

April 11, 2005

## Cutting off the juice



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### Top Story

*Congress made a big splash with its recent hearings on illegal steroid use in Major League Baseball.*

*But more than a dozen states are already pushing bills aimed at stopping steroid use before it starts.*

## SNCJ Spotlight

### States lead battle against youthful steroid abuse

Observers of the recent Congressional hearings to confront steroid abuse in professional baseball might logically presume that only federal lawmakers are seeking to rein in illegal performance enhancing drugs in the United States. In reality, the charge to end steroid abuse — particularly among young people — is being led not just by Congress, but by an ever-increasing number of state lawmakers from CALIFORNIA to NEW YORK.

So far in 2005, 14 states have introduced a total of 26 bills concerning steroid use. Many of these, including California SB 37, CONNECTICUT SB 257, ILLINOIS SB 64 and MICHIGAN HB 4118, directly seek to keep anabolic steroids, human growth hormone and other dietary supplements out of the bodies of high school and college athletes. A few others, such as MINNESOTA House File 1103 and New York Assembly Bill 3836, take on the professional sports establishment by authorizing state health officials to conduct their own steroid testing on pro athletes.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse in MARYLAND, anabolic-androgenic steroids are man-made substances related to male sex hormones. "Anabolic" refers specifically to muscle-building, while "androgenic" refers to an increase in masculine characteristics. As a prescription medication, steroids are used primarily to treat body wasting diseases such as AIDS or other ailments that lead to the body producing abnormally low amounts of testosterone. Because they also help produce muscle mass, athletes and wannabe athletes alike use them to illicitly bulk up their bodies in order to gain a competitive edge in their sport.

There is debate among athletes, scientists, educators and politicians about just how harmful steroids really are. Many steroid users point to medical studies in respected publications like the New England Journal of Medicine that say steroids, if taken in proper doses for short periods of time, can be a safe and highly effective way to take athletes to that extra level of performance. Critics rabidly disagree, noting that aside from being illegal to use without a prescription, steroid abuse can lead to everything from liver damage and heart attacks to mood swings and severe depression. Because of this potential for harm, one of the few areas of agreement on all sides is the need to keep steroids away from young athletes.

In that regard, California Senate Bill 37 has drawn national attention, due mostly to the admitted steroid use of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) during his career as a world champion body builder. Authored by state Sen. Jackie Speier (D), SB 37 would require high school coaches to complete an education

## *The Week in Session*

### States in Regular Session:

AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IN, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, US, VT, WA, WI, WV

### States in Special Session:

CA "a", ME "a"

### States in Recess: KS

### Currently Prefiling:

LA (Drafts for 2005)

### States Projected to Adjourn:

AR, AZ, MD, WV

### States Adjourned in 2005:

DC "z", GA, IL "z", KY, MA "z", MS, NM, NY "z", SD, UT, VA, WY

### States in Special Session

#### Adjourned in 2005:

DE "c", FL "a", MD "a", MS "a", WI "a", WV "a"

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions

Source: State Net, 4/08/05

program on steroids and performance enhancing dietary supplements (PEDS) and bar certain school employees from selling or promoting them. The bill would also mandate that the California Interscholastic Federation work with state health officials to develop a list of prohibited PEDS, which high school athletes would have to agree not to use as a condition of being allowed to participate in sports. In addition, the legislation would bar supplement makers from sponsoring school events.

This is the second go around for Speier's bill, which received legislative approval in 2004 as SB 1630. Schwarzenegger vetoed that measure, saying its parameters were "unclear, open-ended and difficult to interpret." Schwarzenegger also suggested the federal Food and Drug administration was better equipped to regulate PEDS, a claim that still draws Speier's ire.

"That is just one of many misstatements the governor has made on this issue," Speier says now. "The FDA does not even regulate PEDS."

Speier also doesn't buy the argument from some that the Congressional hearings held in March — which featured such current and former baseball superstars as Jose Canseco, Mark McGwire, Curt Schilling and Sammy Sosa as well as MLB Commissioner Bud Selig — were nothing more than political grandstanding by lawmakers. She calls the hearings "a great public service that has elevated the issue's profile across the country."

"We have to clean up steroid use in professional sports first because kids emulate pro players," Speier says. "In that case, Congress does have a tremendous role to play in solving this problem."

Congress has actually already played a significant role in steroid legislation, amending the federal controlled substances act in 1990 to group steroids with drugs like morphine and methamphetamine as a "Schedule III" controlled substance. That makes selling or providing steroids without a valid prescription a felony that carries up to 10 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine.

Those penalties, however, have apparently not countered the appeal of what steroids and other PEDS can do, especially among young athletes looking for an edge on the playing field. During the baseball hearings, U.S. Rep Tom Davis (R) of VIRGINIA, who chairs the Congressional Committee on Government Reform, cited statistics from the Centers for Disease Control that say more than 500,000 high school students nationwide have tried steroids.

MINNESOTA Rep. Joe Atkins (D) agrees with Speier's assessment that much of the blame for that falls on professional ballplayers. Atkins says states anxious to halt steroid abuse among young people need to first "stop the use of steroids by their role models." He also says part of the problem is states' not keeping up with the enormous number of new drugs that come into existence every year, specifically so-called "designer" steroids that are much harder to detect in normal drug

screening. Atkins notes that current Gopher State law specifically bans only about 10 percent of the illegal steroids and supplements out there, making his state “a decade and a half behind the times.”

To counteract that, Atkins has teamed up with Republican Rep. Tim Wilkin this year to co-author House File 1020, a measure that would impose penalties of up to 20 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine for selling steroids, particularly to minors. If passed, the statute would bring Minnesota into line with the number of substances listed in federal statutes, which he says will make the law easier to enforce. He is also working on a bill that would require all athletes who play their games in publicly funded stadiums to be tested for steroids.

Several pending statutes in other states would put the onus on students to stay clean. FLORIDA House Bill 257 and Senate Bill 2262, ILLINOIS HB 3554, NEW JERSEY SB 500, NEW YORK AB 1393, OKLAHOMA HB 1875 and VIRGINIA HB 2832 would all require state high schools to test student athletes for steroid use. TEXAS is also considering introducing a drug testing plan for high school athletes. Other proposals, like OREGON SB 6, New York AB 4307 and RHODE ISLAND HB 6277, mirror Speier’s bill in barring school employees and coaches from pushing steroids or other supplements to their student athletes.

Speier and Atkins say states undoubtedly still face an uphill fight in battling steroids, particularly when the upside for users — the chance to make the team, be a star or maybe earn a multi-million dollar professional contract — keeps some athletes going for the juice whenever they can. While each lauds Congress for its recent efforts, both also say states need to be prepared to move forward on their own while the federal government figures out if and how it will deal with the problem.

“In theory, it would be helpful to have uniformity,” says Atkins of the possibility of greater Congressional involvement, “But in practice, Congress has a lot of other concerns.”

Speier says that even without further Congressional action, she is much more optimistic that Schwarzenegger will sign her bill this year, noting the amount of public criticism he has endured for months over his failure to take a stronger anti-steroid stance. Schwarzenegger has since told several media outlets that he needs to “do more” to help diminish steroid use in both pro and amateur sports.

Speier is hopeful that he means it, noting the positive influence that someone of Schwarzenegger’s stature — both politically and athletically — could have on reversing the trend of steroid abuse in young athletes. She also thinks the governor, who is mired in a grueling battle with the Democrat-controlled Legislature over a

## *Upcoming Elections*

*(04/06/2005 - 04/20/2005)*

### **04/12/2005 Massachusetts Special Election**

House Suffolk Districts 18, 12

House Berkshire District 3



host of other reforms he is pushing, would like to stop talking about what has become a sour issue for him.

“I really think he is tired of being asked about it [steroids],” Speier says. “I think the governor just got some really bad advice last year.”

— *By RICH EHISEN*

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# Budget & taxes

**N**EW YORK PASSES ON-TIME BUDGET: They finally did it. For the first time in more than 20 years, NEW YORK lawmakers managed to pass the state’s budget on time. The Legislature’s approval of the \$105 billion spending plan came midday Thursday, March 31, hours before the April 1 deadline — and over four months earlier than last year, when it wasn’t passed until Aug. 11. Lawmakers said, however, that \$1.5 billion they wanted for welfare, college construction, environmental protection and overhauling the state’s outdated election system was left out of the plan, which meant that another round of debate was on the way. And others pointed out that the budget fails to provide additional funding for New York City schools, as mandated by a court decision last year. Gov. George E. Pataki (R) intends to appeal that ruling. But State Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi answered his own question, “If there are pieces not in the budget, does that mean it’s not done?” with an unequivocal “no,” and said he would certify the budget. It seems that public pressure made the difference this year, with numerous polls showing the voters’ disgust with how things were being done — and not being done — in Albany. “The public was so fed up with the state budget process that there was an outcry to get the damn thing done by the deadline,” said one Assemblyman. Following the passage of the budget bills, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D) told his crowded chamber, “I am grateful and I am proud.” After the applause that followed, he added, “A promise was made, a promise of reform.” And at a press conference later in the day, Senate Leader Joseph L. Bruno (R) said it was “a season to govern, and we’re governing.” All the self-congratulation prompted Edmund J. McMahon, director of the Empire Center for New York State Policy of the Manhattan Institute, to remark, “Rather than swelling with pride in their accomplishments, they might feel embarrassment in showing they were able to do it all along.” (NEW YORK TIMES)



**CA REAPS DECEPTIVE WINDFALL:** CALIFORNIA took in a whopping \$3 billion more than anticipated from a two-month tax amnesty program that ended April 1. The windfall was welcome news for the not so Golden State, which is currently facing an estimated \$8.5 billion budget gap. But Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's (R) budget office warned last week that the state probably won't get to keep much of the money. "These kind of numbers certainly get your attention, but before anyone starts popping champagne corks, it's very likely that a substantial portion of this revenue spike may end up going right back to the people who paid it," said H.D. Palmer, a spokesman for the state Department of Finance. The amnesty program allowed individuals and businesses accused of owing back taxes to pay the disputed levies and avoid facing tough new penalties that went into effect this month. State officials concede that many of those who took part in the program may win their appeals, forcing the state to refund their money. But since it could take up to three years to resolve the cases, the pool of cash will be very enticing to lawmakers and the governor struggling with the huge budget shortfall. "The temptation will be to use it to balance the budget," said Assemblyman Joe Canciamilla (D). "The hope will be that the state will ultimately prevail and just won't have to pay it back, or that the economy will improve and enough new revenue will come in to cover it." But state Controller Steve Westley, who sponsored the amnesty program, called for "prudence." He said, "We have a mountain of cases, a mountain of checks. This will take us some time to review." Palmer didn't sound terribly optimistic that the state would ultimately be able to keep much of the money. He suggested it was a little unreasonable to expect the program to have generated more than ten times what the administration had projected. But he added, "you tell people in this building that there is \$3 billion more and their eyes get really big, as does their appetite to spend it." (SACRAMENTO BEE, LOS ANGELES TIMES)

**IOWA PROPOSES MEDICAID EXPANSION:** With the backing of Gov. Tom Vilsack (D), IOWA's Republican-controlled House introduced legislation last week that could make the Hawkeye State a national pilot program for Medicaid expansion. House File 841, introduced by Rep Danny Carroll (R), would allow state and local revenues spent on health care to receive matching federal funds. The measure would create a waiver program granting low-income people, including the parents of children currently receiving care under Medicaid, limited hospital and doctor services under the joint federal-state healthcare program. U.S. Health Services Secretary Mike Leavitt agreed to allow the state to try the program, after discussions with Vilsack and other state officials. Under the pro-





a strong-arm tactic on the part of the GOP leadership to keep the caucus in line. “That’s part of the radical right-wing paranoia of Republicans in Georgia,” he said. “They don’t even trust their own.” But House Speaker Glenn Richardson (R) said the hawks were needed to make the committee process more efficient and to cover for members who arrived late or missed meetings because of schedule conflicts. They apparently succeeded in that regard. Another of the hawks, Rep. John Lunsford (R), said, “During the first week or two, we showed up a lot...Eventually, the members realized that if they didn’t show up, we’d vote.” Lunsford added, “The threat of the sledgehammer was more important than the sledgehammer.” (ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION)

## *Upcoming Stories*

Here are some of the stories you will see in the upcoming issues of the State Net Capitol Journal:

The push to force insurance fee disclosures

The possible onset of a streamlined sales tax

The spread of CALIFORNIA’s strict new emissions laws

**STATE WORKFORCES HEADED FOR CRISIS:** In the next ten years, states will begin to experience major employee turnover due to the retirement of the aging public workforce, according to a new report. The report, prepared in conjunction with the Government Performance Project, a \$4.7 million study of state management issues funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, stated that the looming retirements could result in a “crisis situation” in some states, with shortages in key state personnel, such as healthcare workers; significant losses of institutional memory; and added stress placed on already-stretched state pension systems and healthcare programs. The hardest hit state will likely be WASHINGTON, where 64 percent of the public workforce will be eligible to retire by 2015, but the outlook isn’t much better in MAINE, TENNESSEE, MICHIGAN and PENNSYLVANIA. Several states have already begun taking steps to address the problem. IDAHO, which happens to have one of the lowest percentages of retirement-age workers, has instituted a program to train future replacements for agency administrative positions. And GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA and VIRGINIA are working with online employment site Monster.com to recruit state workers. (STATELINE.ORG)

**AT THE POLLS:** Last Tuesday, KANSAS voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage and civil unions. The measure, which received 70 percent of the vote, makes the Sunflower State the 18th to amend its constitution to ban gay marriage (WICHITA EAGLE). • Republicans and Democrats swapped a House and Senate seat in MISSOURI last Tuesday. Republican Ryan Silvey claimed the 38th House District seat previously held by Democrat

Rep. Dan Bishop, who died shortly after being re-elected to a second term last November, while Democrat Frank A. Barnitz captured the 16th Senate District seat that had been held by Republican Sen. Sarah Steelman, who became state treasurer in November. Meanwhile, a second Senate race — in the 22nd District — looked to be headed for a recount; unofficial results showed only 66 votes separating Republican Bill Alter from Democrat Rick Johnson. Despite the fact that the race will do little to alter the GOP's dominance in the upper chamber, it was still hotly contested, with Democrats calling it a referendum on the state's new Republican governor, Matt Blunt (ASSOCIATED PRESS, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH). • Shaun Walley, a 28-year-old high school teacher, defeated lawyer Paul Walley in a runoff election to fill the **MISSISSIPPI** House seat vacated by Bubba Pierce, who was named a chancery judge. The two Walleys — who are not related — were the top two vote-getters in last month's special election. Although the candidates' party affiliations were not listed on the ballot, Shaun Walley said, "I'm a Democrat and have been up front since day one. I support funding for public schools" (CLARION-LEDGER [JACKSON]). • Elizabeth Burmaster won her second term as **WISCONSIN**'s superintendent of public instruction, beating out Republican Gregg Underheim by a slightly larger margin than her 60-40 percent victory over Linda Cross in 2001. While Burmaster said her win demonstrated the voters' desire for quality education and restraint on property taxes, Underheim contended it was merely the result of Burmaster and the state teachers union outspending him by a margin of 8-to-1 (MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL).

**POLITICS IN BRIEF:** The buzz around the **MONTANA** Capitol last week was that the Legislature may adjourn early in an effort to save money. House Speaker Gary Matthews (D) said lawmakers were shooting for adjournment on April 19 instead of April 26 as scheduled, but he cautioned that his chamber — which is split 50-50 between the Democrats and Republicans — still had some significant legislation to consider, including HB 2, a major appropriation bill, and HB 63, a school funding measure (BILLINGS GAZETTE).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

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# Governors

**B**LAGOJEVICH TO PHARMACISTS – JUST FILL IT: Concerned by a growing number of reports of pharmacists nationwide refusing to fill birth control prescriptions (See April 4 *State Net Capitol Journal*), ILLINOIS Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) issued an emergency order last week requiring Prairie State pharmacies to fill all drug orders with “No delays. No hassles. No lectures.” Blagojevich issued the directive after hearing about two Chicago women who were refused morning-after birth control pills by an Osco pharmacy, which is part of a national chain. The Illinois Dept. of Financial and Professional Regulation also filed a formal complaint against the company, which could result in a fine or a loss of the pharmacy’s license. The order drew immediate praise from pro-choice groups

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## Quote...

“The pharmacist is not a gas station attendant where if there is gas you have to sell it. Pharmacists are supposed to assess the appropriateness of a drug.”

**Susan C. Winkler of the American Pharmacists Association on why her organization opposes a directive from ILLINOIS Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) to fill all prescriptions without question.**

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## ... unquote

“[The right to counsel patients] doesn’t change. What cannot happen is the pharmacist cannot allow personal factors and feelings to interfere.”

**Blagojevich spokesperson Abby Ottenhoff.**

**(NEW YORK TIMES)**

and criticism from pharmacy advocates. Susan C. Winkler of the American Pharmacists Association said drug dispensers should be allowed to reject prescriptions that counter their religious beliefs as long as the patient can still get their prescription filled elsewhere. She also said that such strict requirements could force pharmacists to dispense medications that are “clinically inappropriate” for patients. Blagojevich, however, said he believed such refusals are not about pharmacists weeding out incorrect prescriptions from doctors, but rather “part of a concerted effort” to prevent women from accessing birth control. (NEW YORK TIMES)

**MORE LOST VOTES FOUND IN WA:** New votes keep popping up in the highly contentious WASHINGTON governor’s race between Democrat Christine Gregoire and Republican Dino Rossi. Election officials in King County last week found 93 valid but uncounted ballots, prompting Republicans to call for the resignation of Dean Logan, the man in charge of the county’s elections. Their mood was not improved when even more uncounted ballots were discovered later in Pierce



County. The second discovery drew the ire of both parties. Republicans fired first by immediately calling for Logan to step down over what they claim are “repeated and inexcusable mistakes.” Democrats, who were dismayed mostly from having to hear about the newly-found ballots by reading about it in the local papers, quickly endorsed a proposal to conduct a complete audit of Logan’s department. Rossi has filed suit challenging the election, claiming errors and illegal votes have made it impossible to know who actually won the race. Rossi won the initial vote and an initial recount, but Gregoire was declared the winner after a second recount showed her with a 129-vote advantage. (SEATTLE TIMES, NEWS TRIBUNE [TACOMA])

**WESTERN GOVS BACK POWER PLAN:** Four Western-state governors — CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), NEVADA Gov. Kenny Guinn (R), UTAH Gov. Jon Huntsman (R) and WYOMING Gov. Dave Freudenthal (D) — announced their support last week for a proposed energy project that will develop 1,300 miles of new transmission lines to carry electricity from Wyoming to the other three states as early as 2011. The governors say a major component of the project, known as the “Frontier Line,” will also include coaxing private companies to build a series of new, mostly coal-fired power plants that will eventually produce as much as 12,000 megawatts of electricity, enough to power about 10 million homes. The new lines are expected to cost around \$2 billion with another \$20 billion needed to build the new plants. Backers estimate that between project revenues and electricity cost savings, the Rocky Mountain States could realize more than \$1 billion in annual benefits, while California could cut up to \$400 million from its yearly electricity costs. (WALL STREET JOURNAL BILLINGS GAZETTE)

**GOVERNORS IN BRIEF:** CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) dropped his proposal to shift public pensions to a 401(k)-style plan for state workers hired after 2006. Schwarzenegger said he was swayed to drop the effort — one of five he had vowed to take to the ballot box in a special election in November — by the families of public safety officers killed in the line of duty who said the plan would end their death and disability payments. The governor denied he yielded to polls that showed the measure not faring well with potential voters (SACRAMENTO BEE). • Freshman UTAH Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. (R) has apparently kept at least one campaign promise — he has trimmed his staff from 115 to 111 people. Huntsman hinted during his campaign that he would cut staff in the governor’s office. The cutbacks equate to an approximate \$142,000 reduction in payroll costs (DESERET MORNING NEWS [SALT LAKE CITY]). • OREGON Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D) announced the creation of the Oregon Governor’s Fund for Environment, a trust fund

designed to pay for environmental cleanup projects around the state. The \$2 million in seed money for the project came from a fine levied against a shipping company that intentionally dumped waste oil into the Columbia River (STATESMAN JOURNAL [SALEM]). • **IOWA** Gov. Tom Vilsack (D) said he will consider a proposal calling for life imprisonment for second-time sex offenders, but cautioned that the Hawkeye State Legislature will need to provide funding for such a measure. Vilsack also invoked the recent death of Pope John Paul II to reiterate his opposition to the death penalty, saying “As we consider his life and work, it’s probably not a good idea to talk about the death penalty today” (OMAHA WORLD-HERALD).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

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## Hot issues

**B** **USINESS:** The **NEVADA** Senate approves a measure that would abolish a 10 percent cap on interest rates Silver State pawnshops can legally charge their customers. SB 334 would allow customers to negotiate rates with each shop individually in order to find their best deal. It moves to the Assembly (LAS VEGAS SUN). • The **CALIFORNIA** Supreme Court upholds a Golden State law that forbids car rental companies from using global positioning satellite technology to track customers and fine them for speeding (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • In a 3-2 decision, the **NEW HAMPSHIRE** Supreme Court rules that injured an worker cannot collect cost-of-living adjustments in workers’ compensation benefits if that person also receives Social Security payments (FOSTERS DAILY DEMOCRAT). • The **MISSOURI** Senate overwhelmingly endorses HB 168, a measure that would make Show Me State contractors immune from lawsuits over defects in new houses. The statute would instead funnel disgruntled homeowners to mediation. It moves to the House (ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH).

**CRIME & PUNISHMENT:** The **FLORIDA** House gives their nod to a measure that would allow Sunshine State residents to use deadly force to defend their homes, vehicles and personal well being if they believe they are in danger of death or bodily harm. It fires off to Gov. Jeb Bush (R), who has said he will sign it (WASHINGTON POST). • The **MISSOURI** House approves HB 700, which will make it a felony punishable by up to seven additional years in jail for HIV-infected inmates to spit on or otherwise expose any bodily fluids to prison workers, visitors or other inmates (JEFFERSON CITY NEWS TRIBUNE). • The **TEXAS** Senate rejects SB 60, which would have allowed Lone Star State juries to sentence capital murderers to



life without parole rather than death (SAN ANTONIO NEWS-EXPRESS). • The **ILLINOIS** House okay's legislation that would allow prostitutes to sue their pimps for emotional anguish and other damages. It moves to the Senate (CHICAGO TRIBUNE). • Prostitutes are also on the agenda in **NEVADA**, where an Assembly panel endorses AB 470, a measure that would remove a requirement that acts of prostitution or pimping be corroborated by a third party to prove guilt. It walks off to the full Assembly (LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL). • The **KANSAS** Legislature approves a proposal to require all law enforcement agencies to create and adopt a written policy prohibiting racial profiling. It moves to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D) for review (WICHITA EAGLE).

**EDUCATION:** An **ARIZONA** Senate committee flunks out HB 2079, which would have established four-year degrees at Grand Canyon State community colleges. The measure had previously passed in the House (ARIZONA REPUBLIC [PHOENIX]). • The **OREGON** Senate unanimously approves SB 755-A, which would require all Beaver State public and private schools to release disciplinary records of employees convicted of sexual abuse and other crimes. It goes to the House (STATESMAN JOURNAL [SALEM]). • **CONNECTICUT** announces plans to sue federal education officials for requiring the Constitution State to expand No Child Left Behind-mandated student testing without funding that directive. It is the first state to file suit over the funding issue (HARTFORD COURANT). • A **TEXAS** House committee unanimously endorses legislation that directs the state education commissioner to intervene when high school cheerleader dance routines are too sexually suggestive. The "anti-booty-shaking" bill goes to another committee (DALLAS MORNING NEWS). • A **FLORIDA** Senate committee okay's SB 2, which would prohibit private schools that receive public funding for tuition from discriminating on the basis of religion. It goes before the full Senate (PALM BEACH POST).

## *In the Hopper*

State Net's database tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states at any given time. Here's a snapshot of what's in the legislative works:

Number of 2005 prefiles last week: 356

Number of 2005 Intros last week: 2,812

Number of bills enacted/adopted last week: 2,303

Number of 2005 prefiles to date: 30,029

Number of 2005 Intros to date: 128,041

Number of enacted/adopted overall in 2005: 13,487

— Compiled By GINA HUMMELL  
(Measures current as of 4/07/05)  
Source: State Net





bar Aloha State landlords and employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. Both head to the House (HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN). • The **ARKANSAS** House endorses HB 2536, a measure that would ban partial-birth abortion unless it is in order to save the mother’s life. It moves to the Senate (ARKANSAS NEWS BUREAU).

**POTPOURRI:** The **KANSAS** House approves SB 195, which would mandate that Sunflower State gun laws pre-empt local ordinances while also allowing retired law enforcement officers to carry weapons. It goes to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D) for review (WICHITA EAGLE). • A **CALIFORNIA** Senate committee okay’s SB 1028, legislation that would ban computer-assisted hunting in the Golden State. It would also bar the importation of meat or trophies taken by a Web hunter (SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE). • The **INDIANA** House okay’s SB 217, a proposal to allow Hoosier State motorists to drive 70 mph on rural highways and toll roads. It speeds back the Senate (FORT WAYNE JOURNAL GAZETTE).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

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# Once around the statehouse lightly

**A NOT-SO-MYTHICAL PLACE.** The evidence now is in. CALIFORNIA is just about as crackpot as most Americans think it is. According to *The Christian Science Monitor*, a university-sponsored survey revealed that 63 percent of Californians actually have hugged a tree. Moreover, 24 percent have surfed and 21 percent admit to taking a mud bath. “I recommend everyone do it,” one Golden Stater said of tree hugging. “It connects you to the earth and sky.” Tofu, anyone?

**A NOT-SO-MYTHICAL PROCLAMATION.** April is Confederate History and Heritage Month in ALABAMA and a time for the governor to issue an annual message. This year, Gov. Bob Riley stirred up long-simmering passions over the Civil War by dropping a paragraph about slavery from his proclamation. Heritage groups were pleased, reports The Associated Press. The Legislative Black Caucus, however, was not amused. To omit any reference to slavery would be, a caucus spokesman grumped, “a disgrace.” Riley’s office said the omission was an accident. He re-issued the proclamation, which designated slavery as one of the causes of the

war. Now the Black Caucus was pleased and heritage groups were not amused. They argue that the Civil War was about tariffs and taxes.

**THE YOUNGEST LOBBYIST** — in MAINE, at least — is a fourth grader from Waterville, who last week trekked to the governor’s office where she witnessed the signing of a bill — her bill. As the *Portland Press Herald* reports, Jenna Gagnon promoted legislation to create “Family Reunion Day,” to be observed each year on the first Monday after the first weekend in August. Jenna’s motivation? Her family is scattered all over the East Coast, with some as far away as OREGON. Not only that, she argued, the interval between July Fourth and Labor Day was too long and needed another break.

**BUTTONHOLED.** It came as something of a shock to Democratic lawmakers in COLORADO last week when one of their own, Rep. Anne McGihon of Denver, voted against a workers’ compensation bill that McGihon said she would support. Moreover, *The Denver Post* reports, the “no” vote came as a shock to McGihon as well. The legislation was expected to pass despite strong Republican opposition, so McGihon’s opposition set back efforts to move the bill along. Why did she ultimately vote against it, after vowing support? In a moment of distraction, McGihon confessed, she pressed the wrong button. She didn’t realize the goof until it was too late to change her vote. Legislative leaders are investigating ways to revive the bill. McGihon will be monitored should HB 1018 surface again.

**SCOOBY DOOBY DOO.** The GEORGIA Legislature perhaps has seen more passionate arguments in favor of a bill, but its members likely have not seen a more unusual visual aid than the one recently used by Sen. John Bulloch. As the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reports, Bulloch gave an impassioned plea on behalf of a bill to allow Peach State taxpayers to contribute to a Dog and Cat Sterilization Fund. The money is used to spay and neuter pets and to pay for educational materials. And the visual aid? Bulloch, an Ochlocknee Republican, gave his floor speech while holding a large, stuffed Scooby Doo.

**CRACK SHOT OF THE MONTH AWARD** to the UTAH avalanche control experts who overshot their target and dropped a howitzer round into someone’s backyard. No injuries, reports The Associated Press.

— By A.G. BLOCK



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