



“Now that Tennessee legislature has finished its first session in our lifetime under Republican control, we can take a look at how they did.” by Mel Griffith

Now that Tennessee legislature has finished its first session in our lifetime under Republican control, we can take a look at how they did. There were some notable successes and also some failures. There were some significant improvements in our gun laws, which were long overdue and had been stubbornly blocked by democrats for years. They also managed to deal with the economic downturn without raising taxes or doing any real damage to state services.

Unfortunately, several important things did not get done. One of the most obvious improvements needed in state law is to return the

office of school superintendent to an elected position. That needed improvement somehow got put off until next year, apparently due to pressure from the education lobby, which doesn't like the public to have much to say about how their children are educated. We will be watching closely next year and expecting results.

The legislature also, after considerable fumbling around, failed to return to

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the office of judges in the higher courts to elected positions. Instead, they tinkered a bit with the present Soviet style one-candidate system, but made no real improvements.

They also did nothing to

deal with the anti-everything attitude of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, which spends most of its time and money stopping or delaying progress for frivolous reasons. Much of this nonsense is required by the federal EPA, which is intent on controlling everything and everybody, but we should be sure that TDEC doesn't crank out any regulations not required by the federal government.

The legislature apparently didn't even consider doing anything about Tennessee's outrageous landlord-tenant laws, which are ridiculously slanted in favor of deadbeat tenants and against responsible landlords.

While legislature didn't get around to doing a number of good things that should have been done,

they did manage to pass one very bad law. In another government power grab, the legislature imposed building codes on all the counties that have had the good sense not to adopt them.

Counties can opt out of these restrictions, but the process is complicated and has to be done over and over. This won't affect Bradley County, where we already have lots more regulations than we need, but will drive up the costs of building where it applies. These regulations are always explained as being needed for the protection of the public, but the truth is they are special interest legislation promoted by the builders lobby so they can charge us for doing things that we could just as well do ourselves, except for unfair laws that prevent us.

We will be watching the legislature closely next year to see that they remember

why we elected them. They will do well to mind what happened to a Republican Congress that forgot why they were there. We expect a party that supports limited government to actually limit government, not just campaign on the platform.

- Mel Griffith raises cattle and chickens on his farm in the southern part of the county. He is the 6th District member of the Bradley County Commission. He also serves on the Bradley County Planning Commission.

Answers to this month's Crossword



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