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BIPARTISAN OPERATING AGREEMENTS: OKLAHOMA

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OKLAHOMA

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STATE SENATE LEADERS ANNOUNCE POWER-SHARING AGREEMENT

State Capitol, Oklahoma City –Democrats and Republicans in the Oklahoma State Senate have reached a historic agreement to share power, Senate leaders announced Tuesday. The 48-member Senate has an unprecedented tie of 24 Republicans to 24 Democrats.

The leaders said the historic agreement will ensure that the Senate’s business can be conducted in an orderly fashion, and follows several weeks of intense negotiations. A tentative agreement was reached by negotiators last Friday, and it was formally approved by both parties’ caucuses Tuesday morning.

“I am proud of the agreement we are announcing here today,” said President Pro Tempore Mike Morgan, D-Stillwater. “Faced with the challenge of an equal partisan divide, the members of the State Senate have chosen to respond with a bipartisan accord that will ensure that the Senate will continue to efficiently and effectively undertake the people’s business and provide a steady hand for our state.”

“Many pundits and doubters predicted partisan gridlock in the State Senate because of the tie, but it hasn’t happened. Oklahoma’s state senators today have put aside partisanship to reach this historic agreement. Republicans and Democrats alike realize that we must work together to make sure the people’s business gets done,” stated Senate Co-President Pro Tempore Designate Glenn Coffee, R-Oklahoma City.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STATE SENATE’S POWER-SHARING AGREEMENT

MAJORITY PARTY

- The power-sharing agreement recognizes that there is no majority party in the Oklahoma State Senate. Both parties will share power.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

- Democratic Senator Mike Morgan will serve as President Pro Tempore for the next two years, except from July 1 through July 31, 2007, when he will serve as Co-President Pro Tempore.
- Republican Senator Glenn Coffee will serve as Co-President Pro Tempore for the next two years, except from July 1 through July 31, 2007, when he will serve as President Pro Tempore.
- The President Pro Tempore and Co-President Pro Tempore will jointly share authority in the State Senate.

FLOOR LEADERS

- Each party will appoint a co-floor leader.
- The co-floor leaders will share the responsibility for scheduling the daily legislative calendar.
- The co-floor leaders will rotate the management of floor activities on a daily basis.

PRESIDING OFFICERS

- Democrats and Republicans will share presiding duties, rotating daily. On days when one party's co-floor leader is managing floor activities, the other party will preside in the chair.

COMMITTEES

- Each committee will have equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans.
- Each committee will have a Republican and Democratic co-chair, who will share the responsibility of running the committee.

LENGTH OF AGREEMENT

- The agreement will remain in effect for two years, unless a special election to fill a vacancy changes the balance of power in the Senate.