

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
FINANCE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE  
MONTANA STATE SENATE

February 25, 1981

The 16th meeting of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee met on the above day in the State Capitol Building, room 108. Senator Hims1, Chairman, called the meeting to order, roll call was taken and is attached, and the time was 8:38 a.m.

Senator Hims1 said we have some problems in regard to the Aging Services appropriations and Senator Regan could better explain it.

Senator Regan said that in working with the Human Services budget in subcommittee, they had an area dealing with the Aging Services budget, and that as they addressed it they became aware of problems in it in the delivery of services through the aging services councils. Some people feel so strongly about it that there was a bill introduced to do away with the Aging Services Councils completely. We are not ready to do that. We need to know what the problems are, how it will function, and we need to know if something should be done in its place. I have asked the Chairman of the subcommittee, Representative Hurwitz and Norma Vestry, SRS director to speak on this, and I am asking the Finance and Claims committee to authorize a study before we tamper with the system.

Representative Hurwitz, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health Services said that as Senator Regan had explained, we have a problem. There is a real conflict between the different communities as to whether the council is the way to deliver the services, or whether it ought to go direct to the communities. House Bill 755 would take it out of the area agencies and the money would go direct to the 56 counties. Testimony heard was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping it the way it was. The budget is \$ 3 million 700 thousand for the Human Services, and \$371,000 is taken off and used by the area agencies as administrative costs. A hearing was held in which there was a great deal of testimony from the cities. Great Falls seems to be leading the fight to do away with the area councils. Sanders, Cascade etc. were the only place we had any complaint. The rural counties seem to be happy the way it is.

House Bill 755 came out of the House Health Committee with an 11-6 vote favoring doing away with the councils. In our subcommittee we had voted to keep it the way it was. Senator Regan felt that since there was so much disagreement, and since we had something that so many people said worked, that we should come up with something by the end of the biennium.

Senator Hims1: Your request is for a Joint Resolution to ask for a study in the current biennium?

Senator Story: Two alternatives came up in the subcommittee. 1. The area councils say they provide the input to do what the people in the local areas want, and 2. Can we save some administrative costs that can be used at the operational level instead of having so much overhead.

Representative Hurwitz: It would be administered by SRS. When the area agencies get the money, SRS has no control over it. As an alternative, SRS said they could put 4 people on to help the rural people handle the money.

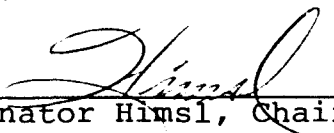
Senator Johnson: I have worked with agencies. Some of them are dynamite in the areas, and some are not. At least this type of action will have the effect of tightening the ship right away.

Norma Vestry, Bureau Chief, Social and Rehabilitative Services, said we do relate to and coordinate with the aging services because they provide services and contract meals on wheels, etc., and are responsible for the communities. We provide many of the same services and get to the people that need it. There are differences in the type of service they give and those that we give.

Senator Van Valkenburg suggested it might be better to say in the resolution that we instruct the Finance Committee to make the study and we will be sure it gets done. The committee agreed.

MOTION by Senator Haffey that we as a committee sponsor a resolution to direct the Finance Committee to make a study of the problems in the Aging Services Councils etc., and to report back to the next legislature.

Motion was voted, unanimous agreement of those present. Senator Dover was absent.

  
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Senator Hims1, Chairman

ROLL CALL

FINANCE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE

47th LEGISLATIVE SESSION - - 1981

Date 2/25/81

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NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Senator Etchart	✓		
Senator Story	✓		
Senator Aklestad	✓		
Senator Nelson	✓		
Senator Smith	✓		
Senator Dover			
Senator Johnson	✓		
Senator Keating	✓		
Senator Boylan	✓		
Senator Regan	✓		
Senator Thomas	✓		
Senator Stimatz	✓		
Senator Van Valkenburg	✓		
Senator Haffey	✓		
Senator Jacobson	✓		
Senator Himsl	✓		