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OK Governor Henry signs tattoo legalization into law

[Journal Record, The \(Oklahoma City\)](#), [May 11, 2006](#) by [Janice Francis-Smith](#)

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It's official - tattooing will be legal in Oklahoma on Nov. 1.

Gov. Brad Henry signed Senate Bill 806 on Wednesday, legalizing the practice of tattooing in Oklahoma. Tattooing is already allowed in every other state in the United States.

Regardless of one's personal views about tattoos, the plain fact is that tattooing is prevalent, Henry said. Public health experts say that tattooing must be regulated if we are to help guard against health hazards that might arise from shoddy practices.

The Oklahoma Department of Health is assigned the task of promulgating rules and standards for tattooing in the state, and to provide licensure for practicing tattooists.

State Sen. Frank Shurden, D-Hanna, author of SB 806, said the bill was intended to preserve the health of Oklahomans.

I'm not planning to get a tattoo myself, but if you want one, Oklahomans should be able to get one in a safe environment and not have to go to Texas, he said.

Shurden, currently serving his last term in the Oklahoma legislature, said he wasn't the first legislator to try to legalize tattooing, and the effort has gone on for several years.

It takes time with these controversial issues to get past the fear, Shurden said.

SB 806 had languished in a House committee for more than a year before the chairman decided to give the measure a hearing. Shurden thanked state Rep. Al Lindley, D-Oklahoma City, for his efforts in carrying the bill in the House this year.

Lindley said he was not too surprised that the measure finally passed this year.

I think the media had a whole lot to do with this, Lindley said. Additionally, the state's law banning tattooing faced several challenges in the courts, and precedent from other states indicated Oklahoma likely would have been compelled to overturn the ban if lawmakers had not decided to do so with legislation.

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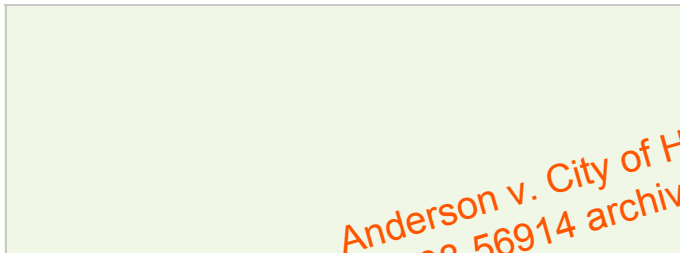
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