

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE  
MONTANA STATE SENATE  
47th SPECIAL SESSION (II)

JUL 9 1982

OF MONTANA

June 21, 1982

Senator Hazelbaker called the first joint committee hearing to order at 2:07 at which time he introduced the following staff persons: Greg Petesch, staff attorney, Pat Bennett, House Committee Secretary and Louise Sullivan, Senate Committee Secretary.

ROLL CALL: All members were present with Senators Boylan, Dover and Regan excused to attend the Finance and Claims Committee Meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1: Senator Turnage, chief sponsor of the bill appeared before the joint committees explaining that this bill is an effort to do something, basically, about the idle time problem in a meaningful way. It is a vehicle for the Department of Institutions to use to guide them through a vo-tech education oriented program at the prison. There is no argument that productive use of an inmate's time is a critical matter. This bill does not mandate anything specific; it is to provide training and experience in any field involving personal property. As far as payment for any work done, there is no better incentive than possibly 15 days per month off their sentence. (15 days per month is maximum). This bill is not intended to interfere with any contracts with anyone, i.e. subsection (c) of the bill, page 4, lines 19-22.

Senator Stephens, co-sponsor of the bill stated that in addition to the overcrowding and other problems, the idleness of the inmates is of primary concern. Some type of industries program must be implemented, whether it be refurbishing school buses as they do in Texas, Nevada makes mattresses, furniture for all the institutions and also has a metal workshop, as does New Mexico. With the low incidence of violence among 30,000 incarcerated at the Texas institution, administration personnel feel that it is because of the inmate's time being occupied with work and training.

Curt Chisholm, Department of Institutions, stated that they have been working on the same type of program to present before the regular session in January and it would be an excellent addition to the present program. He introduced Sandra Harris also from the Department of Institutions.

Sandra Harris, Industries Coordinator from the Department of Institutions, has been working on this type of program to coordinate with theirs. Some of her suggestions were vehicle and equipment maintenance repair, office equipment repair, small engine repair, woodworking and metalworking, basic sewing and

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and sewing machine repair and data processing and clerical office help. The two programs would work together very well.

Gene Christiaansen from the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction supported the bill. The prison has had vocational programs in the past but they were cut back when funds dwindled. (See Exhibit #1)

Judy Johnson, Assistant in the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction,, explained more of Exhibit #1 which Mr. Christiaansen handed out.

John Board, President of the Montana Education Association passed out his testimony which included short and long range recommendations for the State Prison's Education Program. (See Exhibit #2)

There were no opponents to the bill present.

QUESTIONS: Senator Blaylock questioned Senator Turnage if this wouldn't possibly become competition for private enterprise. Senator Turnage replied that it would not because this is not to be a self-supporting project and that is not what it is intended for. They would repair furniture; they would not manufacture it for the state or any other governmental entities, such as desks for schools, etc.

Rep. Ellison felt that in order to keep that many inmates busy it would have to be opened up to competition with private enterprise. Senator Turnage again emphasized that the program would not be self-supporting and it would be very important to see that it does not become so.

Rep. Wallin had a handout for the committee members concerning a paint shop which would supply paint to the highway department for striping the highways. Besides providing work it would save the Department money.

Senator Blaylock asked Judy Johnson if the OPI would take the lead in setting up and the responsibility for an education program. She replied that at the present time it is not set up this way. Turnage stated that he would have no trouble with that.

In closing, Senator Turange stated that he appreciated the remarks and supportive statements by all present.

Senator Hazelbaker stated that being there were three Senate members absent that we would not take executive action until the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

  
FRANK W. HAZELBAKER, CHAIRMAN