

Legislative Report

Last month I wrote about Oklahoma's get-tough law on illegal immigrants that Texas will try to imitate in the 2009 legislative session. The following are some interesting numbers dealing with the law:

1804 The omnibus anti-illegal-immigration law is called this because it was a House bill with that number in last year's session of the Oklahoma Legislature

88-9 Margin by which the bill passed in the initial vote by the GOP-controlled Oklahoma House

41-6 Vote to pass the law in the state Senate, which is split evenly, 24-24, between Republicans and Democrats

0 Number of news organizations' cameras present last May when Democratic Gov. Brad Henry signed it into law

0 Number of mentions of the law in Mr. Henry's State of the State address last week

15,000-25,000 The Greater Tulsa Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's estimate of how many illegal immigrants have left the Tulsa area, where enforcement has been most strict, since the law took effect Nov. 1.

DEM LEADERS SHOWER PORK ON FRESHMEN. Democratic leaders have sent tens of millions of dollars to freshman lawmakers' districts in hope of protecting the party's newfound majority come November. A new study shows that the party in power has resisted pressure to abandon earmarking, at least to the extent of handing lawmakers in tough districts plenty of pet projects they can boast about to voters. Democratic freshmen in the House were among the biggest recipients of earmarked funds, often surpassing much more senior colleagues by millions of dollars.

STATE CORRIDOR HEARING ECHOES SMALL-TOWN CONCERNS. Farmers and ranchers in the rural counties around Houston have voiced a resounding "no" to having the Interstate 69/Trans-Texas Corridor built in their backyards. A public hearing was held on February 12 on the project. Only 233 were present, compared with more than 1,000 in tiny Bellville, but they were just as opposed to the idea. When the hearing adjourned shortly after 9 p.m., not one of the 49 speakers was in favor of the plan.

Marilyn Davis, VP Legislation