53. Actor Titus Welliver is 52. Former MLB All-Star Darryl Strawberry is 51. Actress Julia Campbell is 50. Actor Aaron Eckhart is 45. CNN reporter Jake Tapper is 44. Rock musician Graham Coxon is 44. Country musician Tommy Bales (Flynnville Train) is 40. Country singer Holly Williams is 32. Actor Sam Levine is 31. Actor Tyler Patrick Jones is 19. Actress Kendall Applegate is 14.

Thought for Today: “Home” is any four walls that enclose the right person.” — Helen Rowland, American writer, journalist and humorist (1876-1950).

FROM THE BIBLE

Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?
Matthew 18:21. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

CONTACT US

PHONE:
(605) 665-7811
(800) 743-2968
NEWS FAX:
(605) 665-1721
ADVERTISING FAX:
(605) 665-0288
WEBSITE:
www.yankton.net
EMAIL ADDRESS:
news@yankton.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS/
CIRCULATION:
Extension 112
CLASSIFIED ADS:
Extension 108
NEWS DEPARTMENT:
Extension 114
SPORTS DEPARTMENT:
Extension 106
ADVERTISING OFFICE:
Extension 122
BUSINESS OFFICE:
Extension 119
NEW MEDIA:
Extension 136
COMPOSING DESK:
Extension 129

* * *

MANAGERS

Gary L. Wood
Publisher
Michele Schievelbein
Advertising Director
Tonya Schild
Business Manager
David Jeffcoat
Circulation Director
Tera Schmidt
Classified Manager
Kelly Hertz
Editor
James D. Cimburek
Sports Editor
Beth Rye
New Media Manager
Kathy Larson
Composing Manager
Bernard Metivier
District Manager

* * *

DAILY STAFF

Andrew Atwal
Melissa Bader
Derek Bartos
Brett Beyerle
Cassandra Brockmoller
Rob Buckingham
Randy Dockendorf
Jeannine Economy
Jeremy Hoeck
Nathan Johnson
Muriel Pratt
Sheldon Reed
Noelle Schlechter
Cathy Sudbeck
Sally Whiting
Brenda Willcuts
Jackie Williams

* * *

Published Daily
Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage paid at Yankton, South Dakota, under the act of March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotian established June 6, 1861. Yankton Daily Press and Dakotian established April 26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

* * *

MEMBERSHIPS

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan is a member of the Associated Press, the Inland Daily Press Association and the South Dakota Newspaper Association. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

* * *

SUBSCRIPTION RATES*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY
1-month \$12.09
3 months . . . \$36.27
6 months . . . \$72.53
1-year \$133.09

MOTOR ROUTE
(where available)

1 month \$14.51
3 months . . . \$43.53
6 months . . . \$87.05
1 year \$139.14

MAIL IN RETAIL TRADE ZONE

1-month \$16.93
3 months . . . \$50.79
6 months . . . \$101.57
1-year \$148.82

MAIL OUTSIDE RETAIL TRADE ZONE

1 month \$19.35
3 months . . . \$58.05
6 months . . . \$116.09
1-year \$186.33
* Plus applicable sales tax for all rates

YOUR LETTERS

Standing Firm

Mikael Covey, Yankton Editor, Lit Up Magazine

Thank you, Rep. Hunhoff, for voting NO on the idiot bill to put guns in school. It's time we kept account of exactly which idiot Republican introduced a bill to put lethal weapons into our public schools. That way we can look back and say "yeah, weren't you the one who wanted guns in school? And ... weren't you one of those nuts who voted for it?"

In other words — people, how stupid can you be? It would be so easy to discuss persuade and rant about this. But the very simple truth is, either you're bright enough to figure this stuff out, or you never will be.

Online Opinion

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you think Joe Biden will run for president in 2016?
No 76%
Yes 20%
Not sure 4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 404
The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Should Daylight Saving Time be scrapped?
To vote in the Press & Dakotan's Internet poll, log on to our Web site at www.yankton.net.