

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 53rd LEGISLATURE - SPECIAL SESSION

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & AGING

Call to Order: By **REP. WILLIAM BOHARSKI, CHAIRMAN**, on December 8, 1993, at 1:20 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Bill Boharski, Chairman (R)
Rep. Bruce Simon, Vice Chairman (R)
Rep. Stella Jean Hansen, Vice Chairman (D)
Rep. Beverly Barnhart (D)
Rep. Ellen Bergman (R)
Rep. John Bohlinger (R)
Rep. Tim Dowell (D)
Rep. Duane Grimes (R)
Rep. Brad Molnar (R)
Rep. Sheila Rice (D)
Rep. Angela Russell (D)
Rep. Liz Smith (R)
Rep. Carolyn Squires (D)

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: Rep. Tom Nelson
Rep. Tim Sayles
Rep. Bill Strizich

Staff Present: David Niss, Legislative Council
Alberta Strachan, Committee Secretary

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing: HJR 5

TESTIMONY ON HJR 5

REP. BOHLINGER said that HJR 5 came about as a result of a 1986 State of Michigan pilot project that placed developmentally disabled children or people in homes to aid families with dependent children. This experiment was funded with a \$200,000 grant and has been identified as Living In Families Program and goes by the acronym of LIFE. The program enables public assistant recipients to become foster parents for developmentally disabled children or adults. Life provides an alternative for

residential treatment for children with special needs. In Montana these people are housed at Eastmont or Boulder at a cost somewhere between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per year per person. But a developmentally disabled child is moved from an institution to a home. The child reaps the benefits of living in a family setting with other children of normal intelligence. They continue to receive individual counselling, support and supervision. The process of matching children with prospective foster families involves a mutual decision. Each child is assigned a case worker who will monitor the level of care and the progress is occurring in the developmentally disabled child's life. In Michigan, the LIFE Program pays foster parents an annual salary of \$22,000 per year plus medical benefits. This income removes people from welfare and gives them the opportunity to become a taxpayer, a home owner and a person who can plan for the education of their children. The children in this program participate in a unique opportunity to maximize their potential through life with a normal family. The LIFE Program breaks the cycle of welfare dependency for the adult, and de-institutionalizes the disabled child. It is cost efficient for the taxpayer. This resolution directs the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services to conduct a study of Michigan Living and Family Environmental Program in order to determine if a similar program in Montana would be feasible and in the best interest of both populations. public assistance.

PROPOSERS:

Mike Hanshaw, Administrator, Developmental Disabilities Division, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, said that his Department contracted private, non-profit corporations in over 35 communities across the State to provide community based services for people with developmental disabilities. His department serves approximately 3,000 people and they are interested in the concept in the Michigan pilot project and would like to complete a feasibility study for Montana. In Montana there are a number of former AFDC recipients currently being paid to be foster parents for children with disabilities. In just two regions in the state there were eight children being served in this manner. One of the problems the department faces is the high turnover rate and the fact that people come in without much training to do the work required. The State needs a way to link up with employment training programs for people presently on public assistance in order to offer some of them the option to look for employment in developmental disabilities services. There would be more jobs available for AFDC recipients and some of the people interested would have the skills that entry level employees don't have.

Joe Roberts, representing the private non-profit corporations that contract with the State to provide residential services and job services for developmentally disabled people in the state, he commended **REP. BOHLINGER** for raising some interesting and intriguing questions. He discussed integration of services in

Montana and how they could possibly provide a benefit. This is the appropriate way to go rather than rushing in with legislation. There is a highly developed community based system in Montana, perhaps more developed than in some of the other states. Whatever is developed should be a Montana system.

Brode Mall, Lake County Mission Mountain Enterprises, a community based program that provides services to 61 adult developmentally disabled persons, commended this idea. Lake County provides outreach services to nearly 23 people with placement opportunities, whether it is apartments or foster care. He said that AFDC parents and people with developmental disabilities would be a good match and a good opportunity for learning skills the network offers. The use of the job service as a coordinated effort for training should be considered.

Rick Thompson, Director, Highline Home Programs, Inc., is a licensed foster parent. Ten years ago a support system for families classified as specialized family care was dealing with children with intense needs. The providers decided to try to support families to keep children in their own homes with their own families. **Mr. Thompson** wanted to go on record in saying that there is a need to look at the program.

OPPONENTS:

None.

QUESTIONS BY COMMITTEE:

REP. SQUIRES stated that low salaries would increase turnover. She wondered if this would be a consideration in the new program and whether there would be intense training in dealing with these individuals.

Mr. Hanshew said that the average entry level wage for the system was \$6 per hour. Part of the problem is getting individuals to spend the time training. It is not a simple matter to care for someone but there are things you need to know, i.e., CPR, how to cope with a person with disabilities. That is part of the service. Some type of transitional employment or on-the-job training would be needed. That would be a benefit the employer or the person with disabilities. There are opportunities for advancement. There are approximately 2,000 people in Montana in need of this type of service.

REP. SQUIRES said, in discussing there were dislocated workers, that she was interested in reviewing some type of grant that might be available through the Department of Labor. Privatization results in more cost.

Mr. Hanshew said that this is not a cost saver. Privatization of the institutional population is not much of an issue. The education of people about the option of employment is encouraged.

The jobs are there but the recruitment of people to work in these situations is difficult to do. If someone is looking for work, here is someplace to work. In terms of resources to provide the training, his Department has the staff to provide the technical assistance and training to corporations.

REP. BERGMAN questioned the feasibility of the project.

Mr. Hanshew said that, considering the state's dire financial straits, before the program is implemented, the Department of SRS must study the present system for delivering care to see if the mechanism exists to address this problem. After a study has been evaluated, a program might be established that is meaningful.

REP. BERGMAN asked how many jobs programs does the Department of SRS handles now.

Linda Currie, Self Sufficiency Team, Family Assistance Division, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, stated that there is a Jobs Program and the Food Stamp and Training Program. The Jobs Programs covers 30 counties across the state; the Food Stamp and Training Program covers 14 counties.

REP. SIMON said that when the resolution was presented, the subject of children was addressed. He asked whether the resolution would be restrictive to only children or if it is broad enough to cover people in the adult population.

REP. BOHLINGER said that the need existed beyond just those needs of children. The problem exists especially with people 18 years and older. The language is inclusive.

REP. SIMON said that there was another population receiving state assistance that has a critical need similar to the developmentally disabled. Those are the people who receive personal care attendance. They are handicapped in other ways other than being developmentally disabled. He asked if the services were being restricted to developmentally disabled people only or if there is the possibility of services to those who receive personal care attendance.

REP. BOHLINGER said that he wanted to make this as inclusive as possible to people disabled in a broad sense.

REP. SIMON said that he understood from testimony there was not a lot of cost savings here for the State. He said that, if AFDC parents provided foster care to this population he thought it would be a helpful service and a cost savings for the State.

Mr. Hanshew stated that this question will be part of the the study: the financial impact of transition; the savings for public benefits; the cost incurred in providing the employment; and how the two match up.

REP. SIMON then asked if there was a potential for cost savings for the State in developing a program.

Mr. Hanshew said that there is a savings. The program should not be oversold; that is part of the problem of institutionalism. Finding trained people and removing these people from the assistance program is the important issue.

REP. SIMON asked if this then was a targeted jobs program.

Mr. Hanshew said that the preparation of people for employment and letting people know there are jobs is important.

REP. SIMON asked if it would be necessary to license these trained people for adult foster care.

Mr. Hanshew said they would if foster care was the model that was being used.

REP. SIMON questioned the wage of \$5 an hour and its effect on the status of AFDC recipients and the benefits they are currently eligible to receive. The trade up would not be very good.

Cheryl Lay, Human Services Officer, Family Assistance Division, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services said that foster care payments made to foster care providers are exempt income from AFDC.

REP. SQUIRES asked if these people were going to receive actual job training and whether the department will coordinate with other agencies such as the Job Service, Displaced Homemakers, etc.

Ms. Lay said they did not provide actual job training for any particular field or any particular career. The classes were offered, it would become part of the employability development plan. The department does not provide the technical training.

REP. MOLNAR asked if these participants would be employees of the State or independent contractors.

Mr. Hanshew said that these people would be employees of private corporations that contract with the State. No direct services could be provided.

REP. SIMON said it appears that the department was already accomplishing these services. He questioned the need for this resolution. If the resolution were not passed, he wondered whether part of this resolution would not be accomplished.

Mr. Hanshew said the department was aware of the Michigan study and initially studied the feasibility of an appropriations bill to fund the program.

REP. BOHLINGER closed, saying that this is a win situation. This would direct SRS on the level of services that would be available to the people concerned.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HJR 5

Motion/Vote: REP. BOHLINGER MOVED DO PASS ON HJR 5. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 2:45 P.M.

William E Boharski

REP. WILLIAM BOHARSKI, Chairman

Alberta Strachan

ALBERTA STRACHAN, Secretary

WB/as

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VISITOR'S REGISTER

Human Services COMMITTEE BILL NO. *HJR 5*
DATE *12-8-93* SPONSOR(S) *John Bohlinger*

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NAME AND ADDRESS	REPRESENTING	BILL	OPPOSE	SUPPORT
MIKE HANSHEW	SRS			✓
Rick Thompson	H.-line Home Programs, Inc			✓
JOE ROBERTS	ADVOCACY for DEV Disabled			✓
Brake Mall	Mission Mtn. Enterprises			✓
Linda Currie	SRS- Family Assist.			
Cheryl Lay	S.R.S.-Family Assist			

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED TESTIMONY WITH SECRETARY. WITNESS STATEMENT FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU CARE TO SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY.