

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
FEBRUARY 20, 1981

The Senate Committee on Education and Cultural Resources met Friday, February 20, 1981, in Room 402 of the Capitol Building. Senator Bob Brown, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Committee members present were Senators Brown, Mazurek, Severson, Haffey, Hammond, and Blaylock. Senator McCallum arrived late; Senators Smith and Thomas were absent.

The Committee heard Senate Joint Resolution 22.

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 22

" A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING
ASSIGNEMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE INTERIM COMMITTEE TO
STUDY MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCING SYSTEM."

Senator Bob Brown, District 10, sponsor of the bill, stated the bill is a request for an interim study of the foundation program. He said the resolution was prompted by the presentation made by Rod Svee, Superintendent of Schools, Wolf Point, tying costs to educational standards. Since we haven't studied education in 30 years, he stated, it is time to thoroughly review the program, especially from the funding aspect.

PROPOSERS

Shauna Thomas, representing the Montana Federation of Teachers, stated her support of the bill. She said the integrity of the foundation program is at risk as it has been 30 years since it has been changed. She cited three main reasons for the bill:

1. the possibility of litigation exists with the inequality in distribution of funds to districts,
2. the level of state funding in the foundation program, and
3. only a handful of people in the state understand the foundation program.

She said she felt the resolution needs to be a bit more specific as to funding aspects. She also stated a careful selection needs to be made as to who does the study so the credibility of the report is intact when it is completed.

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William F. Hickey, an educator in Anaconda, representing the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Trustees, and parents, children and taxpayers of Anaconda, presented his written testimony in favor of the resolution (attachment #1).

A brief discussion of the foundation program was held by the committee members.

ACTION ON SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 22

Senator Haffey moved to strike page 2, lines 10-12. The motion carried unanimously (see attached standing committee report).

Senator Haffey moved Senate Joint Resolution 22 Do Pass As Amended. The motion carried with Senators Brown, Mazurek, McCallum, and Haffey voting yes, Senators Blaylock and Hammond voting no.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.



Senator Bob Brown, Chairman

jdr

ROLL CALL

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

47th LEGISLATIVE SESSION - - 1981

Date 1/1/81

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Senator Ed Smith			
Senator George McCallum			
Senator Elmer Severson			
Senator Swede Hammond			
Senator Chet Blaylock			
Senator Bill Thomas			
Senator Joseph Mazurek			
Senator Jack Haffey			
Senator Bob Brown, Chairman			

Each day attach to minutes.

DATE FEBRUARY 20, 1981

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & CULTURAL
RESOURCES

STP
BILL NO. 22

VISITOR'S REGISTER

[illegible]

(Please leave prepared statement with Secretary)

NAME:

DATE: _____

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

REPRESENTING WHOM?

APPEARING ON WHICH PROPOSAL:

DO YOU:

SUPPORT?

AMEND?

OPPOSE?

COMMENTS :

PLEASE LEAVE ANY PREPARED STATEMENTS WITH THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY

NAME: Wm. F. Hickey DATE: _____

ADDRESS: 142 Shirley (Fairmont) Anacost

PHONE: 563-5101

REPRESENTING WHOM? *Knocord School*

APPEARING ON WHICH PROPOSAL:

DO YOU: SUPPORT? ☒ AMEND? OPPOSE?

COMMENTS:

PLEASE LEAVE ANY PREPARED STATEMENTS WITH THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY



ANACONDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P. O. Box 1281 / Anaconda, Montana 59711
(406) 563-6361

DANIEL W. MARINKOVICH,
SUPERINTENDENT

SJR 22

My name is Bill Hickey. I am an educator in Anaconda, Montana and I am testifying as a proponent of SJR22. I am testifying on behalf of Superintendent Marinkovich, the Anaconda Board of Trustees, parents, children and taxpayers of our community. Equal educational opportunity is guaranteed by the Montana Constitution in Article X, Section 1. The State Foundation Program is Montana's way of meeting this "Constitutional Guarantee". The State Foundation also represents the biggest single expenditure of tax dollars and rightfully so. The problem with our equalization program is that it is a 1940's system trying to handle the schools of the 1980's. It may not be the most efficient way of funding schools in the eighties.

Legislators are bombarded with a variety of school funding issues from the foundation increase, to the capstone, to the special education issues, to the rolling average, to the decline in enrollment, to the increase in enrollment, to the large schools, to the small schools, etc. Without a specific and systematic scholarly study of Montana's school finance how can the Legislature and educators respond as responsibly as they would like?

California with Serrano vs. Priest was forced to analyze and modify the state equalization as a reaction to a court decision. Washington State had the same problem about three years ago. Legislators and Educators are far better off to proactively respond to these issues with study and modification if supported by research than they are to respond reactively to court mandates.

Funding an interim study or school finance analyzing the Montana Foundation, other system of equalization, current revenue sources, other taxation systems and a projection of basic education for the 1980's is a responsible thing to do. Appropriating \$150,000 to the State Superintendent for this purpose would be a small price to check the efficiency of a forty year old funding mechanism which represents the greatest single expenditure of tax dollars. Public Instruction may contract with the University System for assistance in completing this task and would thereby not necessarily have to increase state bureaucracy.

We strongly encourage you to react favorably and responsibly to SJR22.

William F. Hickey 2/20/81

NAME:

DATE :

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

REPRESENTING WHOM?

APPEARING ON WHICH PROPOSAL:

DO YOU:

SUPPORT?

AMEND?

OPPOSE?

COMMENTS:

PLEASE LEAVE ANY PREPARED STATEMENTS WITH THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

.....February 20..... 1981.....

MR. PRESIDENT

We, your committee on EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

having had under consideration SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION Bill No. 22

Respectfully report as follows: That.....SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION..... Bill No. 22

be amended as follows:

1. Page 2, lines 9 through 12.

Following: "funding"

Strike: lines 9 through 12 in their entirety

And, as so amended,
DO PASS