

State and National

Delegate Commitments

As they come into the home stretch of the four remaining primaries June 7, which offer 466 delegates total, Michael Dukakis appears within striking distance of the 2,081 delegates needed to nominate. In the latest count:

Mass. Gov. Michael Dukakis:.....1,711 total
 Tenn. Sen. Albert Gore Jr.:.....421 total
 The Rev. Jesse Jackson:.....984 total
 Ill. Sen. Paul Simon:.....171 total
 Others, uncommitted:.....614 total
Needed to nominate: 2,081

Budget concerns to be discussed in N.C. legislators' short session

By KARI BARLOW
 Staff Writer

When the N.C. General Assembly convenes today for its "short session," it will mainly address budget concerns — and it will do that in a hurry.

"In the short session, the only issue will be the budget. We cannot take up new problems," said Rep. Martin Nesbitt, D-Buncombe. The Appropriations Committee has met for the past two weeks to review budget proposals, he said.

"We know what Gov. (Jim) Martin wants, and it's just a matter of putting together the budget," Nesbitt said.

"We have a budget that we feel is very reasonable. We would propose a road bond package for the November ballot which would supply an additional \$450 million for new highway construction without a tax increase," said Karen Rotterman, communications director for the governor.

Another key issue will be the 4.5 percent salary increase for state employees.

"If we give a 4.5 percent salary increase to all state employees and teachers, there will be very little recurring money left," said Rep. Billy Watkins, D-Granville.

Many have speculated that this year's short session has the potential to drag on, but most lawmakers have declared their intentions to be out by July 4.



Jim Martin

"Any session has the potential to turn into a longer one," Nesbitt said.

"I always feel good about a short legislative session. I think it's needed, and it will be beneficial to the state," Watkins said.

"It will not turn into a long one. We are limited to five appropriation bills, and those factors alone are very limiting," said Rep. Edd Nye, D-Bladen. During the short session, the Appropriations Committee will not break into five subcommittees to review the governor's budget proposal, he said.

"For the past few short sessions, we have not broken into subcommittees. It's in an effort to place the session on the fast track," Nye said.

But some legislators express concerns about the speed of a short session.

"State government is getting bigger

and bigger. I'm afraid if we keep it (the session) short just to keep it short, we might enact legislation too hastily. And I think that can be dangerous for the state," said Rep. Ann Duncan, R-Forsythe.

The upcoming elections could keep out some controversial issues during the session, and the Democratic National Convention could also affect the session's timetable, Duncan said.

Other issues that may be addressed include a retailers' use tax and an amendment to give the governor veto power, said Rep. Bill Boyd, R-Randolph.

"They (retailers) used to get 3 percent of what they collected. It was taken away from them last year. It was done under the guise of a school construction bill," Boyd said.

Boyd said he thinks the General Assembly will try to get the gubernatorial veto on the ballot as a referendum in the elections this November, instead of discussing it in the short session.

"Of course, I am all for veto power for the governor. I understand that the lieutenant governor says he will address that in the 1989 session. I think it's vital for the people of the state," Duncan said.

"When Governor Martin first proposed this issue, the lieutenant governor did not support this issue. So we are delighted to have him join us in this crusade. We hope he will be pushing for action on this issue during this short session," Rotterman said.

But many Democrats say the attempt to gain gubernatorial veto power will be futile.

"It won't come up. I don't even think it's eligible," Nesbitt said.

"It's not an issue. It's just something to campaign on," Nye said.

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