

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
55th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Call to Order:** By Chairman Norm Mills, on March 27, 1997, at  
3:47 P.M., in Room 104.

ROLL CALL

**Members Present:**

Rep. Norm Mills, Chairman (R)  
Rep. Chris Ahner, Vice Chairman (Majority) (R)  
Rep. Ellen Bergman (R)  
Rep. Sylvia Bookout-Reinicke (R)  
Rep. Matt Brainard (R)  
Rep. Bill Carey (D)  
Rep. Matt Denny (R)  
Rep. Charles R. Devaney (R)  
Rep. Jon Ellingson (D)  
Rep. Antoinette R. Hagener (D)  
Rep. Deb Kottel (D)  
Rep. Bob Lawson (R)  
Rep. Daniel W. McGee (R)  
Rep. Wes Prouse (R)  
Rep. Liz Smith (R)  
Rep. Loren L. Soft (R)

**Members Excused:** None

**Members Absent:** Rep. David Ewer, Vice Chairman (Minority) (D)  
Rep. Tim Dowell (D)  
Rep. Sam Kitzenberg (R)  
Rep. Linda McCulloch (D)

**Staff Present:** Bart Campbell, Legislative Services Division  
Debbie Thompson, Committee Secretary

**Committee Business Summary:**

Executive Action: SB 159 - DO CONCUR 12-2  
SB 27 - DO CONCUR 9-8  
SB 280 - TABLE 10-8

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON SB 159

**Motion:** Rep. Brainard moved DO CONCUR SB 159.

**Vote:** The question was called. The motion PASSED 12-2 with  
Reps. Denny and McGee voting no.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON SB 27

**Motion:** Rep. Ahner moved DO CONCUR SB 27.

**Discussion:** {Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Count: 1.7-5.3;  
Comments: Rep. Brainard said the county would incur debt without  
an election.}

**Motion:** Rep. Brainard moved to TABLE.

**Discussion:** Rep. Carey said this was an opportunity to borrow at 4% through the InterCap Finance Program which would benefit the citizens.

**Vote:** The question was called. The motion to Table FAILED 10-8.

**Motion:** Rep. Ahner moved DO CONCUR.

**Discussion:** Rep. Denny remarked that the example of Missoula County paying out big money for a computer system was a major decision and therefore he was against the bill. Rep. Brainard said there was no reason the county couldn't bond, this was another way of getting around I105 without the okay of the people. Rep. Hagener noted that inflation applied to the county and they needed more leeway for decision making.

**Vote:** The question was called. The motion PASSED 9-8.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON SB 280

**Amendments:** {Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Count: 13.2-18.1;  
Comments: Rep. Kottel discussed the good salary of court reporters, plus a monopoly of the type of work they do. She said they receive a royalty plus enjoy a system of salary plus court reporters are treated as independent contractors. She suggested the bill be tabled until the court reporter association and MACO can straighten out the dual system. Rep. Kottel suggested an amendment that the court reporters provide the county transcripts free until it equals 1/2 of their salary. She noted that reporters are paid a salary but they could do extra work while they were being paid. No other county employee has this type of contractual situation and it should be straightened out.}

**Discussion:** Rep. Ellingson commented that court reporters were not compensated for their equipment expenses. It was their responsibility to provide the equipment and tools of their trade in order to serve the public. He said the same issue came up in the 1989 Session and concluded there was advantages and disadvantages but the maximum salary would be \$30,000.

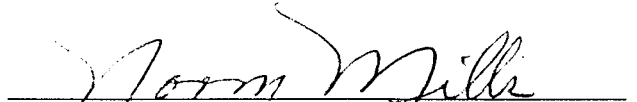
**Motion:** Rep. Kottel moved to TABLE SB 280.

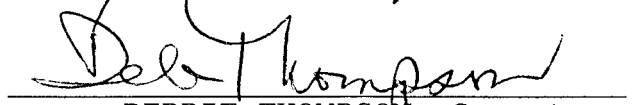
**Discussion:** Rep. Hagener read a letter regarding raises. She commented that this appeared to be an unfunded mandate. She noted that this would be disruptive to raise one salary and not others. Rep. Bookout noted that if there were a county salary freeze it would not be right for court reporters to be earning extra money while working at the county. Rep. Denny said this was an area of government that should be privatized.

**Vote:** The question was called. The motion to TABLE SB 280 PASSED 10-8 on a roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4:36 P.M.

  
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REP. NORM MILLS, Chairman

  
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DEBBIE THOMPSON, Secretary

NM/dt