

State of Montana
46th Legislative Session

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

A meeting of the Education Committee of the House of Representatives was called to order at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, February 10, 1979 in Room 5 of the Capitol Annex by Chairman Peter J. Gilligan.

The roll was taken and shows Representatives Oberg, Teague, and Yardley excused. All other committee members were present.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear House Bills 36, 450 and 634.

Chairman Gilligan requested Representative Eudaily to explain to the committee HB 634 which is an act to clarify postsecondary vo-tech center governance and defines duties of state and local officials and authorizes a statewide property tax levy for the support of the centers. Representative Eudaily briefly spoke concerning the bill and asked Georgia Ruth Rice, Superintendent of Public Instruction to tell the committee the major points of the bill.

Proponents of HB 634 were:

Georgia Ruth Rice, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Public Instruction, Helena, Mt. - Ms. Rice stated, "I have several major reasons for supporting HB 634: 1. One of the great strengths of the post secondary vocational technical system in Montana is local administration. As you know, I strongly believe in grass roots control of ALL education.... 2. This Bill is a compromise bill between a total state vo-tech system and a state/local vo-tech system of administration. 3. I support this bill because I believe that state employees numbers should not be inflated at 236 people. During my campaign I did not find a single Montanan who wanted more state employees. As a representative of the people I cannot support any increase of 236 state employees. 4. This bill does not ask for additional dollars from this already strapped legislature. It does not ask for money that would take dollars away from direct services students. In summary I believe that this bill will be the kind of legislation that will best serve the students of vocational technical centers. That is really more important than any of the multiple reasons any of us can discuss in this limited time. (For complete written testimony, see Exhibit 1)

George Zellick, 2101 Bow St., Missoula, Mt. - (Representing the Missoula County High School District) - Mr. Zellick reiterated several points brought to the committee's attention by Ms. Rice as stated above and urged the committee's support of the bill. (See Exhibit 2)

Penny Bullock, 1920 Highland, Helena, Mt. - (Representing Helena School District No. 1) Ms. Bullock stated, "The Helena Vocational Technical Center and School District #1 has and continues to support the concept of local administration of the post-secondary vocational technical centers in the State of Montana. We feel the local districts have and will continue to provide the necessary leadership needed to offer quality vocational education programs to the students of Montana." (For complete written testimony, see Exhibit 3). Ms. Bullock speaking for the Montana School Boards Association, informed the committee that MSBA supports HB 634.

Carolyn G. Miller, 3725 Wylie Dr., Helena, Mt. (Representing the Montana Vocational Association as Chairman of the Legislative Committee) - Ms. Miller stated, "The Montana Vocational Association, a statewide organization of secondary and post-secondary educators ask that you support local control -- HB 634." (For complete written testimony, see exhibit 4)

There were no opponents to House Bill 634 present. The committee was allowed to question the witnesses and the hearing was closed. Written testimony was submitted (See Exhibits 5,6,7,&8) which was not presented orally. (See Exhibit 9 for out-line of major points)

Chairman Gilligan requested Representative Yardley to explain to the committee House Bill 450 (an act revising the laws relating to postsecondary vo-tech education centers and providing for an executive officer hired by the Board of Public Education). Representative Yardley told the committee this bill was drafted and proposed by the Advisory Council for Vocational Education. Representative Yardley requested the committee to read the out-line of the major points of the bill (See Exhibit 9) outlined by Jim Oppedahl of the Legislative Council.

Proponents of HB 450 were:

William Ball, P.O. Box 4789, Helena, Mt. (Representing the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education) Mr. Ball stated, "We are concerned that opportunity for as many as wish to participate in post-secondary and secondary vocational education have that opportunity. That opportunity is not available today. The council is concerned, along with many others, that the vocational education system become more accountable. We strongly support a system that holds promise for growth and development toward future needs. The Council recommends a stable financial base for vocational education in Montana." (For complete written testimony, see Exhibit 10)

Marjorie King, Winnett, Mt. (Representing the Board of Public Education) - Ms. King told the committee the Board of Public Education is currently concerned with the vocational education governance system and urged passage of the bill. (See Exhibit 11)

Opponents of House Bill 450 were:

Blake J. Wordal, Administrative Assistant, Governor's Office, Executive Office, Room 204, State Capitol, Helena, Mt. - Mr. Wordal spoke neither in support of opposition to the vocational education bills being heard by the Education Committee, but told the committee of the Governor's concern with the accountability of the vocational education system. (See Exhibit 12)

William C. Milligan, 111 N. Montana St., Butte, Mt. - (Representing School District No. 1) - Ms. Milligan stated, "At a local Board of Trustees meeting, Monday, February 5, 1979, Butte School District Trustees voted to support that the operation of the Butte Vocational Technical Center be retained under the present system. The Butte Vo Tech Center was developed from its inception by local citizens, the local government units of Silver Bow County and the City of Butte, School Dist. No. 1 Board of Trustees and its administrative staff with no help from the state of Montana. Centralized control of the Vo Tech Center would eliminate adequate monitoring for accountability of vocational education policy and procedure established by the Board of Public Education and Office of Public Instruction. Under local control the local Board of Trustees and its administration become a watch dog at no expense to the state." (For complete written testimony, see Exhibit 13)

Edward W. Nelson, 1706 9th Ave., Helena, Mt. - (Representing the Montana Taxpayers Association) - Mr. Nelson stated, "If a state-wide open-end mill levy is required, have it introduced as a tax measure." He pointed out that his organization does not feel this bill is tax relief. (See Exhibit 14)

Representative Yardley in closing told the committee he feels this bill would get the control and accountability for vocational educational systems the state government needs. The committee was allowed to question the witnesses and the hearing was closed.

Chairman Gilligan requested Representative Dussault to explain to the committee House Bill 36 (an act providing for a postsecondary vocational-technical district system under the Board of Regents and transferring postsecondary vocational-technical district boards of trustees). Representative Dussault told the committee that she had been the Chairman of the Interim Committee on Postsecondary Education and that HB 36 was the result of that Interim Committee's findings. (See Exhibit 9)

Proponents of the bill were:

Senator Larry Fasbender, Rt. 1, Box 23, Fort Shaw, Mt. - Senator Fasbender stated, "This bill sets up a total state system where the state has primary responsibility for governance and funding. This bill opts for a sharing governance system with the state and local controls sharing authority and financing."

Shauna Thomas, P.O. Box 1246, Helena, Mt. - (Representing the Montana Federation of Teachers) Ms. Thomas spoke briefly in support of HB 36.

Jim Murry, AFL-CIO, Helena, Mt. - Mr. Murry told the committee the AFL-CIO supports the concept of the bill.

Cordell Brown, AFL-CIO, Montana Federation of Teachers, Helena, Mt. - Mr. Brown reiterated Mr. Murry's position as stated above.

The committee was allowed to question the witnesses and the hearing on HB 36 was closed. Chairman Gilligan assigned the three Vocational-Technical bills heard by the committee to a sub-committee. Those assigned to the sub-committee were, Representative Teague, Chairman, and Representatives Yardley, Daily, Eudaily and Anderson.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.


Peter J. Gilligan, Jr., Chairman

MJW