MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Call to Order: By Sen. Tom Keating, Vice Chairman, on February 14, 1989, at 8 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: All members were present with the exception of Rep. Bradley.

Members Excused: Rep. Bradley

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Peter Blouke, LFA
Evan McKinney, LFA
Lois Steinbeck, OBPP
John Huth, OBPP

Announcements/Discussion: Orientation, Family Services (Management support and community services, exhibit 1 with issue sheets presented by LFA, exhibits 2 and 3); Executive Action, DHES, exhibit 4.

HEARING ON DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES

Presentation and Opening Statement: Sen. Keating announced that the hearing would begin with a presentation by the department.

Testifying Proponents and Who They Represent:

Mr. Mullen, Department of Family Services

Proponent Testimony: Mr. Mullen, representing the Department of Family Services, presented the subcommittee with an agency orientation and overview (exhibit 1, attached). Discussion followed.

Questions From Subcommittee Members:

A119
Rep. Cobb was interested in whether continuity of services was maintained for clients of DFS. Mr. Mullen reported the department is trying to build that into their program and are in the process of developing in-home service programs.

A133
Rep. Grinde asked for a description of out of state placements

and the cost for such placements. Mr. Mathies replied that Home on the Range, North Dakota, charges $35 per day, some facilities charge as much as $200 per day, but average cost runs around $90-95 per day. This can run over $100 per day for 24 hour supervision.

A160
Sen. Hofman asked Mr. Mullan's feelings about the animosity from county commissioners and how he could improve relationships with them. Mr. Mullen replied as an ex-county commissioner he would be trying to reach out and develop rapport with county commissioners; that this is one of the department's priorities.

A177
Sen. Hofman evinced an interest in the method used in handling child abuse. Mr. Mullen reported there is an investigation by the social worker, who substantiates the charge and if so, the department is responsible to correct the situation. If the child is in an emergency situation, the social worker has the authority to remove the child (or children). Unless the situation is deemed an emergency or dangerous for the child, the social worker confers with the supervisor before any charges are brought. By law, DFS have 60 days to do the investigation. The department calls on the county attorney to handle charges.

A203
Rep. Cody expressed a concern for children making up the 25 percent out of state placements and asked why they are not being placed in state. Mr. Mullen stated all attempts are made to place the child (or children) in state but at times there is no room and/or no services.

Rep. Cody asked if there are an abundance of foster care homes in and out of the state. Mr. Mullen remarked the supply is limited; also it is hard to place teenagers.

Rep. Cody also expressed an interest in the method used in determining the rates for residential services. Mr. Mullen stated that last session, DFS developed a matrix and thus reimburse all facilities in a same or similar manner. Mr. Walsh stated costs run from $35 to $100 per day with the average at $68-69 per day. Rep. Cody asked the department if they would furnish the subcommittee with a breakdown of charges and monies paid out for per diem charges; Mr. Walsh will bring this report to the next meeting.

A289
Rep. Grinde asked for information regarding the educational background of the social workers. Mr. Mullen remarked social workers required a bachelor of science degree in social work or social science. The social workers are the contacts with the families and are responsible for making the initial assessments; however, other professionals, e.g.,

supervisors, are available for conference purposes.

A328
In response to Rep. Cobb's question, Mr. Mullen replied DFS has established thirteen goals for the department.

A345
In replying to Sen. Keating's inquiry regarding overlaps, Mr. Mullen stated that DFS is a case management program while SRS furnishes benefits. DFS took protective services for children and adults from the SRS program but each department furnishes a unique service for the clients.

A422
Rep. Cobb expressed an interest in social worker liability. Mr. Mullen stated the department was protected by its policies and by statute. As long as the social workers work within the guidelines, the department is protected.

A445
Sen. Van Valkenburg asked about the department's philosophy of decentralization and if there was cause to be concerned about management of monies by regional managers who would not be responsible for administering the budgets prudently.

Mr. Mullen replied that a certain budget is allocated to each of the ten (10) regional managers along with accountability for each of their individual budgets.

Sen. Van Valkenburg asked about decision which set up the ten regions. Mr. Mullen replied determination was based on every 150,000 population base with three in areas like Missoula-Kalispell and one in northeastern Montana where 14-17 counties have a population of 105,000.

A538
Rep. Grinde requested a breakdown of the regions and suggested a flow chart or organizational chart for the department would be helpful for the subcommittee. Mr. Mullen offered to bring this to the next meeting.

A544
Peter Blouke reviewed the issue sheets on the management services and community services divisions.

A678
Mr. Mathies reported on staff training coordination where the department attempts to maintain the quality and consistency of the training; the LFA level budget includes $4,001 for more training expenses this biennium.

Because DFS is a new department of nineteen months, there is a need to set up secretarial coverage since they are now separate from SRS. In the past, DFS had part time services of an SRS secretary. The department is also in the process of separating their foster care data base from that of SRS.

The 3.9 FTE's requested are part time in seven (7) different locations.

A811
In answer to Sen. Van Valkenberg's inquiry as to their present number of employees and work location, Mr. Mathies stated DFS is now located in the New York Building on the mall, Last Chance Gulch; he stated all employees (43) are located there. The department has a six (6) year lease. The reason for the move was to provide more space for SRS programs.

A828
Rep. Cobb asked if the department had any problem with the executive level budget on the operating expenses. Mr. Mathies replied no problem.

Rep. Cobb asked if SRS gave DFS priority in changing the data base, would you need a new data base system. If SRS had that authority, would this be a solution; Mr. Mathies said that would probably work for the next 2-3 years. However, the $17,000 the department is asking is an estimate by the Department of Administration on just the programming cost of removing DFS information from the SRS system. This is due to the confidentiality of the information. The other cost is lot of the program developing and processing cost involved in doing the revisions to the program.

Rep. Cobb asked if DFS and SRS systems would interface and Mr. Mathies said with federal regulations they are expecting, the process could be accomplished. Rep. Cobb's inquiry as to source of funding elicited a reply from Mr. Mathies that it would be state money.

A814
Ms. Steinbeck clarified one aspect of the budget. The executive is not requesting a new computer system here; the request is just to separate the data bases on the mainframe so that the DFS can access it in its own department. She further stated that it will cost $17,000 to separate data bases and the rest is for the ongoing cost to operate.

Mr. Mathies reported additional monies would be for purchase of programming time from SRS or the Department of Administration and write reports.

Rep. Cobb asked if this would reduce SRS budget and Ms. Steinbeck stated that last year SRS did very little work on DFS data base.

A953
Sen. Hofman asked why the cost of follow up care of clients was excessive; he was interested in community resources for clients, e.g., family, friends, etc.

Mr. Walsh stated that many of their clients do not have families with the ability or the willingness to do these kinds of things.

A047
Dr. Blouke reviewed the issue sheets on the community services division, then went on through the operating expenses and equipment.

A208
Mr. Walsh reported that the six (6) positions that were deleted last session are needed if DFS is going to get the job done. He reported as the quality of service gets lower, as the caseload increases, social workers are pushed to close cases faster. As your clients are run through the system, they have a history of coming back because you are not meeting their needs. Quality is being lessened at the present time with supervisors carrying caseloads and time for administration and training becomes less. Social workers are pushed to doing their own clerical work.

A336
Rep. Cody asked about money for the employees receiving upgrades.

Mr. Walsh reported the upgrades were in process before DFS became a separate entity from SRS.

B010
Brian McCullough of the Department of Labor & Industry and John Huth, OBPP, presented the modified welfare reform (JOBS) issue sheets (exhibits 4 and 5). Discussion followed on the department's ability to estimate the number of dollars for the JOBS program and the probable necessity of using any additional available state dollars for match.

DISPOSITION OF DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES

Tape No. A

Motion: Sen. Van Valkenburg moved to accept the current executive level budget for the modified welfare reform (JOBS) program. (See exhibit 5)

Amendments, Discussion, and Votes: The motion PASSED with Sen. Keating voting nay.

Motion: Sen. Van Valkenburg moved to define language in the bill to provide authority to seek a budget amendment for additional federal funding by utilizing $90,000 of existing match (included in the four programs; new horizons, AFDC day care, displaced homemaker and dislocated worker) as match money for federal funds during 1990 if the budget director states additional funding can be utilized to reduce AFDC caseloads.

Discussion: Sen. Van Valkenburg said the reason he made the motion is because the state may be able to get an additional $270,000 federal matching money. He stated that if caseloads are reduced, there should be as much help as possible provided to find opportunities for people to get off the welfare caseload.

Amendments, Discussion, and Votes: The motion PASSED unanimously.

Motion: Sen. Keating moved to accept the current level budget for personal services, general assistance training program of employment services, Department of Labor and Industry.

Discussion: Discussion followed and Sen. Keating requested more information on the breakdown of budgets. Sen. Keating commented it might be better to postpone the issue until the full committee was present.

Amendments, Discussion, and Votes: The motion FAILED on a 3-3 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 10:30 a.m.

Dorothy Bradley
REP. DOROTHY BRADLEY, Chairman

DB/dib

3723.min

DAILY ROLL CALL

HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE 2-14-89

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Rep. Bradley (Chair.)			
Sen. Keating (Vice Chair.)	✓		
Sen. Hofman	✓		
Sen. Van Valkenberg	✓		
Rep. Cody	✓		
Rep. Cobb	✓		
Rep. Grinde	✓		

Form CS-30A
Rev. 1985

EXHIBIT 1
DATE 2-14-89
HB ______

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE FY90-91 DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES BUDGET

PRESENTED TO THE HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

AGENCY ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW

On behalf of the Department of Family Services it is a great pleasure to be able to present to this subcommittee an overview of the agency's first biennium of operation. The hard work that has been put into the agency is through the efforts of many dedicated staff and their efforts are appreciated.

The department was created some short nineteen months ago by the 1987 Legislature. The department was created to focus on serving children who are in the custody of the state, providing community-based services to the elderly and the developmentally disabled. The new agency was charged with redirecting services toward prevention and community-based programs, while providing greater accountability. The previous delivery system provided little accountability and authority was divided between several state and local agencies.

The department is based on the philosophy that government alone cannot provide the answers to helping troubled youth and dysfunctional families -- that family and community will be at the heart of any solution. The department has been organized so that decisions are made as close to home as possible. For that reason, the department has been decentralized into 10 Local Youth Services Advisory areas with greater discretionary authority and autonomy given to five regional administrators and their respective supervisors. This allows for quicker identification of needs in the local communities. Program development, training and policy remain the responsibility of the state office, with emphasis placed on consistency. The state office is utilizing the conventional wisdom of the field staff through the use of standing committees that assist in the development of policy and programs.

The local councils are the focus of the department. The local councils are responsible for planning, assessing and evaluating the needs of youth and families within their respective areas.The success and failure of the department largely rests with the local advisory councils. Local councils have spent the past year and one-half in program orientation and data gathering. The councils are just now ready to begin addressing the needs in their areas, as they are able to fill the gaps in service so that we quit losing kids through the cracks.

The past nineteen months have been hectic and frustrating for all involved, state staff, field staff and local council members. The past year and one-half has been spent developing and nurturing the regional concept and the resulting internal reorganization necessary with a new department.

With the department's reorganization behind us, it is now time to concentrate on redirecting programs into a system that improves the care of children in the state's custody and attempts to reduce the number of children placed. These are very difficult challenges. These goals are made more difficult by attempting to stay within the intent of the enabling legislation by redirecting services without additional resources.

It is the goal of the department to provide services as close to home as possible in the least restrictive, most appropriate setting. In order to do that, the department is going to have to develop community-based services, in concert with other services providers, and shift resources in an effort to expand the continnum of services without increasing the public costs. To meet that difficult challenge, new programs will have to replace, not supplement, those existing programs that fail to adequately meet the needs of youth and families. Finding ways of accomplishing this will be a major challenge to the department in the next few years. It is not the departments intent to radically move away from present programs, but to augment those services with more intermediate level local programs.

Because of the departments responsibilities in the Child Welfare area, much effort has been concertrated in this area in the past biennium. Since the service delivery system is now in place, additional attention can be given to aging and developmental disabilities programs in the coming biennia.

I would now like to highlight a few areas of deep concern to the agency. Further detail on these issues and other benefits programs will be provided in future testimony and discussions with additional department staff.

FTE Vacancies

Most of the departments attention is concentrated in this one area. The agency is statutorily required to investigate all reports received regarding possible abuse, neglect or exploitation. Accompaning this handout is a line graph which depicts the increase in child abuse and neglect investigations since 1982. In effect, the number of youth involved has doubled in the last six years. Also attached are some column charts that show the relationship between substantiated and alleged violations of abuse and neglect.

Because of the tremendous volumn of casework required, with no let-up in sight, the department must ask this committee's reconsideration of reinstating the approximate seven positions that were deleted by the Appropriations Committee previously. The department was required to institute a classification upgrade for social workers, cottage life attendants and social work supervisors. Because the agency lacked the funding necessary to meet this mandate, vacant positions were held open in an effort to handle the crisis in-house. State law precludes the agency from requesting a supplemental to fund upgrades. Lack of the ability to fill these vacancies will have the effect of exacerbating full caseloads. Unfortunately this may result in compromising quality for quantity, through more restrictive case-management or priority selection and perhaps greater liability to the state.

Foster Care

The department is experiencing significant problems with the foster care portion of the budget. Attached, please find a series of line charts that show the increase in the number of youth being served in out-of-home and foster care programs of all types (ie. home foster care, group homes, residential treatment).

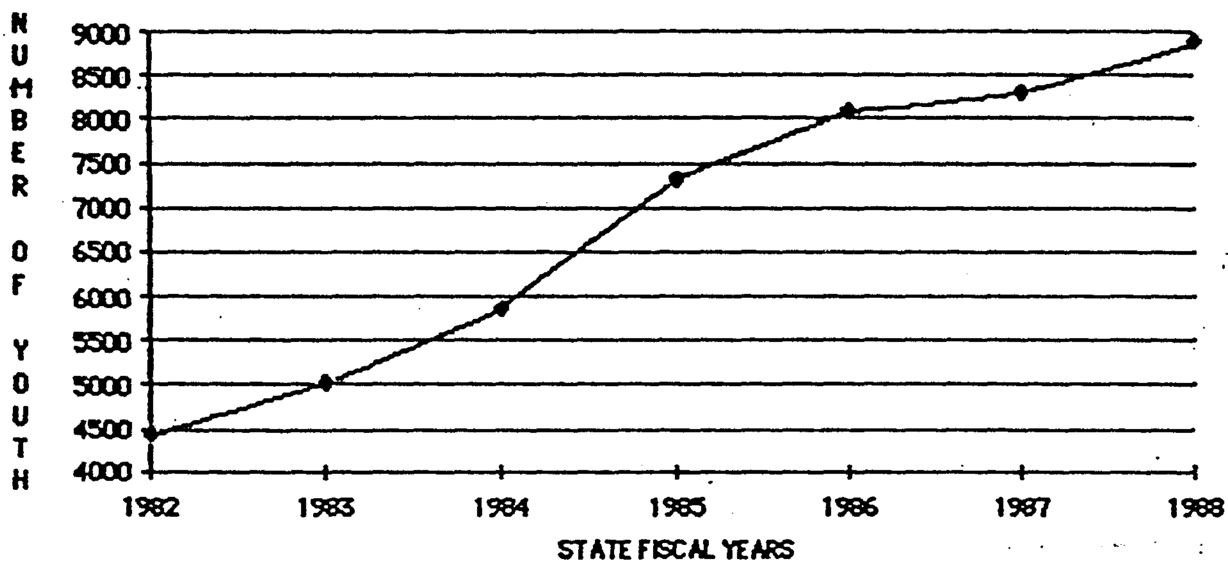
It appears that the current level of foster care expenditures will exceed the present budget by approximately $720,000. In the short-run, the department will need to use its proposed budget modifications to cover this shortfall. Although the department is reluctant to vacate the initiatives addressed in the modifications, such as in-home family-based services pilot projects, getting a handle on the growth of foster care costs is indeed the priority issue. The success of this agency is viewed by many legislators as our ability to live within the foster care budget.

<u>Out-of State Treatment Placements</u>

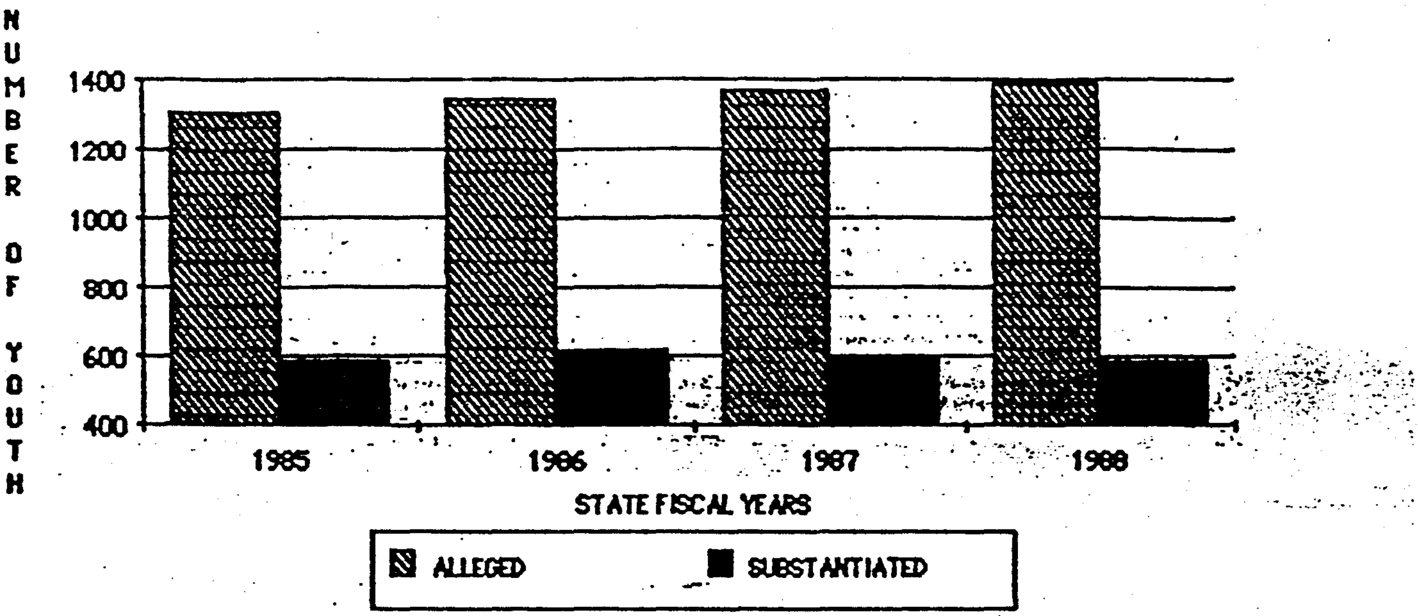
Of late, some attention has been given to the department's use of out of-state facilities for residential treatment. A recent study by the National Mental Health Association cast a dubious eye on the number of out-of-state placements. Attached is a pie chart that depicts the relationship between in-state and out-of-state placements. It is a priority to this department to place kids in-state when possible or appropriate. Last year the department, in conjunction with OPI, SRS and DOI set up a interagency committee that is responsible for approving all out-of-state placements.

Roughly 25% of the placements out-of-state were at Home on the Range in North Dakota and Excelsior in Spokane. These two facilities are, in most cases, closer to home for those kids involved. The majority of the other placements are referred out-of-state because services are not available in Montana. It is a priority to this department, as discussed earlier, to develop community-based alternatives so that we can begin serving and treating families in or near their communities.

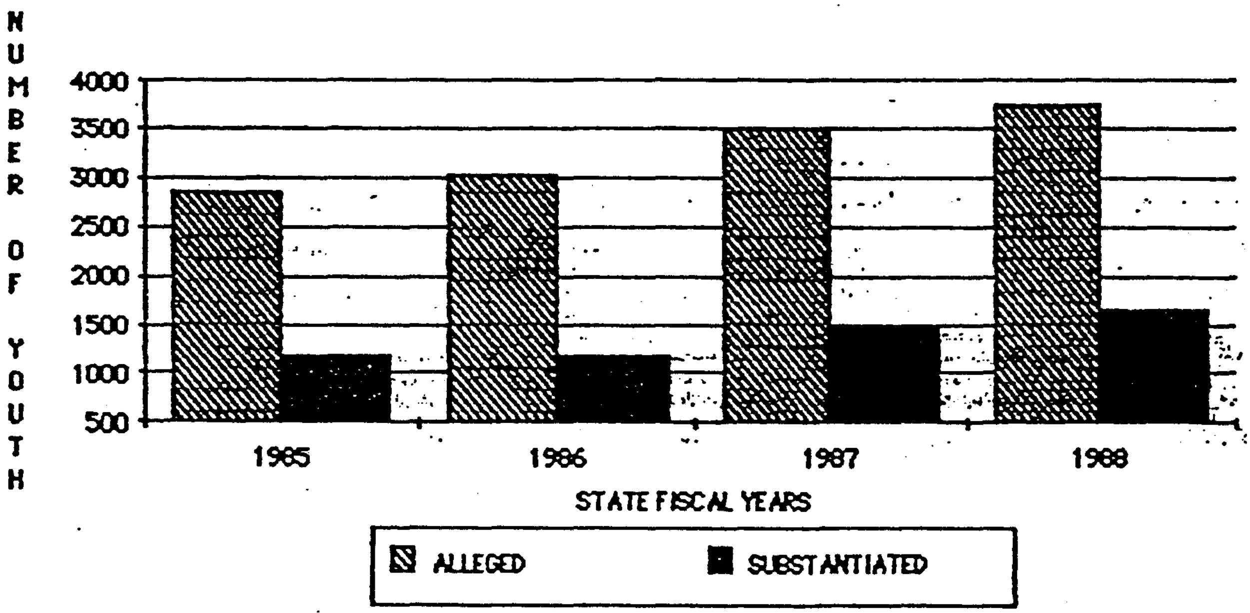
CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS



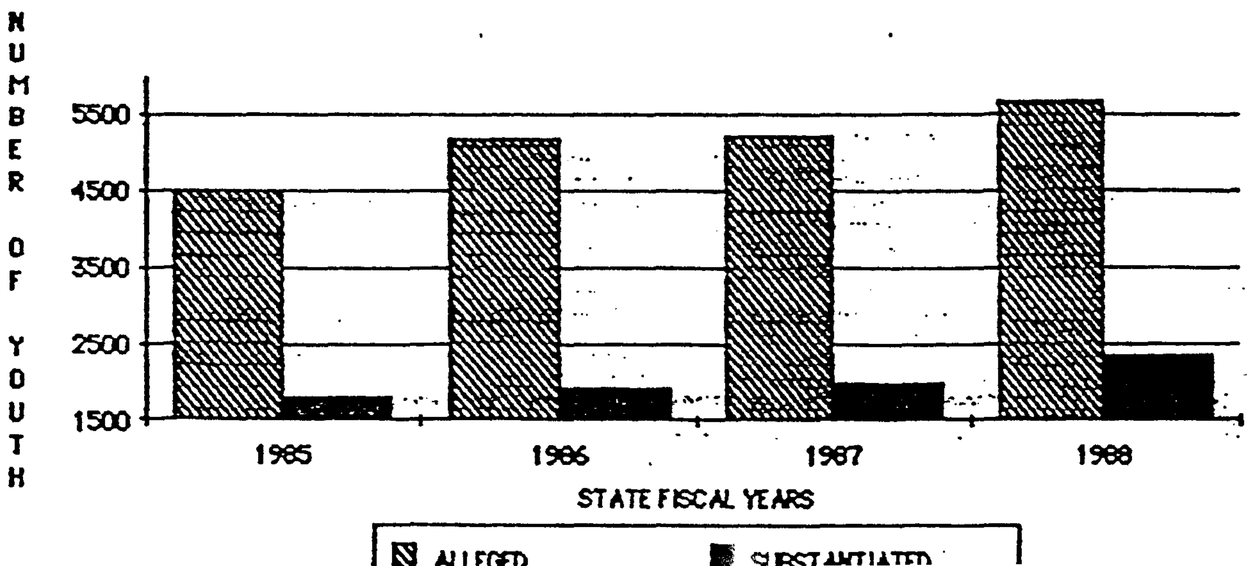
SEXUAL ABUSE



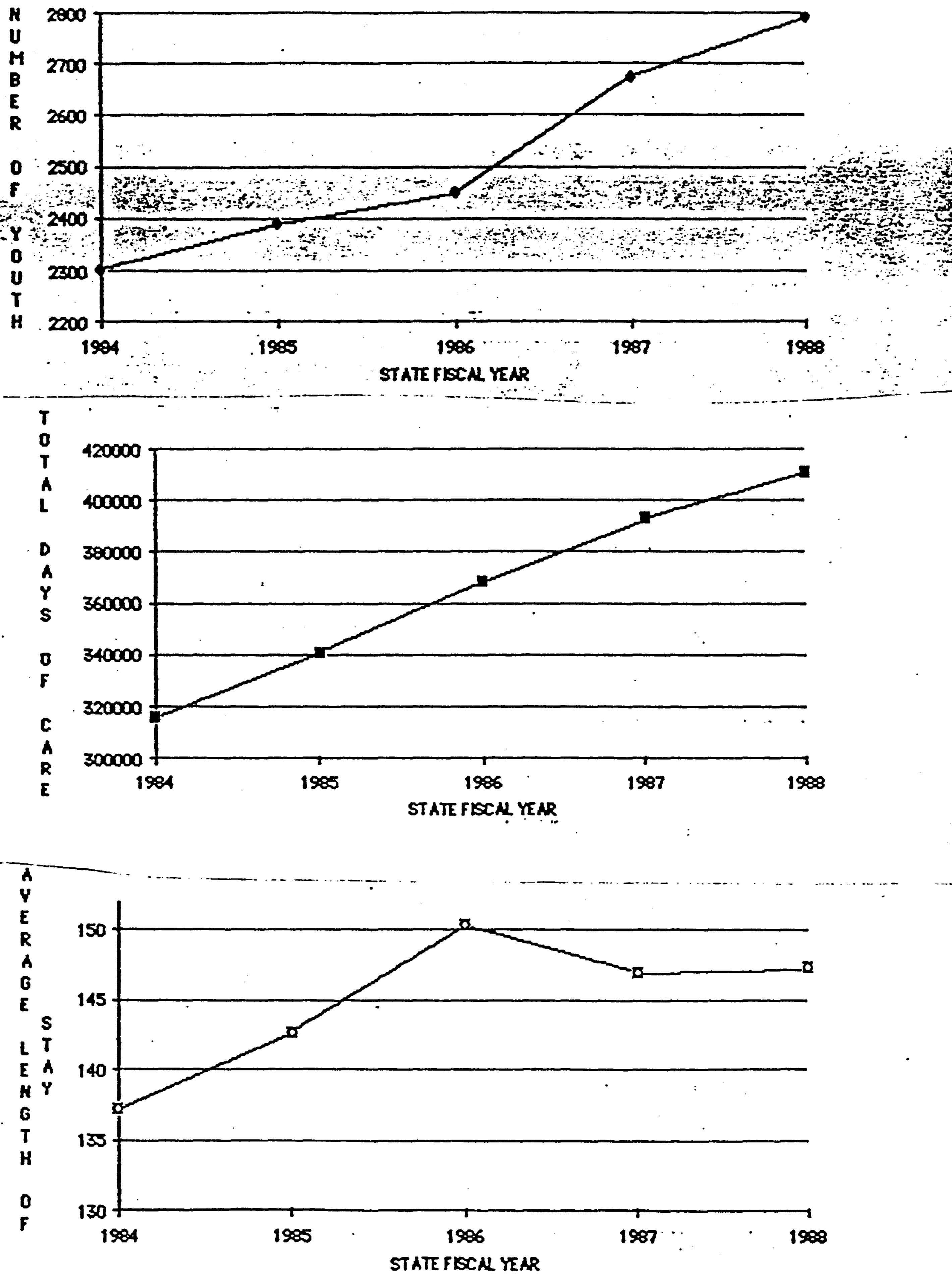
PHYSICAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE



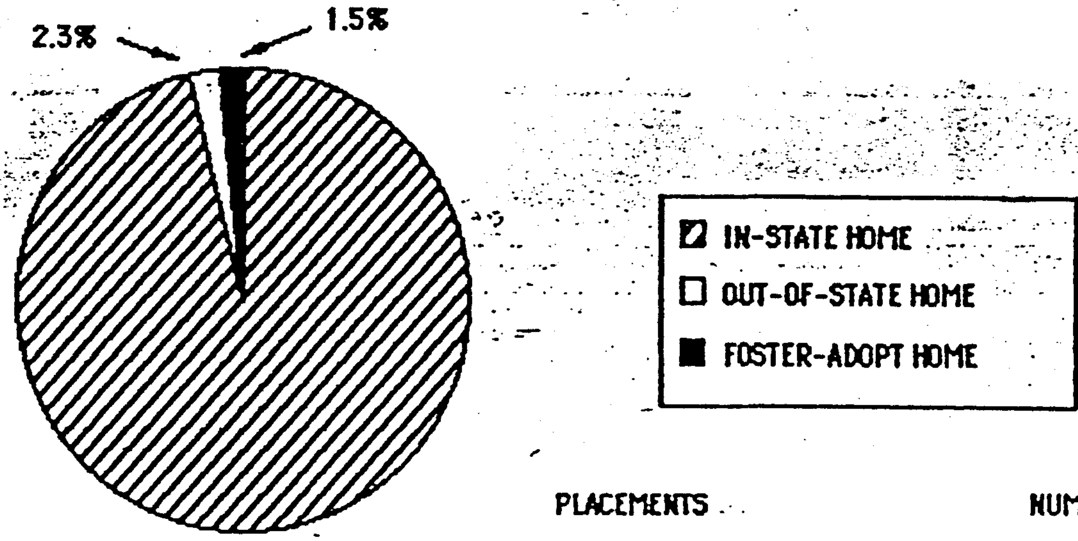
NEGLECT



OUT-OF-HOME/FOSTER CARE SFY84-SFY88

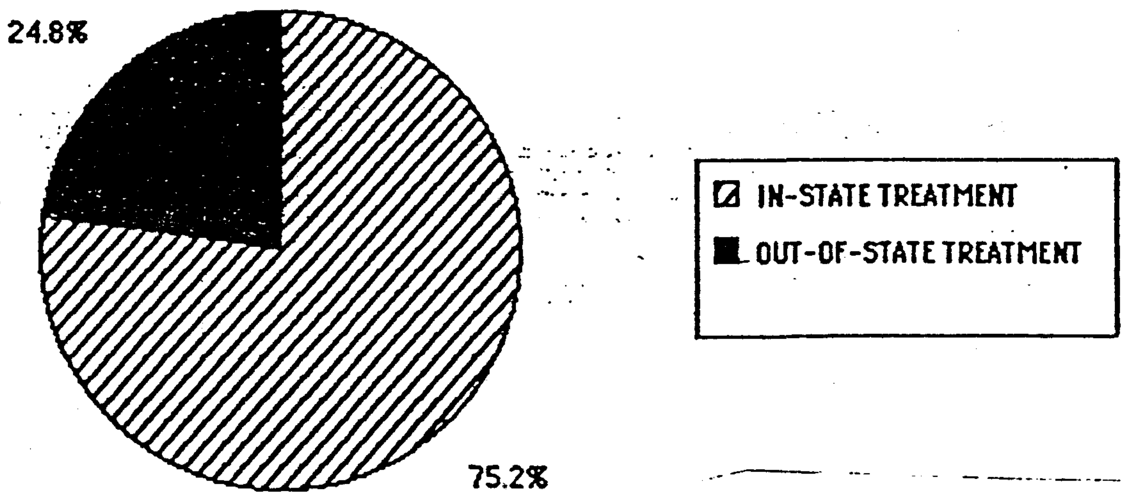


FAMILY FOSTER HOME CARE SFY88



PLACEMENTS	NUMBER
IN-STATE HOME	1912
OUT-OF-STATE HOME	45
FOSTER-ADOPT HOME	29

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT SFY88



PLACEMENTS	NUMBER
IN-STATE TREATMENT	224
OUT-OF-STATE TREATMENT	65

EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2-14-89
HB ______

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES
MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION

PERSONAL SERVICES	1990	1991
Executive FTE	43.5	43.5
LFA Current Level FTE	43.5	43.5
Difference	-0-	-0-
Executive	$1,291,633	$1,294,537
LFA Current Level	1,291,633	1,294,537
Difference	$ -0-	$ -0-

- - - - - - - - - Personal Services Issues - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

LFA current level originally included a vacancy savings rate of 4 percent, while the executive included a rate of 2 percent. Figures shown in the above comparison include a 0 vacancy savings factor.

1. Appropriations Committee Policy

Positions Deleted:
None

Positions Flagged due to Recruiting Problems:
None

	1990	1991
Vacancy Savings Added:		
Executive	$25,830	$25,888
LFA Current Level	$51,530	$51,644

1. Committee Issues/Committee Action

LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-74

Executive Budget Reference: Page 370

OPERATING EXPENSES	1990	1991
Executive	$672,062	$603,427
LFA Current Level	694,507	638,636
Difference	$(22,445)	$(35,209)

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1. The difference between the executive budget and the LFA current level analysis is due to the net effect of four factors:

a) LFA current level adds $30,000 to contracted services each year. In fiscal 1988, the Management Services Division transferred this amount to the Community Services Division to hire 1.63 FTE secretarial staff. In the 1991 biennium, the department has requested 3.90 FTE which is the annualized equivalent of the original 1.63 FTE. The full cost for the additional 3.90 is $59,000 per year. Under the LFA current level, the positions have been deleted in the Community Services Division and the original transfer amount reinstated in this division;

b) the executive has added $42,237 in fiscal 1990 and $25,237 in fiscal 1991 to allow the department to separate it's foster care data base from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services' data base;

c) the executive has deleted $31,003 in one-time costs which were included in the original agency request and are included in the LFA current level;

d) LFA current level includes $4,001 more training expenses than is included in the executive budget. The executive maintains training at the fiscal 1988 level.

2. Committee Issues

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Committee Action

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LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-75

Executive Budget Reference: Page 370

EQUIPMENT	1990	1991
Executive	$9,236	$8,618
LFA Current Level	9,236	8,618
Difference	$ -0-	$ -0-

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1. Both the LFA current level and the executive fund replacement office and personal computer equipment at the agency requested level.

2. Committee Issues

Committee Action

LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-75

Executive Budget Reference: Page 370

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2-14-89
HB

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
ADMINISTRATION

Community Services Division Administration is composed of all regional field staff, social workers, and family resource specialists; federal Work Incentive (WIN) social workers; administration of the Children's Trust; the Aftercare Program; and the Youth Evaluation Program at Great Falls.

PERSONAL SERVICES	1990	1991
Executive FTE	333.08	331.95
LFA Current Level FTE	332.55	332.55
Difference	.53	(.60)
Executive	$8,269,961	$8,260,687
LFA Current Level	7,980,881	7,998,248
Difference	$ 289,080	$ 262,439

- - - - - - - - - Personal Services Issues - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Both the LFA current level and executive figures above include -0- percent vacancy savings.

Vacancy Savings Added:		
Executive	$159,136	$158,946
LFA Current Level	$321,547	$322,243

1. Appropriations Committee Policy

	1990	1991
Positions Deleted:		
Social Worker Supervisor (1.5 FTE)	$ 49,583	$ 49,645
Family Resource Specialist	30,205	30,221
Social Worker (2.0 FTE)	49,005	49,031
Home Attendant (1.22 FTE)	24,106	24,286
Human Services Aide	15,975	15,983
Total 6.72 FTE	$168,874	$169,166

LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-76
Executive Budget Reference: Page 372

LFA current level originally applied a 4 percent vacancy savings factor, while the executive budget applied a 2 percent factor.

2. The difference between the executive budget and LFA current level is due to three factors:

a) LFA current level deletes 3.90 FTE requested secretarial staff totaling $59,046 in fiscal 1990 and $59,098 in fiscal 1991;

b) the executive phases out all Work Incentive (WIN) social workers, with a net reduction of 3.37 FTE in fiscal 1990 and 4.50 in fiscal 1991. As a result, LFA current level includes $79,238 in fiscal 1990 and $106,155 in fiscal 1991 over the executive;

c) the executive funds upgrades of social workers and cottage life attendants awarded by the Personnel Division totaling $311,894 in fiscal 1990 and $312,118 in fiscal 1991. The upgrades were not requested in the budget due to the uncertainty at that time of their final form and effective date, but have taken effect as of January 1, 1989.

3. Committee Issues

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Committee Action

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LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-76
Executive Budget Reference: Page 372

OPERATING EXPENSES	1990	1991
Executive	$1,159,021	$1,170,405
LFA Current Level	973,162	966,542
Difference	$ 185,859	$ 203,863

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1. The difference between the executive budget and LFA current level is primarily due to the executive transferring more expenses from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services to the Department of Family Services for operation of the field offices than was transferred in LFA current level. This difference totals $161,353 each year. The subcommittee has voted to accept the higher level of transfers in the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

In addition, the executive added rent of $20,000 each year for parking fees and $9,850 in fiscal 1991 for increased rent in the Great Falls office not included in current level.

2. Committee Issues

Committee Action

LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-76
Executive Budget Reference: Page 372

EQUIPMENT	1990	1991
Executive	$13,365	$22,365
LFA Current Level	17,562	17,562
Difference	$(4,197)	$ 4,803

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1. LFA current level maintains equipment expenditures in the regional field offices at the fiscal 1988 level of expenditure, which would allow the purchase of the first and fourth items on the equipment priority list: office equipment and a telephone system. The executive includes miscellaneous office equipment, the telephone system, and an automobile. The total difference over the biennium is $606.

2. Committee Issues

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Committee Action

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LFA Current Level Reference: Page D-76
Executive Budget Reference: Page 372

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 2-14-89
HB

WELFARE REFORM MODIFIED FY90

EXECUTIVE MOD PROPOSAL			$1.187,243
WIN PROGRAM (3/4 OF FY90)			(449,698)
FUNDS NEEDED TO MATCH (.7128/.2872 MATCH REQUIREMENT)			737,545

$737,545/.7128 =	$1,034,715	(TOTAL PROGRAM)
LESS FEDERAL MATCH	(737,545)	
STATE MATCH NEEDED	$ 297,170	

STATE MATCH		$ 297,170
LESS ADMIN TAX: (3/4 OF FY90)		
NEW HORIZONS	$ 20,321	
AFDC DAY CARE	81,818	
DISPLACED HOMEMAKER	45,750	
DISLOCATED WORKER	240,000	(387,889)
OVER-MATCH		$ 90,719

WELFARE REFORM MODIFIED FY91

EXECUTIVE MOD PROPOSAL	$2,255,762
WIN PROGRAM	(599,597)
FUNDS NEEDED TO MATCH (.7128/.2872 MATCH REQUIREMENT)	1,656,165

$1,656,165/.7128 =	$2,323,464	(TOTAL PROGRAM)
LESS FEDERAL MATCH	(1,656,165)	
STATE MATCH NEEDED	$ 667,299	

STATE MATCH		$ 667,299
LESS ADMIN TAX:		
NEW HORIZONS	$ 27,095	
AFDC DAY CARE	109,091	
DISPLACED HOMEMAKER	61,000	
DISLOCATED WORKER	275,806	(475,992)
GENERAL FUND MATCH NEEDED		$ 194,307

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 2-14-89
HB

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

1802 11th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601
(406) 442-5209

TO: Representative Dorothy Bradley, Chairman
Members, Human Services Subcommittee

FROM: mp Gordon Morris, Executive Director

RE: Department of Family Services

DATE: February 7, 1989

On behalf of the association, I am writing to request the subcommittee's consideration of the following recommendations.

Most County Commissioners and many welfare directors opposed the creation of the Department of Family Services (DFS). Since the 50th session, Commissioners across the state made a commitment to the youth of Montana by supporting the Department. Yet concerns remain, doubts linger and promises appear to have been broken. I refer you to the "Briefing Paper: State Shared Revenue," (Exhibit 1) subsection entitled "Family Services." In addition, I would refer you to the attached discussion paper (Exhibit 2). These illustrate the origins of concern and suggest a resolution.

Legislation (HB 501) has been prepared and introduced to: repeal section 14, Chapter 609, Laws 1987, to eliminate county contributions to the Department of Family Services. This legislation deserves consideration in light of the situation. As such, if passed, the state general fund would face an additional financial obligation estimated to be approximately $3.6 million for the '91 biennium (Exhibit 3, from the Governor's Budget.)

My purpose in this communication is to request consideration of the issues raised in HB 501: the '87 cap built into HB 325, from the 50th Session, has not been adhered to. Counties are shouldering unforeseen, and unanticipated costs associated with the program. Counties have encountered seemingly arbitrary, unilateral decisions associated with staffing, office supplies and equipment and budget allocations in general. Counties have no supervisory authority of the program, or local DFS staff. We say enough; the state, <u>not</u> local property taxpayers should fund this program, uniformly, equitably and with the interests of the youth in mind.

We request your consideration in supporting this legislation and the necessary funding to make it a reality. Commissioners stand prepared to support this effort.

GM/mrp
Enclosures

MACo

counties of:

TABLE I

(Governor's Executive Budget FY 1990-1991)

	FY 90	FY 91
Community Services	$876,959	$876,959
Foster Care	$996,723	$996,723

It is recommended that this funding be discontinued, and 100% state funding be found for family services.

STATE DISTRICT COURTS

State District Courts for FY '89 are budgeted at $13,211,097.[1] These costs continue to increase uncontrollably, and deficits are being incurred in the face of property tax levies and the district court reimbursement program. It should be noted that the state shared revenue program is working, but needs a financial infusion of state dollars.

Currently, the reimbursement program is funded by 7 percent of the 2% vehicle licensing tax. This is projected at:

TABLE II

(Governor's Executive Budget FY 1990-1991)

	FY 90	FY 91
District Court	$2,509,412	$2,740,781

It is recommended that allowable costs be expanded and revenue appropriations from vehicle taxes amended, with the revenue coming from an alternative state source. This would mean the 7% portion could be returned directly to schools, cities and towns, and counties.

WELFARE

Welfare funding in both "state administered" and "county administered" counties is tied directly to the increased need for public assistance and medical assistance. Public assistance is a statewide concern, and again the principle of the broadest tax base to funding the needs does apply.

[1] Montana County Budget Report, FY 1988-1989, Montana Association of Counties

Exhibit 1

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

1802 11th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601
(406) 442-5209

BRIEFING PAPER
"STATE SHARED REVENUE"

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Local governments in Montana differ in their capacity to raise revenues based upon their economic and political climates, but lack the flexibility to change the state's menu to fit their needs. Counties have different revenue sources available to them, but are often in competition with other governments. At the same time counties are confronted with ever increasing mandated responsibilities for programs without additional money to carry out such programs.

Since 1983 there has been a decline in both federal and state shared revenues, the most significant of which are federal revenue sharing and the state block grant program. As a consequence there has been on increasing reliance on property taxes to fund services.

THE MONTANA EXPERIENCE

The most significant problem that counties face is coping with the way the state has structured the revenue raising abilities. The property tax is impacted by the statutory levy limitations, the I-105 Property Tax Freeze, and the legislative erosion of the tax base.

In the face of these facts counties must continue to provide services funded primarily through property taxes. A major area of concern are those services funded from property taxes, which conventional wisdom suggests funding using the broadest tax base available.

Three areas in particular stand out for inspection. They are: family services, district courts, and welfare.

FAMILY SERVICES

In the 50th Legislative Session the Department of Family Services was created. The new department consolidated administration and funding of services that were previously the counties' responsibilities, except in state supervised counties. State administration, while raising questions of local control, is not the issue here. Instead, counties were minimally responsible for continued funding of Community Services and Foster Care, at "current levels" or "FY '87 levels which ever was less." For the coming biennium this county contribution is estimated to be a cost to

The state administered counties are required to levy 12 mills of property tax revenue. Translated into dollars, this amounts to:

TABLE III
(Governor's Executive Budget FY 1990-1991)

	FY 90	FY 91
Assumed County Property Taxes	$10,170,733	$10,157,199

In addition, the non-state administered counties have anticipated budget expenditures of $10,178,619 in FY 89, with $6,198,654 coming from property taxes.[2]

The threshold for state assumption is 12 mills, yet the threshold for state shared revenue is 13 1/2 mills. This is an obvious discrepancy in intent.

It is recommended that a larger portion of state revenue flow to the administration of welfare in state-administered as well as non-state administered counties.

A CLOSING NOTE

It is the case that state revenue should flow to and fund state services. Property taxes are appropriately reserved for local services. Applying the principle again of the broadest tax source being used to fund services for all Montanans works in each of the situations cited. Property taxpayers should not be asked to continue to fund these services, when the costs can be identified in terms of at-large responsibilities.

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2 Montana County Budget Report, FY 1988-1989, Montana Association of Counties

Exhibit 3

Community Services Program Table 3
Operating Expenses and Funding by Subprogram
FY88 Actual and 1991 Biennium Request

Expenditure/ Funding	FY88 Actual	- - - - - FY90 - - - - Regional Staff	Aftercare Group Services	Aftercare Workers	YEP	Children's Trust Fund	WIN	FY90 Total
FTE	327.02	313.95	7.00	6.00	5.00		1.13	333.08
Personal Services	$7,389,335	$7,667,326	$147,486	$163,631	$106,352	$0	$26,030	$8,110,825
Operating Costs	1,022,259	1,013,699	98,354	11,734	23,416	9,760	458	1,157,421
Equipment	36,105	13,365	0	0	0	0	0	13,365
Total Cost	$8,447,699	$8,694,390	$245.840	$175,365	$129,768	$9,760	$26,488	$9,281,611
General Fund	$5,982.464	$5,809,299	$243,040	$175,365	$129,768	$0	$2,649	$6,360,121
County Funds	554,941	876,959	0	0	0	0	0	876,959
State Special	9,604	0	0	0	0	9,760	0	9,760
Federal Funds	1,900,690	2,008,132	2,800	0	0	0	23,839	2,034,771
Total Funds	$8,447,699	$8,694,390	$245,840	$175,365	$129,768	$9,760	$26,488	$9,281,611

Expenditure/ Funding	FY88 Actual	- - - - - FY91 - - - - Regional Staff	Aftercare Group Services	Aftercare Workers	YEP	Children's Trust Fund	WIN	FY91 Total
FTE	327.02	313.95	7.00	6.00	5.00			331.95
Personal Services	$7,389,335	$7,683,633	$147,560	$163,886	$106,662	$0	$0	$8,101,741
Operating Costs	1,022,259	1,023,834	99,522	11,880	23,808	9,761	0	1,168,805
Equipment	36,105	22,365	0	0	0	0	0	22,365
Total Cost	$8,447,699	$8,729,832	$247,082	$175,766	$130,470	$9,761	$0	$9,292,911
General Fund	$5,982,464	$5,839,635	$247,082	$175,766	$130,470	$0	$0	$6,392,953
County Funds	554,941	876,959	0	0	0	0	0	876,959
State Special	9,604	0	0	0	0	9,761	0	9,761
Federal Funds	1,900,690	2,013,238	0	0	0	0	0	2,013,238
Total Funds	$8,447,699	$8,729,832	$247,082	$175,766	$130,470	$9,761	$0	$9,292,911

Funding for Regional Staff includes general fund, federal funds, and all county administration funds remitted to the state. The amount of federal participation is about 23% of the total cost. County funds are capped at the amount expended on county administrative costs for community services programs in FY87. The department may adjust the county contribution for inflation, but otherwise it is frozen. In FY88, county administration funds were budgeted in both CSP and Management Support.

The Aftercare Program was reorganized into two separate subprograms and transferred to CSP. The 1991 budget request is based on the FY89 total budget for Aftercare with additions to fund 2% vacancy savings instead of 4%, social worker reclassification upgrades, and inflation. Aftercare was a function transferred from the Department of Institutions when DFS was created. The program had 6.00 FTE and contracted for aftercare group home services. The reorganization discontinued the contracts to fund a transition program in Billings (5.50 FTE) and an independent living program in Missoula (1.50 FTE).

Aftercare funding is largely state funds. However, there is a small estate that produces an estimated $2,800 of annual interest and income that is included in the FY90-91 request.

The Youth Evaluation Program was reduced by 1.00 FTE transferred to Mountain View School. The remaining 5.00 FTE and operating authority were transferred to CSP. Most operating costs were held at FY88 actual. Social worker upgrades add about $6,600 to costs each year. Other increases are due to inflation—$732 in FY90 and $1,124 in FY91.

The Children's Trust Fund Program receives money from a state income tax check off, divorce fees collected by district courts and a federal grant. Operating costs fund travel, communications and printing costs of an advisory board. The board is attached to DFS; however, department involvement is limited to administrative support for the board.

The Work Incentive Program (WIN) is a work, job search and education program for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children. The program is being phased out and replaced with a jobs program established by the Family Security Act of 1988 (federal welfare reform). WIN continues through the first quarter of FY90 as the executive pro-

Refugee benefits are federally-funded service contracts for Indo-Chinese refugees. Funds can be used for day care, employment referral and social services. The request is based on the FY89 budgeted level.

As a condition of receipt of federal grant funds, Children's Trust Fund benefits must be used for education and activities to prevent child abuse and neglect. The program may not pay for direct services and benefits for individuals. The funding sources are the same as those for administration of the program—state income tax check off revenue, divorce fees and a federal grant. The level of funding incorporates anticipated revenues and one-half of the trust fund balance that remained at 1988 fiscal year end in each year of the 1991 biennium.

Foster care consumes the most general fund of any benefit in the DFS budget. Table 5 shows the FY88 expenditures, FY89 budget and FY90-19 request by fund. Federal funds pay about 70% of the foster care cost for IV-E eligible children and 100% of the cost of foster care for Indo-Chinese refugees.

Community Services Table 5
Foster Care Funding
FY88 to FY91

Funding	FY88 Actual	FY89 Budget	FY90 Request	FY91 Request
General Fund	$5,176,608	$5,108,433	$5,214,697	$5,214,697
Federal Funds	2,070,606	1,687,920	1,775,453	1,775,453
County Funds	996,732	1,190,520	996,723	996,723
Total	$8,243,946	$7,986,873	$7,986,873	$7,986,873

Source: Department of Family Services, October 24, 1988. FY88 federal funds include a budget amendment of $274,381.

County contributions to foster care benefits were frozen by HB325 passed in the 1987 Legislature. Nonassumed counties pay the lesser of current fiscal year costs or the amount expended for foster care in FY87. The FY90-91 request continues the level of county funds at the actual FY88 amount paid for foster care. The FY89 budgeted county funding is higher than the HB325 ceiling of $1,139,650 estimated by the department.

Child welfare service (CWS) foster care covers children who are not eligible for IV-E or refugee funds. General fund pays 100% of the cost of CWS children in state-assumed counties. In nonassumed counties, county funds pick up 100% of the expenditure until the cost exceeds the amount paid for foster care in FY87 and then general fund picks up the shortfall. General fund pays 30% of the cost of IV-E foster care in state-assumed counties and the shortfall not covered by county funds in nonassumed counties.

Third party reimbursements such as insurance and social security payments offset some of the cost of foster care. In FY88, such reimbursements totaled about $470,000, almost 6% of the foster care benefit expenditure.

Days of foster care by type of service from FY84 to FY88 are shown in Table 6. Total days of care have grown gradually over the last five years. The largest increase between FY87 and FY88 was in foster care family homes. Days of shelter care and group home care were lower in FY88 than in FY87.

Community Services Table 6
Days of Care by Type of Foster Care
FY84 to FY88

Type of Service	FY84	FY85	FY86	FY87	FY88	FY84 to 88 Percent Change
Foster Family Homes	230,044	253,710	264,056	277,279	297,844	29
Shelter Care	15,066	15,452	19,195	21,002	20,047	33
Group Homes	25,369	25,134	27,799	32,319	30,245	19
Instate Treatment	38,331	37,061	47,357	48,177	48,314	26
Out-of-state Treatment	7,090	12,005	10,718	14,461	15,152	114
Total	315,900	343,362	369,125	393,238	411,602	30

Source: Foster care data base.

From FY84 to FY88 the most rapid growth occurred in out-of state placement; however, the department has been able slow such growth in FY88 by finding unique community-based alternatives for difficult to place children. DFS and SRS have agreed to jointly fund placements of dually-diagnosed children (emotionally disturbed and developmentally disabled) in the Developmental Disabilities Program in foster care children who otherwise would have been placed out-of-state at a much higher cost. The current level foster care budget includes the cost of care for such children in the 1991 biennium.

The number of children in out-of-state treatment declined between FY87 and FY88 (see Table 7). The departm
able to mod

Exhibit 2

DFS Problem/Concern Discussion
Robert L. Mullen, Member
DFS State Advisory Council
January 9, 1989

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most county commissioners and many county welfare directors were opposed to the creation of the Department of Family Services (DFS) from the beginning, for a variety of reasons. Since the inception of the new department, with the 1987 legislative session, it has been closely scrutinized, and often criticized, by not only county commissioners and county welfare directors but by also youth court probation officers, district judges, youth service practitioners and some of the department's social workers, although certainly much more discreetly.

The comments that are still aired range from those of total failure (i.e. "kids are still falling through the cracks") to a more overall consensus of success, with the need to fill in the cracks in service that still remain.

In June, at the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) Annual Convention, a resolution (copy enclosed) calling upon the 1989 Legislature to repeal the enabling legislation was defeated in lieu of taking the more pragmatic approach of soliciting comments and, hopefully, providing for positive, suggestive changes through the MACo Health and Human Services Committee. Beginning in September, the committee did request comments from all interested parties in an effort to catalog those concerns that would lead to constructive change.

To date, although the documented comments have been relatively few, I feel they state good criticisms and concerns that can lead to the positive change, in both the short and long-term, that all parties would like to see. Understanding that it is often easier to provide "lip service" than to document the problems, I believe that the concerns are greater than the number of comments received by the committee. Additionally, I feel the process is one that is on-going in nature.

The following remarks are basically my own, and do not state the opinions of the MACo Health and Human Services Committee. The information is a compilation of the remarks received by that committee and shared with me in my capacity as liason with the State Youth Services Advisory Council.

DOCUMENTED CONCERNS

Loss of Local Control

This is perhaps the most central issue of concern to county commissioners. Commissioners, I am proud to say, are very defensive of the public's interest and are genuinely offended when required to fund, or partially fund, programs with little or no input in the policy or decision-making process. These type of relationships are generally viewed as taxation without representation.

Suggestions:

A. Commissioners need to be made to understand that "local control" has not been centralized to Helena, but actually transferred to the regional or local advisory councils, encompassing a five or six county area. Each advisory council is comprised of seven (7) members, two (2) of which are appointed by the Director of DFS based upon recommendations by commissioners within the local regions. Ironically, counties can have a significant impact (I believe more than existed previously) on the delivery of youth services by collectively nominating interested and qualified commissioners to the local councils.

B. The long-term remedy may be to fund the department's need for property tax revenue from another source. It is my understanding that between $2-$3 million would be needed to fund the DFS portion of the Poor Fund in the 43 non-assumed welfare counties. I am uncertain about the required funding in the state-assumed welfare counties. I realize the limitations of the state general fund presently, but perhaps this goal could be accomplished down the road if we collecively work toward solutions now.

Administrative Costs

This particular area is grounds for a great deal of the irritation that comes from county commissioners and county welfare directors. The enabling legislation led all parties to believe that the DFS portion of the Poor Fund would be capped at the FY 86-87 level. This has not been the case.

Many, and perhaps most, feel that counties are being forced to shoulder these irratatingly, inflationary and unforseen costs due to Governor Schwinden's promise of no additional cost (in creating the new department) and the Legislature's reluctance to fully fund the department. Items such as office supplies and capital equipment (i.e. office machines, desks, etc.) have reluctantly remained the responsibility of counties as the DFS has refused to accept the increased financial obligation.

Interestingly, even though the county welfare directors have no supervisory authority over the local DFS staff, they are expected to present the DFS portion of the budget to the county commissioners for approval. For obvious reasons this should not be a responsibility of the welfare directors. Certainly the department could find a better budgeting alternative than using someone who has no vested interest or advocacy role in the outcome.

Another related administrative sore point with most counties is the departments insistence upon the counties providing office space, to the FY 86-87 level of staff, rent free. Office space in most counties is at a premium, whether in courthouses or other county facilities.

Suggestions:

A. Remove the DFS funding obligation from the county Poor Fund. Ideally, replace the property tax levy with some other state-wide revenue stream as discussed earlier. This would allow counties to more accurately reflect the true local "poor fund" costs.

B. Cap all administrative expenses subsequent to the FY 86-87 county budgets or, at a minimum, the FY 88-89 budget. DFS needs to advocate to the Legislature the necessary appropriation to adequately fund these expenditures. Clearly, the past Governor's promise should not be balanced on the backs of local government.

C. Remove the necessity for the county welfare directors to be involved in the DFS budget process by, perhaps, requiring the Regional Administrators, or their assigns, to be responsible.

D. I seriously doubt that an appropriation sufficient to adequately reimburse counties for rent of office space is possible. But, perhaps a system could be designed that would allow counties the ability to use rental space as "in-kind consideration" toward meeting federal or state match dollars for foster care. I am not sure if this is possible, but the office space thing will remain a "bone of contention", much as the county assessor's office space has.

Placements

The concerns associated with placements came to the committee primarily from county welfare directors and youth service practitioners, including DFS caseworkers.

Both in-state and out-of-state foster care placements seem to be areas of confusion, both in terms of timeliness of decisions and consistency of placement. Some horror stories have circulated regarding the occassional inability of some Youth Placement Committees to quickly meet and decide the outcome of some cases. In addition, delay in response from regional offices was one of the most often cited criticisms from DFS caseworkers. They indicated that responses were to be received back within three (3) days, but have, at times, taken up to fourteen (14) days. Obviously, in most cases, the committees are dealing with crisis situations that require appropriate, immediate action. To do less could create some potential liability situations.

Many expressed serious reservations about the lack of adequate facilities to deal with the entire spectrum of placement clients, such as older males, younger children, aftercare placements, E.D. youth, etc. They augmented their concern, that not only were there few placement alternatives in the past; but that of late other facilities are drying up, with the closure of an aftercare facility in the northwest corner of the state and the closure of a youth group home in the Miles City area.

In addition, placements are further exacerbated by lack of funding for suitable placements, lack of appropriate placement options, uncooperative or unsuitable parents and poor placement planning.

Suggestions:

A. More clearly defined or streamlined policies and guidelines need to be developed in an effort to be as timely as appropriate and as consistent as possible.

B. Better education of caseworkers regarding treatment options, placement planning and available resources.

C. Enhancement of placement options and community-based services for all types of troubled youth (ie. E.D., foster care, aftercare, etc.).

D. Adequate funding for the necessary number of staff, training and placement options.

Community-Based Services

Again, many of these options were forwarded by Child Protective caseworkers and youth services practitioners.

A primary goal and mission of the DFS is to make placements in the most appropriate setting as close to home as possible, in an effort to keep families together, when possible. Many respondents felt there is a definite need for enhanced or expanded community-based programs. As such, many commented that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on comprehensive family-based services, the short-term intense intervention programs that prevent out of home placements. Earlier intervention and prevention could significantly impact the foster care system and reduce the long-term dependency factor.

Some case workers were concerned about the move toward private care facilities. They feel that although the new options toward private care sound good, the options are extremely expensive and tend to pick and choose their clients based upon their potential for success. A need was presented to develop a source to deal with the severely emotionally disturbed youth that cannot or will not be held in currently available facilities.

Suggestions:

A. Developing or nurturing more community-based services could lead to a substantial long-term savings by using available community resources such as Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug, D.D. Day Care Treatment Programs, etc.

B. Better access to and coordination of existing community-based services.

C. Increased programming in "family-based services" and in-home services. Emphasis on treating dysfunctional families could pay rewards down the road. I believe there is a $700,000 appropriation in the budget request to set up "pilot" in-home service projects in each of the five (5) regions.

D. Improved training of foster care providers to deal with emotionally disturbed youth.

E. A real need exists to fund the early intervention and prevention of child abuse and neglect. Ironically, it is almost impossible to remove funds from existing "reactionary" programs in an effort to develop "pro-active" programs. Historically, these changes are difficult to justify in the short run, but have reaped rewards in the longer-term. Perhaps some nature of private sector involvement in this area could be explored.

Staff

Regarding the staff, considerable comments were received from nearly everyone responding. Many felt that worker morale was low and many good people have left the agency because of burn-out due to overloaded work schedules. Most attributed the problems to the departments vacancy savings and lack of back-up support in the form of policy or technical advice.

Many caseworkers felt they lacked the adequate access to the regional supervisors they needed. And, as a result, felt they many times needed to make decisions at the local level, when they actually had little authority to do so, and feared their decisions would be overruled. Local workers generally felt their suggestions for improvements were ignored and rejected out-of-hand. One worker indicated the clients used to cause job-related stress, but, now, the agency was the responsible party. Some discussed their belief that the regional autonomy, that was promised and intended, is actually being circumvented at the state level.

Suggestions:

A. Workers need more clearly defined policies regarding authority and local decision making. There appears to be a need for a better understanding of what is deemed acceptable at the local level. In fairness to the agency, internal committees have been established that are responsible for developing department policy. Unfortunately, such change takes time. Once clear policies are in place and understood, regional decision making must be backed-up from the state level.

B. Given the present status of the state general fund and future budget restraints, positive reinforcement needs to be done with the present DFS staff in an effort to turn around the poor morale picture and retain the employees that are looking elsewhere (more than likely, they are not the poorer quality workers).

C. The on-line and local staff need improved access to the Regional Administrators.

D. Regional Administrators need assistance with their administrative duties in an effort to allow them the time to be more responsive to the local workers needs. Some work has been done in this area as administrative officers and Community Social Work Supervisors were added in the 4th quarter of last year. The addition of these staff persons should be a tremendous help to the regional administrators. The suggestion remains because on-going improvements in responsiveness is admirable and necessary.

Communications:

This is perhaps the single most important area of concern. Many of the earlier discussed problems are actually a result of poor communications in one way or another, either between the state office and the regional administrators or the regional offices and the local offices. In addition, there has been virtually no communications between the DFS and other human service providers, such as county commissioners and county welfare directors, the individuals that before administered child abuse and neglect on a local level and have the conventional wisdom to be very helpful in filling gaps in service. In many cases, counties are providing services to the same clients and the sharing of information could only enhance the provision of services needed. Obviously, when considering the entire continuum of human service needs, there is little or no room for stand alone programs. Without proper information sharing between agencies, the likelyhood of unfilled gaps becomes greater as each provider avoids the responsibility for some groups of youths in need of services.

This lack of adequate dialog between the department and county government has tended to increase the level of frustration experienced by county commissioners. Given all the problems previously discussed, this lack of frank and honest discussion has only served to increase the mistrust and misunderstandings that exist between the two levels of government. Until feelings of mutual trust are developed, the DFS image will continue to be tarnished.

Suggestions:

A. The DFS should do some immediate fence-mending with county service providers to improve the departments image and rapport with local government.

B. As mentioned previously, channels of communication and support need to be cleaned up, or adequately developed, within the agency.

C. Regional Administrators and Local Advisory Councils need to reach out to and inform, not only other youth service providers, but, the general public as well. A great advocacy constituency exists for providing services to youth in need, the department needs to find a way to utilize it.

The foregoing discussion of concerns and possible solutions is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather a cross section of those problems I am aware of, in an effort to increase your level of awareness and, hopefully, solicit your assistance in rectifying these department shortcomings.

I am in the unique position of being a county commissioner and a representative to a local council and the state advisory council. Over the last eighteen (18) months, I have become a real believer in the purpose of the department, that is, to achieve a more effective and responsive structure to youth services by consolidating the responsibility for youth services under one agency. After working with the system over the past year and one-half I feel that regional "de-centralization" is the correct way to go. A state as large and diverse as Montana has to allow for the uniqueness of needs of the various regions of the state.

From my perspective, I believe the department is certainly salvageable. All of the foregoing discussion has not indicated to me that the department is not achieving it's purpose. But rather, has only reinforced my desire to make the necessary corrections and get on with the business at hand. In short, there appear to be no problems so great that improved policies and communications cannot correct. I realize that change is often slow to come. The local councils are just now in a position, after developing goals and objectives and gathering the necessary data, to begin addressing the regional needs of troubled youths and families. I believe we all need to give the new program time to develop and work.

I definitely do not feel that it would be in the best interest, at this time, to reorganize the department. In many ways, the past year has been spent in developing the regional concept and the internal reorganization necessary with a new department. It has been, in many ways, a most stressful period for all involved. To, again, reshuffle that deck of cards could be quite destructive in the short run, not to mention a complete waste of the past year and one-half. The gaps in service are now becoming obvious, it's time to fill them and move forward.