

LEGISLATIVE ACTION NETWORK WEEK #16

APRIL 20-24, 2009

Paulette Vandegriff, LAN Coordinator

The Budget and Unemployment Compensation Fund continue to be debated.

Tomorrow, April 27th, SB 89-Physicians Admitting Privileges will be in conference committee at 10AM in the Senate Chambers.

Also, tomorrow, HB1346-Election Matters will be heard in conference committee.

HB1491-Election of St. Joseph County Circuit Court Judges was in conference committee on Wednesday, April 22nd at the same time former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was speaking to an audience of 500 in South Bend. It was amended on Thursday, April 23rd, awaiting further action. Summary of Justice O'Connor's remarks:

During a visit to South Bend today, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor pushed a message that merit selection is the best way to ensure an independent judiciary, though her words come at a time when state lawmakers are close to scrapping that very system in the county she visited.

As the first female justice on the nation's highest court, she served from 1981 until her retirement in 2006. Since leaving the Supreme Court, former Justice O'Connor has traveled the country promoting the virtues of an independent judicial branch and speaking in support of merit selection. Her comments in South Bend echoed the views she's expressed at law schools and bar events nationally: that electing judges undermines the independence of the judiciary, especially because of the role of money in the campaigns.

SB0014, Accessibility of voting locations and SB0254 Voter ID and Voter registration were heard in conference committee this week and are awaiting further action.

The session is scheduled to end at midnight on Wednesday, April 29th.