

MINUTES OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 4, 1977  
8:00 A.M.

The Chairman called the meeting of the Appropriations Committee to order at 8:00 a.m. Roll call was taken, showing a quorum present (see attached).

Also present were:

Rose Weber	Director of the Legislative Council
John LaFaver	Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Dave Lewis	Office of Budget & Program Planning
John Driscoll	Speaker of the House
Jerry Norris	Director of the Western Office, Council of State Governments San Francisco, California
Phil Halstead	Director of Project T.R.A.I.N. National Conference of State Legislatures Denver, Colorado

Senators Regan, Theissen, and Nelson were also present, Representative Peter M. Meloy was present for part of the meeting.

The meeting was called for hearing on House Bill 693, payment of money to the Legislative Council for payment of dues to the National Council of State Legislatures.

Speaker John Driscoll spoke briefly in support of the bill, and introduced Mr. H. J. Phillip Halstead, Project Director of the NCSL, Denver, Colorado. Mr. Halstead distributed literature concerning the NCSL (attached), and explained the services and benefits of membership in NCSL.

The bill requires \$14,500 for first year funding, and \$16,000 the second year. NCSL and Council of State Governments are complimentary organizations, not competing. NCSL serves state legislatures exclusively, and is funded by state legislatures. Forty-eight out of the 50 states are members of NCSL, Montana and North Dakota being the only exceptions. CSG serves legislators, attorney generals, lieutenant governors, and the supreme court chief justices. NCSL does short term research which directly affects state legislatures - CSG does long term research. Regarding the question of what you can expect from this membership, concrete examples are hard to give.

NCSL was created in January, 1975, from a merger of three organizations. It has a staff in Washington, D.C. of 26, and in Denver, 32. All states, regardless of appropriation, have an equal vote in the NCSL. All legislators of member states are members of NCSL. From the organization flows the benefits to the states. There are three objectives: (1) improve quality and effectiveness of state legislatures; (2) assure strong, cohesive state voice in federal decision making; (3) provide inter-state communication between legislatures. NCSL affects federal policy through state federal assembly, which meets 2-3 times a year and is composed of

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9 committees which formulate policy on federal issues. These are ratified by the membership, and then the Denver office speaks to Washington on the states' views on these issues. Technical assistance is given to state legislatures as requested on various ways of improving the legislative process, staffing problems, etc.

Jerry Norris, Director of the Western Office, Council of State Governments, San Francisco, explained the functions of the Council, stressing their committee system, dues structure, services - particularly in the area of publications - and offering states action options.

John LaFaver, Fiscal Analyst, spoke in support of membership in these two organizations. He stated he doesn't believe they provide the same service. Mr. LaFaver made mention of the many organizations which state offices belong to that provide inter-state cooperation between such offices, and which memberships cost approximately \$200,000 per year. He stated we should consider reducing those memberships by choosing those with lowest priorities and getting out of those, rather than not supporting NCSL. NCSL and CSG would be high on the list of organizations that are worthwhile. He stated the service his office has received from NCSL in the area of learning what other states, or Congress, are doing in specific areas, has been excellent.

The Chairman called for opponents to the bill:

John Finnegan, Montana SCORPA Director, Butte, Montana, rose in opposition to H.B. 693, and read a prepared statement strongly opposing funding of NCSL, which statement is attached.

Francis Poulson, Kalispell, rose in opposition, stating it isn't necessary to spend money for a few people to come in here and try to brainwash us with anything as ridiculous as this. He further stated we don't need advice from Denver or any place else; we can run our own state.

Victor Sistok, Flathead Taxpayers' Association, rose in opposition. He stated that county commissioners have lost control of county business - now state government comes down to county commissioners. The federal government binds all legislators together, which only costs money. Legislators are smart enough to handle Montana legislation. If they need to know the law, we have law books in Montana they can read. We don't need this association. We can go to the law books. We need association between legislators and people back on the farm.

George Benson, Flathead Taxpayers' Association, spoke next in opposition. He stated we have lost control of local government;

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Metro-government is designed to replace local government entirely. Soon there will be only two elected officials left in state government - the governor and lieutenant governor. The people will have no control over any other officials, they will be appointed. The people have lost control of state and county government.

Virginia Knapp, Great Falls, Montana, spoke in opposition. She reaffirmed the previous statements, and stated we are spending too much money now. She is a taxpayer, and would like to see taxes and appropriations cut. We have a fine government, but don't want federal bureaucracies fostered on us. She stated she wished the members would "listen to us, we feel strongly about this." Would like the committee to vote do not pass on H.B. 693.

William Toepfer, Silver Bow County, rose in opposition, stating we have the constitution to stand on. He doesn't see why we should be sold to the bureaucracies, which regulate every business and individual. That is not what our country is about. If everyone sells everyone down till we have only two offices to vote on, what chance will we have? America was built on truth and freedom, not conspiracies and regulations telling us what to do. The pollution of the mind that comes out of our educational system alone is sad enough. We don't need all this outside experience. We voted good people in to office; they should support the taxpayer, native sons, and people who made the state strong.

A prepared statement by Anye Ross, Coordinator of Poor Lowly Montana Taxpayers, was read into the record, and is attached.

Mr. John T. Lewis, Boulder, Montana, stated that the gentlemen before him spoke in his behalf and on behalf of other taxpayers. He spoke in opposition to the \$200,000 we are paying for membership in other organizations which propagandize our legislators so they are listening to organizations, not taxpayers and voters. He is on record as protesting H.B. 693.

Rodney Steven, Great Falls; Sandy Turk, Butte; and Mae Snyder, Butte, rose in opposition to H.B. 693. (Visitors' list attached).

Speaker John Driscoll stated in closing he wished to thank those who had come long distances and spoke their opposition to the bill in such an articulate manner. He stated he would have to disagree with many things, and agree with the statements as to local people being elected to represent the local people. He further stated he supports H.B. 693 because though he feels we certainly do have good ideas, we benefit from an idea exchange with people in other states, and cited examples where he felt we had benefited from such exchanges. He also said if we can do away with lower priority links to other states, that would be good.

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Representative Peter M. Meloy rose in support, stating he felt the appropriations for both CSG and NCSL were appropriate. He cited examples of how membership in NCSL had placed the states' views before Congress in Washington in a more forceful and effective manner by doing so collectively than could be done by the states separately, and mentioned areas of idea exchange in problem solving that had come from this organization and had been very helpful to state legislatures. He feels it is important to share progress we have made. Finally, the dues mentioned by Mr. LaFaver (\$200,000) were for 1976 - the legislative part of that was entirely dues to CSG - \$16,141. The legislature really isn't spending very much, and he thinks highly of Mr. LaFaver's idea of prioritizing those dues - and feels funding both CSG and NCSL would be very beneficial.

The Chairman thanked all in attendance for their courtesy; there being no questions from the committee, the hearing on H.B. 693 closed.

Representative South moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 A.M.



FRANCIS BARDANOUVE, CHAIRMAN