

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MONTANA STATE SENATE

March 8, 1985

The 18th meeting of the Senate Education and Cultural Resources Committee was called to order by the Chairman, Senator Chet Blaylock, at 1:10 p.m. in Room 402, State Capitol Building.

ROLL CALL: All committee members were present with Senator Pinsoneault arriving at 1:55 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL 209: REPRESENTATIVE EUDAILY, District 60, sponsor of the bill, said he introduced the bill at the request of the Montana School Boards Association. He said he was interested in the bill because current law is unfair to both school districts and the taxpayer. The bill does two things:

- 1) requires only the amount to be raised by the levy on the special election levy ballot;
- 2) provides that no election is required to permit the trustees to use any available funds to finance a general fund budget other than those funds to be raised by an additional levy.

He noted page 4, subsection 2, is the heart of the bill. Representative Eudaily pointed out not all districts use the same procedures. However, if the levy fails, the ability to use the anticipated funds from motor vehicle fees and any surpluses is lost as these amounts are to be included in the voted levy total. The only amount that should be on the ballot is the new money the district needs.

PROPOSERS:

CHIP ERDMAN, Montana School Boards Association, said the voters are confused by the ballot as it now stands with the non-tax revenues and surpluses included. He fears some levies will go down for the third time this year and all the non-tax dollars will be frozen.

DON WALDRON, School Administrators of Montana, said that organizations supports the bill. He noted a personal example: his district needed 28 mills, with the new appraisals the mills dropped to 24, the new money share of that was only 14 mills.

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TERRY MINOW, Montana Federation of Teachers, supported the bill as it simplifies the complicated mill levy procedures.

JOHN DEENEY, Assistant Superintendent, Billings School District, presented his testimony in support of the bill (Exhibit #1).

BILL ANDERSON, Office of Public Instruction, supported the bill as being more accurate for presentation to the voters.

PHIL CAMPBELL, Montana Education Association, supported the bill.

There being no further proponents and no opponents to the bill, the hearing was opened for discussion.

DISCUSSION:

SENATOR SMITH said the amount collected from motor vehicle fee collections is facing a \$10 million shortfall.

REPRESENTATIVE EUDAILY Closed.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL 416: REPRESENTATIVE KELLER, District 83, sponsor of the bill, said the bill simply requires a copy of the audit of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class districts be sent to the Office of Public Instruction.

PROPONENTS:

BILL ANDERSON, Office of Public Instruction, said the bill would allow OPI to be sure audits were being done and to help identify potential problems that OPI could assist the district in solving.

DON WALDRON, School Administrators of Montana, spoke as a "ponent", saying if special education cooperatives were covered by this bill and third class school districts were all audited, SAM would support the bill.

MR. ANDERSON, OPI, said OPI can ask for an audit anytime due to federal fund disbursements.

There being no further proponents and no opponents to the bill, Representative Keller closed.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL 454: REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS, District 13, sponsor of the bill, said the bill would increase the salary of county superintendents by \$2000 if they have a Master of Arts degree or a Masters in education with an endorsement in school administration.

PROPONENTS:

RICHARD TRERISE, Montana Association of County Superintendents, said this is an incentive bill. He said there are 12 county superintendents in the state who have Masters degrees. Although requirements for school administrators have increased over the years, they haven't for county superintendents. This bill encourages a teacher with a Masters to run for County Superintendent and provides an incentive for a County Superintendent to pursue a Masters if he does not hold one. He noted \$2000 was chosen as it conforms to figures on a county basis. They don't want to be paid more than other county officials or create an adversary relationship with any other county official.

CLAUDETTE MORTON, liaison to County Superintendents for the Office of Public Instruction, presented her testimony in support of the bill (Exhibit #2).

CHIP ERDMAN, Montana School Boards Association, said Superintendents serve as judges in hearings, spend a great deal of time advising the districts and dealing with budget matters. The bill will improve the quality of Superintendents and therefore the quality of education in Montana.

JULIE ENMAN, Granite County Superintendent of Schools, noted teachers salaries go up \$2000-\$4000 when they get their Masters degree. She has been a county superintendent for many years and has her Masters. Her salary is \$14,7000 per year. She said she feels the raise is warranted as Superintendents deal with school finance, parents and students, other administrators and hearings.

DON WALDRON, School Administrators of Montana, said a County Superintendent some time ago worked out a Masters degree program. Six of those Superintendents got their Masters and the improvement was quite noticeable. He supported the bill.

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JOHN DEENEY, Assistant Superintendent, Billings School District, said that over 20 years he has worked with five County Superintendents. He said counties need to attract well qualified people and especially those with more expertise.

PHIL CAMPBELL, Montana Education Association, said in smaller areas the County Superintendent is sometimes the only administrator. Hearing requests are increasing and better qualified people will make better decisions.

MARY JEAN MARREN, Lolo School Board member, said they use their County Superintendent a lot and want the most highly qualified person available.

There being no further proponents and no opponents to the bill, the hearing was opened for discussion.

DISCUSSION:

SENATOR McCALLUM said he determined the County Superintendent would be the highest paid county official if they got the \$2000 plus the \$400 they receive over and above their salary.

MR. TRERISE said they wouldn't receive the \$400 if the \$2000 was in effect.

SENATOR BLAYLOCK asked Mr. Trerise if it bothered him that this is a case of the state telling the counties what they have to pay.

MR. TRERISE said in this single instance it doesn't.

SENATOR REGAN said there are great disparities due to salaries being set at such a strange basis, i.e., population and taxable valuations.

MR. TRERISE said both population and taxable valuations have a direct bearing on services required by the other county offices (sheriff, etc.). He said he feels statewide setting of salaries would be more impartial and less personality based.

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS closed by saying the bill is an attempt to increase the efficiency and draw a better qualified Superintendent.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ACTION ON HOUSE BILL 209:

SENATOR REGAN moved House Bill 209 BE CONCURRED IN. The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ON HOUSE BILL 416:

SENATOR MAZUREK questioned the necessity of creating a new law requiring submission of audits to OPI.

MR. ANDERSON, OPI, said it was necessary to have something with teeth in it to get some of the audits.

SENATOR BROWN moved HB 416 BE CONCURRED IN. The motion carried with Senator Regan voting no.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL 454:

SENATOR HAFHEY moved HB 454 BE CONCURRED IN.

SENATOR REGAN suggested the bill be held until they see what happens to HB 75.

SENATOR HAFHEY withdrew his motion.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.

  

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Senator Chet Blaylock, Chairman

jdr



EXHIBIT #1  
MARCH 8, 1985  
SENATE ED. &  
CULT. RESOURCES  
HB 209

MARCH 8, 1985

SENATE EDUCATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
CHAIRMAN BLAYLOCK AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
STATE CAPITAL  
HELENA, MONTANA

DEAR HONORABLE SENATORS:

THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK IN FAVOR OF HOUSE  
BILL #209 WHICH WOULD REQUIRE TRUSTEES TO PLACE ON THE BALLOT  
ONLY THE AMOUNT RAISED BY LEVY.

THE BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPPORT THIS LEGISLATION FOR THE  
FOLLOWING REASONS:

1. THE BALLOT AT A SPECIAL LEVY ELECTION WOULD BE A VERY  
CLOSE ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF MILLS THE TAXPAYER WOULD BE  
TAXED IN THE EVENT THAT THE ISSUE WAS PASSED.
2. MUCH CONFUSION WOULD BE ELIMINATED IN ATTEMPTING TO EXPLAIN  
TO TAXPAYERS THAT THE NUMBER OF MILLS ON THE BALLOT IS GREATER  
THAN THE NUMBER EXPECTED TO BE LEVIED BECAUSE OF THE OTHER INCOME  
AVAILABLE TO THE DISTRICT TO OFFSET THE TAX LEVY.

ON BEHALF OF THE BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, I URGE YOU TO PASS  
HOUSE BILL #209. THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT  
THIS ISSUE.

SINCERELY,

JOHN B. DEENEY  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS  
BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Public Instruction Testimony

in Support of HB454

to the Senate Education & Cultural Resources Committee

For the record my name is Claudette Morton and I am Liaison to County Superintendents for the Office of Public Instruction. I am here today to speak for the Office of Public Instruction in support of HB454.

In Montana education today, the role of the County Superintendent of Schools is a complex administrative one. For the rural schools which have no principal, they must assume that role. This means supervising and evaluating teachers and support staff, providing curriculum and program leadership, advising school boards of trustees with regard to compliance with state and federal laws and regulations and assisting them in setting budgets. These aspects alone would be enough to justify the need for administrative credentials.

However, the role of the County Superintendent of Schools extends far beyond the rural schools which they directly supervise. Every public school district in their county, no matter how large or small, relies on their expertise in administrative areas. In some cases such as revenues, budgets and levies, they are an intermediate authority between the local district and the state. They also keep many vital records for the local districts and the state. Most recently, their load as hearings officer for controversial items, which have not been resolved at the district level, has significantly increased. Because of these job responsibilities it is important that they be on a comparable educational level with the district administrators with whom they work.

HB454 does not require all county superintendents to have administrative credentials, but it does provide incentive and appropriate compensation for those who do. My experience with this position has made it very clear that those educators who have administrative credentials are able to facilitate relationships with district administrators and to handle the difficult administrative role in which they are placed. Those with these qualifications can provide the kind of educational leadership which is so vitally needed at the county level in these complex times. Therefore, the Office of Public Instruction urges your committee to support HB454.



# STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 8,

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MR. PRESIDENT

**EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

We, your committee on.....

**HOUSE BILL**

No. **209**

having had under consideration.....

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color

**(Senator Regan will carry the bill.)**

**REQUIRING TRUSTEES TO PLACE ON LEVY BALLOT ONLY AMOUNT RAISED BY LEVY**

Respectfully report as follows: That.....

**HOUSE BILL**

No. **209**

**BE CONCURRED IN**

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**Senator Chat Blaylock,**

Chairman.

# STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 8,

85

19.....

MR. PRESIDENT

We, your committee on..... **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**.....

having had under consideration..... **HOUSE BILL**..... No. **416**.....

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(Senator Brown will carry the bill.)

**SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTR. TO RECEIVE COPY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AUDITS**

Respectfully report as follows: That..... **HOUSE BILL**..... No. **416**.....

BE CONCURRED IN

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**Senator Chet Blaylock,**

Chairman.