HB 1558 L. Hall

DIGEST: This bill required the state auditor to make rules standardizing the style and format of state agency publications. Color photographs would be prohibited. The Texas Tourist Development Agency, the Department of Highways and Public Transportation, and any publication that produced enough revenue to pay for its cost would be exempted.

REASONS FOR VETO: This bill had the good purpose of cutting down on wasteful spending. However, the prohibition of color photographs would work a hardship on some agencies, such as the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service and the Industrial Commission. The state auditor would be unduly burdened with having to design forms for each agency.

REACTION: We have to begin somewhere to cut down on wasteful government spending. The government should not be in the PR business.

Any state agency that does a lot of PR work could claim a hardship to avoid being restricted under this bill. The health department could say that it is attracting doctors. The film commission could say that it is attracting moviemakers. The colleges could say that they are attracting students.

The Industrial Commission should have raised objections when they were timely, during the session. The job of attracting industry to Texas should be done by chambers of commerce, not at the taxpayers' expense. Any desirable exemptions could have been worked out administratively, but the Governor made no effort on this, nor did he discuss the bill with its sponsor. The bureaucracy is pretty powerful, when it can override a reasonable bill passed by the House and Senate.

HB 1619 Lauhoff

DIGEST: This bill changes the limits on the number of pounds of shrimp that can be caught by commercial fisherman, the size requirements of the shrimp, and the number of trips a day that a shrimp boat can make. The bill establishes a Fisheries Management Council which would hold hearings and adopt a plan for fisheries management in the salt waters of the state.

NOTE: The bill which passed the Senate is completely different than the bill which passed the House. The original bill added a definition of "finfish" to the Parks and Wildlife Code, increasing the species of fish which could be caught by commercial fishermen. The bill also raised the commercial license fee.

REASONS FOR VETO: The Fisheries Management Council is unnecessary because it would duplicate the work of the Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Texas and Marine Council.

REACTION: This bill was a carefully worked out compromise between sports and commercial fishermen. The Fisheries Management Council was needed to conduct studies and make plans for restocking fish.