

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Call to Order: By Chairman Senator H. W. Swede Hammond, on January 6, 1989, at 1:00 pm in Room 402 of the State Capitol

ROLL CALL

Members Present: All members were present

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Dave Cogley, Julie Harmala

Announcements/Discussion: Senator Hammond opened the first meeting of the Education Committee at 1 pm. He introduced the staff and welcomed all visitors. He hoped that the seating arrangement pleased everyone and that it would promote harmony in our differences.

Consideration of Senate Bill 20 - SENATOR BOB WILLIAMS, District 15, sponsor of the bill, presented the bill to the committee. He stated that this bill would not be new to the members of the committee. He began by saying that he wants to reduce the number of "pupil-instruction-related" or PIR days from seven to five. He mentioned that in the title of the bill, the word conducted should be amended out to be funded.

The total bill is only 24 lines long and the only change in the existing code is to strike 7 and insert 5 on line 17. This action would mean an approximate savings of \$3 million a year for the state of Montana. It would mean the state funding 2 less days than we are right now, if the 7 days are requested by the individual districts.

Senator Williams pointed out that the facts are the same even though the figures he is using are based on the 1987 revenue information and the percent of the general fund dollar information. New current figures are not necessary because it is all relative. He pointed out that today the figures would be higher. He used the

fiscal note of 1987, which indicated that by reducing the two PIR days, the state in 1989 would be saving \$3,018,550 in foundation program expenditures.

He said that because the foundation program only provides about 63% of the average dollar that is used, we would have to add another 37% of that to get the full taxpayers expense for that one day of public-instruction-related acitivity.

Exhibit #1 - A pie, showing education taking 36% of the general fund dollar. It was projected that in 1988 education would take 42.9% of our general fund dollar. While the education piece is becoming bigger, Senator Williams noted concern about where we were going to get the money. With institutions getting 16% and SRS receiving 25.5% of the anticipated revenue in 1989, we must note that every time one piece of the pie gets bigger all other pieces have to get smaller.

Senator Williams related the pie to the county of Judith Basin, one of the counties he represents. In 1986, the Judith Basin school system took 63% of the general fund dollar and we would have to pick up the other 37% of the funding for the schools. The total revenue collected from property taxes for X number of dollars showed the county receiving 31%, the schools 63%, the city 3%, the state 2%, and the fire district 1%. The county's funds include the roads, the poor, the bridge, the weeds, the ambulance, the airport, district court, the library, senior citizens, the extension agency, soil conservation, predatory control, and the museum.

Senator Williams expressed concern over lines 11 and 12 in the bill. He questioned what kind of instruction the teachers were receiving on their PIR days. Using three poorly written letters he had received, he emphasized his point.

Exhibit #2 - A letter from a teacher in Great Falls asking Senator Williams to "veto" his bill.

Exhibit #3 - A letter from the Montana Education Association PAC, informing Senator Williams, they were endorsing his opponent.

Exhibit #4 - A letter from a MEA representative, asking Senator Williams to reconsider his bill.

He added that he felt that most of teachers in this state are good and excellent.

Senator Williams used North Dakota as an example by pointing out that Great Falls would lose 17 PI and PIR days of school funding if it was in North Dakota. North Dakota also pays about \$1200 less per student than Montana. North Dakota is first in the nation in the SAT scores and they also had 94.8% of their students graduating from high school.

Senator Williams concluded his statements by reminding the committee, that in 1986 we stole 60 million dollars from the education trust fund and in 1987 we took another 35 million. Rather than taking money out of the highway funds to cut expenses and laying off several men, he feels that cutting 2 PIR days would be a way to save without cutting too deeply.

Proponents: JULIE HACKER, from the Missoula County Freeholders Association supports this bill, because as a taxpayer, she feels this would be a way to save money.

DENNIS BURR, from the Montana Taxpayers Association supporting amending the bill so that all school districts are required to use the same number of PIR days. Some school districts do not use all 7 days therefore causing some inequities in school funding. He also proposed to make the number of PIR days standard.

Opponents: CLAUDETTE MORTON, Executive Secretary for the Board of Public Instruction, supported an amendment to to keep the 7 PIR days. She stated that teachers should have the necessary time to receive adequate educational and professional development training.

JACK COPPS, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, said by not having 7 PIR days this sets the stage for teachers to be absent from these PIR meetings and decreases the importance of Parent Teacher Conferences. These days, he feels are a critical part of the school calendar for the professional development of our teachers.

ERIC FEAVER, President of the MEA, stated that PIR days are essential to the educational development of our teachers. He suggested that the foundation program be remedied and all schools should be required to use all 7 PIR days.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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TERRY MINOW, of the Montana Federation of Teachers opposed this bill and expressed support of 7 PIR days.

JESS LONG, of the School Administrators of Montana spoke in defense of 7 PIR days. National studies show our nation is at risk, therefore our teachers need more opportunities for such development.

Questions: Senator Pinsoneault asked how 21 PIR days could be used effectively. Eric Feaver of the MEA stated that if we were to rely only on what we learned in college for the next 25 to 30 years of our career we would be a dismal failure in what we are trying to do with our children in the classroom.

Senator Williams concluded by stating that 2.5 million dollars could be saved per day if the number of PIR days were reduced from 7 to 5. He feels that if we keep 7 PIR it should be mandated and the schools be held accountable for them.

Chairman Senator Hammond closed by thanking everyone who attended the hearing and at Senator Williams request, the committee took no action on the bill until after the arguments to the Supreme Court on the new school funding lawsuit were heard.

Adjournment At: 2:20 pm


SENATOR H. W. HAMMOND, CHAIRMAN

HH:jh

ROLL CALL

EDUCATION

COMMITTEE

51st LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1989

Date 1-6-89

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
<u>Chairman Swede Hammond</u>	✓		
<u>Vice Chairman Dennis Nathe</u>	✓		
<u>Senator Chet Blaylock</u>	✓		
<u>Senator Bob Brown</u>	✓		
<u>Senator Dick Pinsoneault</u>	✓		
<u>Senator William Farrell</u>	✓		
<u>Senator Pat Regan</u>	✓		
<u>Senator John Anderson Jr.</u>	✓		
<u>Senator Joe Mazurek</u>	✓		

Each day attach to minutes.

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS

FISCAL YEAR 1988

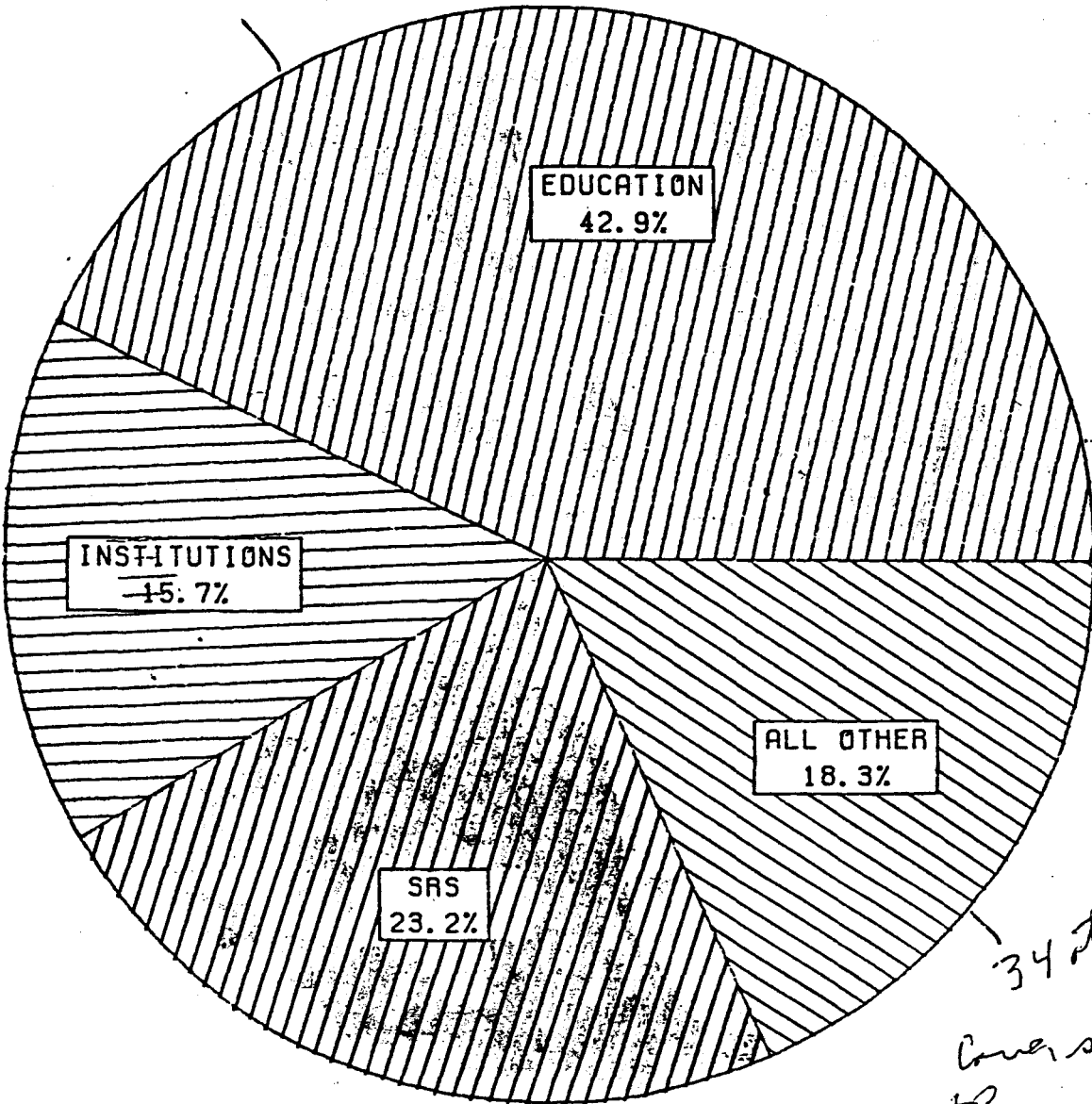
SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 1

DATE 1-6-88

FILE NO. SB 20

*FY 86
39%*



*FY mpts
16.2%
in 89*

*34 other areas
cover some of
these*

*FY 86
16.1%*

March 16, 1989

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 2

DATE 1-6-89

BILL NO. SB 20

Honorable B. Williams,
Senate,
Helen, Mt. 59620


Dear Rep. Williams,

I am writing as an elementary
teacher in opposing SB 38.

This bill will have a negative
effect upon our funding in Great Falls.

It also goes against what Nat'l
organizations are promoting in
Education: length of school year.

I would appreciate your
voting this bill. Thank you.


Lynnwood School

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. _____

DATE _____

BILL NO. _____

August 29, 1988¹⁴³

Bob Williams
Box 338
Hobson, MT 59452

Dear Mr. Williams:

This letter is to inform you that MEA PAC has elected to endorse your opponent in the November general election.

A MEA PAC endorsement is based on a number of factors which include previous voting record and sponsorship of legislation favorable to public education.

Thank you for participating in our MEA PAC interview process. If you are ever again a candidate for the senate we hope we can sit down again and discuss issues.

There have been those who were elected without our endorsement who have become staunch friends of public education, and we have been privileged to support them in subsequent elections.

Sincerely,

MEA PAC Trustee, Region 3

Montana Education Association
GOVERNANCE REGION III

SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 4
DATE 1-6-89
BILL NO. SB 20

Jima A. Severson
Chairperson
Star Route 36, Box 61
Havre, Montana 59501
Telephone 265-6317

Judy Byrne
Vice Chairperson
22 Sundance Drive ⁵⁹⁴⁵⁷
Lewistown, Montana ⁵⁹⁰⁴⁷
Telephone 538-8838

SB 38

January 12, 1987

Senator Bob Williams
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Bob:

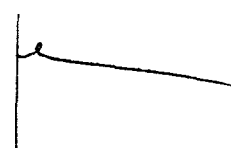
From reading the papers, I know that you have begun this legislative session with both feet in the water! I'm sure things are very busy for you right now.

I have two purposes for writing. First, I'd like you to know that I will be serving as your legislative contact for the MEA. Shortly, you will be receiving our revised legislative program for this session. I urge you to read it carefully, as those will be the priorities we have for educational issues.

Second, I would again like you to reconsider your position on limiting PI days to 180 and PIR days to 5. As I have discussed with you in the past, I feel these bills will be detrimental to excellence in education in Montana. Rather than seeking avenues for cutting the budget, please study areas in which we can enhance our revenues.

Because I will be needing to contact you on a regular basis, I would like to request your phone number in Helena. I prefer talking to you rather than leaving a message at Capital Station.

Sincerely,


22 Sundance

8-8838

"People



Who Care"

