

APPROPRIATIONS - FINANCE & CLAIMS

SUBCOMMITTEE: HUMAN SERVICES

AGENCY I

FEBRUARY 22, 1979 - CAPITOL ANNEX

The meeting was called to order at 7:25 a.m. by Chairman Steve Waldron with the following members present:

Chairman Steve Waldron  
Senator Gary Aklestad  
Representative Bill Hand  
Representative Robert Marks  
Senator Pat Regan

Senator Pete Story - Absent

Others present were: Ron Weiss, OBPP; Curt Nichols, LFA; Keith Colbo, Director of SRS; and Ben Johns, Deputy Director of Administration.

Due to the long hours of Legislature, the Friday morning subcommittee meeting will be called off.

The budget offices still do not have the exact figures for Environmental Sciences and requested it be postponed one more time. It was postponed.

The Veteran's Affairs Bureau was brought up for discussion. Senator Regan told the subcommittee that she is studying this issue. She has found that besides the bureau, the VFW and American Legion along with Army Recruiters at the universities are doing about the same thing. The bureau have over 3/4 of a million dollar budget. It initially started at \$12,000. This budget was postponed pending Senator Regan's findings. Senator Regan also told the subcommittee that the audit for this bureau points out many problems including no documentation for travel, per diem and mileage and there is no accountability.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION

The funds in this bureau are all federal funds. Forty percent of their work load is with the SSI Program, twenty percent is for reevaluation. About 13,000 people are served in Montana and they aid clients in qualifying for SSI. There are no general funds. The department has requested 2.08 FTEs for an intensive review for quality control. They have been criticized by HEW. This would make 33.08 FTEs for FY 80 and 33.03 for FY 81.

Ron Weiss explained to the subcommittee that the difference in budgets is in salaries allotted. The LFA has a lower

figure because they took vacancy savings whereas the Executive did not.

Chairman Waldron explained to the subcommittee that vacancy savings is taken when a person quits. The vacancy is not filled for a period of time, saving that person's salary.

Curt Nichols, LFA, explained that the LFA did take a 10% vacancy savings. Last fiscal year they had a 14% vacancy rate.

Senator Aklestad questioned the department on the number of office-clerk IIIs that they have. Ron Weiss, explained that there is a high amount of technical information and data involved in these applications and skilled clerks are necessary. Ron also pointed out that the bureau has dropped six FTEs on their own in the last few years and now with the additional work load they need all their FTEs.

Senator Regan moved to accept the LFA recommendation and add the requested 2.08 FTEs.

Senator Aklestad wanted to know why they couldn't operate with 31 FTEs. Curt Nichols explained that with vacancy savings they really will be operating with 30 employees. The chairman also pointed out that if errors are made, the state will be the one to pay in the end.

Senator Regan's motion to accept the LFA recommendation with the additional 2.08 FTEs was voted on. All were in favor except Senator Aklestad. The motion passed.

#### ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

In this bureau the eligibility technicians had appealed their grade and as a result the budgets had to be amended to reflect the grade increases. Chairman Waldron pointed out that the subcommittee must be careful to include those figures. The chairman also reminded the subcommittee that the department has asked for five additional FTEs for a pilot program to determine work load and error increase. These FTEs would be eligibility technicians.

Ben Johns informed the subcommittee that the department is trying to get CETA positions to aid in this program.

Representative Hand moved to accept the LFA recommendation. The chairman asked about the eligibility technicians. Representative Hand moved to add three additional FTEs.

Chairman Waldron again reminded the subcommittee that errors

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within the program eventually cost the state money.

Representative Hand moved to amend his motion to add all five FTEs to the program. Representative Marks requested that the department bring back the results next session to see how the pilot worked. A vote was taken on the motion to accept the LFA recommendation and add the five additional FTEs:

Senator Gary Aklestad	No
Representative Bill Hand	Yes
Representative Robert Marks	Yes
Senator Pat Regan	Yes
Chairman Steve Waldron	Yes

The motion passed.

#### VISUAL SERVICES

The chairman reminded the members that this program and Voc-Rehab do the same things only Visual Services deals specifically with blind clients. About two-thirds of the program is children and they deal with medical, prosthetics and transportation. In rehabilitation alone in September of 1978 they were serving 135 cases. In recent months the department is attempting to require more payment from those clients who can afford it.

Representative Hand moved to accept the Executive Budget.

There was discussion on combining the two bureaus of Voc-Rehab and Visual Services. This could be done within the department.

Curt Nichols explained the difference between budgets. The Executive budget allowed the Visual Services Medical Services to expand whereas the LFA kept them at \$50,000. This was why there is a difference in the general fund allocations.

Senator Regan moved a substitute motion that the subcommittee accept the LFA recommendation with the lesser amount of general fund money. All were in favor of the motion, the motion passed.

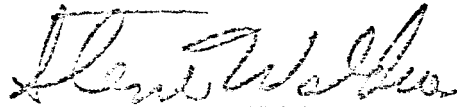
The Executive Budget Officers and the LFA would like to get together and go over the federal funding one more time. It was approved.

The next meeting will be Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:



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Steve Waldron, Chairman  
Approved

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