Assigned trial judges
(HB 1444, by Rangel)

DIGEST: This bill would have required the presiding judge of an administrative judicial district to notify all attorneys in a case when an assigned judge would be hearing that case. Any party in the case could have filed an objection to the assignment as long as it was filed before the first hearing or trial of the case. Such an objection would have automatically barred the assigned judge from hearing the case.

GOVERNOR'S REASONS FOR VETO: According to the Council of Presiding Judges and many leading members of the judiciary, this bill would disrupt both civil and criminal trials. By using the preemptory challenge, lawyers might indefinitely delay trial of the case.

SPONSOR'S VIEW: Rep. Rangel expressed disappointment that she was not informed by the Governor of his intention to veto the bill. The presiding judges did not voice any opposition until after the bill was passed. She said she was denied her "due-process rights" to rebut the judges' opposing arguments.

Late-hours sales of alcoholic beverages
(HB 1678, by Salinas)

DIGEST: This bill would have allowed permit holders in counties with a population of 200,000 or more to sell mixed alcoholic beverages and beer between midnight and 2 a.m. on any day. Current law states that permit holders in counties of 300,000 or more may do so.

GOVERNOR's REASONS FOR VETO: This bill might increase DWI offenses in affected communities. These communities can now extend hours by local option. The matter is better addressed at the local level than by state-wide legislation.

SPONSOR'S VIEW: According to his staff, Rep. Salinas' only comment was that it was the Governor's prerogative to veto bills.