MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
53rd LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: By Rep. H.S. "Sonny" Hanson, Chair, on January 11, 1993, at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:
- Rep. Sonny Hanson, Chair (R)
- Rep. Alvin Ellis, Vice Chair (R)
- Rep. Ray Brandewie (R)
- Rep. Fritz Daily (D)
- Rep. Ervin Davis (D)
- Rep. Ed Dolezal (D)
- Rep. Dan Harrington (D)
- Rep. Jack Herron (R)
- Rep. Bob Gervais (D)
- Rep. Bea McCarthy (D)
- Rep. Scott McCulloch (D)
- Rep. Norm Mills (R)
- Rep. Bill Rehbein (R)
- Rep. Sam Rose (R)
- Rep. Dick Simpkins (R)
- Rep. Wilbur Spring (R)
- Rep. Norm Wallin (R)
- Rep. Diana Wyatt, Vice Chair (D)

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Andrea Merrill, Legislative Council
Susan Lenard, Committee Secretary

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

Committee Business Summary:
- Hearing: HB 48, HB 72, HB 89
- Executive Action: None

HEARING ON HB 89

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. RAY PECK, House District 15, Havre, introduced HB 89 by stating the bill was a request of the Montana School Boards
Association. He explained it would prohibit sport pools and sport tabs on elementary or high school sports events.

Proponents' Testimony:

Bruce Moerer, Montana School Boards Association, provided a copy of the Calcutta statute and noted that elementary and high school sporting events are already removed from Calcutta pools. Mr. Moerer said gambling is inappropriate for high school sporting activities and asked for favorable consideration of the bill.

EXHIBIT A

Jack Copps, Deputy Superintendent for the Office of Public Instruction, remarked HB 89 was desirable because high school interscholastic activities were not created to allow adults to gamble. Mr. Copps stated gambling did not need to be condoned by the Legislature.

Gloria Hermanson, "Don't Gamble With the Future," commented the organization she represents believes gambling in Montana should not be expanded beyond its current depth. She asked for the committee's support of HB 89.

Janet Jessup, Gambling Control Division Administrator, speaking on behalf of the Attorney General, Joe Mazurek, remarked that gambling on school events is not consistent with the goals of education in Montana.

Harley Warner, Montana Association of Churches, requested favorable consideration of HB 89.

Opponents' Testimony:

Mark Staples, Montana Tavern Association, said sport pools and sport tabs results are based on randomness and pure chance. He insisted they cannot influence the outcome of the sporting event. Mr. Staples stated a portion of the money collected for a specific event very often is donated to the respective school departments/organizers of the event. He stressed federal legislation has been passed to prohibit further expansion of any sport betting in Montana. Mr. Staples indicated this type of betting (sport pools and tabs) has been around for forty years.

REP. MENAHAN, House District 67, Anaconda, commented that sport pools and tabs are played by adults, not children. He requested the committee give HB 89 a Do Not Pass.

REP. HARRINGTON, House District 68, Butte, stated with 50/50 betting, half of the money raised goes to the winner and the other half is donated to the athletic department responsible for the event. REP. HARRINGTON noted in many instances, money from this type of betting helps students participate in otherwise cost-prohibitive activities. REP. HARRINGTON continued his testimony by asserting money from these gambling activities helps
to maintain programs no longer supported by taxpayer funds.

REP. PAVLOVICH, House District 70, Butte, said, as a former tavern owner, he liked to support local high school events. He suggested that if 50/50 gambling were affected by HB 89, the students would be the ones to suffer.

REP. BROWN, House District 72, Butte-Silver Bow, asked that he be put on record in strong opposition to HB 89.

REP. GERVAIS, House District 9, Browning, indicated many summer activities in his district would not be in existence without the assistance of the 50/50 program.

REP. SMITH, House District 48, Deer Lodge, recommended the committee consider the economic crisis in Montana. She said the ability for communities to support their schools and extracurricular activities would be greatly jeopardized by the passage of HB 89.

Questions From Committee Members and Responses:

REP. SPRING asked if the bill had anything to do with 50/50 raffles. REP. PECK replied as he read the bill, it did not.

REP. HARRINGTON maintained the ruling would decide 50/50 betting was included in the intent of the bill.

REP. REHBEIN requested Andrea Merrill to interpret if regulation of 50/50 gambling was included in HB 89. Ms. Merrill noted that 50/50's are raffles and indicated they are defined differently than sports pools.

REP. BRANDEWIE asked Mr. Moerer if the intent of the bill was to prevent sports pools from taking place in high schools or in taverns. Mr. Moerer replied HB 89 would prohibit sports pools in either location, and was introduced because MSBA believes it is inappropriate to allow betting on high school activities.

REP. SIMPKINS asked Mr. Moerer if local boards of trustees or the state board of public education presently have the authority to prohibit sports pools on school grounds. Mr. Moerer replied he believed they could be prohibited, but was not certain as to who held the authority to regulate the activity.

REP. DAILY asked when the resolution regarding the bill was passed by MSBA. Mr. Moerer responded it was passed October of 1991 and repassed October in 1992 with the intention of introducing it in this legislative session.

REP. HARRINGTON said he did not understand why Mr. Moerer believed 50/50 gambling was acceptable while sports pools were not. Mr. Moerer replied a 50/50 raffle does not depend upon the outcome of the athletic event, whereas sports pools do.
Closing by Sponsor:

REP. PECK stated HB 89 does not apply to bingo and raffles. Even though sports pools rely on random chance, MSBA believes it is inappropriate to allow gambling on school events.

HEARING ON HB 48

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. DOWELL, House District 5, Kalispell stated HB 48 removes voter turn-out requirements for school bond elections. He explained in order for a school bond to pass, the voter turn-out must be greater than forty percent, with a simple majority voting in favor. With a voter turn-out of less than forty percent, but greater than thirty percent, a sixty percent majority is required to pass the school bond. If the voter turn-out is less than thirty percent, the bond automatically fails.

Proponents’ Testimony:

SEN. VAUGHN, Senate District 1, Libby, stood in favor of HB 48, commenting on a bond issue that failed in Libby because of a low voter turn-out. She said bond issues should be passed or failed by those who vote, not by those individuals who choose to stay at home.

SEN. FORRESTER, Senate District 49, Billings, rose in favor of the bill. He commented HB 48 is long over-due.

Don Waldron, Montana Rural Education Association, asked for favorable consideration of HB 48.

Bruce Moerer, Montana School Board Association, urged the committee’s support of HB 48.

Loran Frazier, School Administrators of Montana, emphasizing the time and money involved in putting school bond issues on the ballot, asked for favorable consideration of HB 48.

Terry Minow, Montana Federation of Teachers, requested the committee’s support of HB 48.

Kathy Schaefer, Self, urged favorable consideration of the bill. She cited recent work in the Clancy School District and the large amount of time, money, and energy required by the district to encourage enough individuals to vote.

Debra Fulton, Chair of the Helena School Board, asked for the committee’s support of HB 48, remarking on the high cost of getting voters out for Helena’s last school bond issue.
Don Latham, Member of the Frenchtown Board of Education, requested the committee to vote favorably on the passage of HB 48.

Phil Campbell, Montana Education Association, requested MEA be put on record in favor of HB 48.

Opponents' Testimony:

REP. SPRING, House District 77, Gallatin County, stood in opposition to HB 48, citing the situation where individuals, who are not long-term or permanent members of the community, are able to pass local school bonds issues.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. DOWELL said percentages do not work in a nation where the majority rules. He emphasized there is no national precedent among states regarding the manner in which school bond elections are run. REP. DOWELL commented present restrictions allow those individuals, who stay at home and decide not to vote, undue weight in the democratic process.

HEARING ON HB 72

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. BIRD, House District 52, Superior, stated the intent of HB 72 was to remove the requirement that a county superintendent of schools be an elected official. REP. BIRD maintained the bill could assist in alleviating some financial difficulties facing education in the state. She indicated HB 72 has a companion bill which would transfer the financial accounting duties of the county superintendent to the school districts, the county treasurers, and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Also indicating the companion bill, REP. BIRD said there should be no need for any additional full-time equivalent positions in the departments to receive duties formerly assigned to the county superintendent’s office. Written statement was presented.

EXHIBIT 1

Proponents' Testimony:

Don Latham, Frenchtown Board of Trustees, questioned the role and function of county superintendents. He suggested most duties of the county superintendent presently revolve around performing the function of information conduit. Mr. Latham stressed HB 72 would allow for a more stream-lined process in the administrative component of education.
Opponents' Testimony:

Larry Stollfuss, Montana Association of County School Superintendents, said MACSS believes HB 72 will cost the state far more when the duties of the county superintendent are transferred to OPI. Written testimony was provided. EXHIBIT 2

Jack Copps, Deputy Superintendent for the Office of Public Instruction, asked OPI to put on record in opposition to HB 72. He argued that serious confusion and further expense could be incurred within the education system if the bill were to pass.

Darryl Omsberg, Glacier County Superintendent of Schools, gave a general overview of a school finance booklet he presented to the committee. EXHIBIT 3

Karl Roosa, Powell County Superintendent of Schools, asked to go on record in opposition to HB 72. Written testimony was provided. EXHIBIT 4

Joyce Decker Wegner, Lake County Superintendent of Schools, presented written testimony from the Lake County Board of Commissioners which summarized its opposition to HB 72 and support for SJR 5. Ms. Decker also provided written testimony from herself noting HB 72 is an unfair attack on needed local services. EXHIBIT 5 and 6

Mary Ann Brown, Gallatin County Superintendent of Schools, presented written testimony regarding levy election responsibilities of the county superintendent and asked for the committee to oppose HB 72. EXHIBIT 7

Rachel Vielleux, Missoula County Superintendent of Schools, offered written testimony commenting on the informational role of county superintendents. EXHIBIT 8

Buzz Christiansen, Yellowstone County Superintendent of Schools, stated the position of county superintendent is important in the hearing process. He noted the superintendent is the first individual responsible in the appeals process in grievance procedures. Mr. Christiansen said he believed the county superintendent is a facilitator, coordinator, and education leader. He urged strong opposition to HB 72.

Gordon Morris, Director of Montana Association of Counties, said HB 72 is an unnecessary piece of legislation. He stated the duties of the superintendent need to be addressed before the position can be eliminated. Mr. Morris, citing Title 7, chapter 3, part 438 of the Constitution, indicated HB 72 covers an option already offered to the voters of Montana.

Rick Bartos, Montana Association of County Superintendents, said the bill is unnecessary and costly. He questioned the absence of a fiscal note for HB 72. He commented there were not substantial
full-time positions in OPI to absorb the responsibilities of county superintendents and urged a Do Not Pass vote on HB 72. Written testimony was provided. EXHIBIT 9

Lynda Brannon, Montana Association of School Business Officials, stating the county superintendent position does save time and money, asked the committee to oppose HB 72.

Loran Frazier, School Administrators of Montana, stood in opposition to the bill.

Gwyn Anderson, Teton County Superintendent of Schools, asked to go on record in opposition to HB 72.

Bruce Moerer, Montana School Boards Association, asked the committee to oppose HB 72.

Caroline Forseth, Teton County District Clerk, said the decision to eliminate the position of county superintendent should be left to the discretion of individual counties. She stressed OPI was not an acceptable substitute.

John Hofer, Chairman of Glacier County School Board, asked the committee to oppose HB 72.

Judy Reddig, County of Dawson, sent in written testimony. EXHIBIT 10

Kathryn Pfister, Musselshell County Superintendent of Schools, sent in written testimony. EXHIBIT 11

Sue Olson, Musselshell Board of County Commissioners, sent in written testimony in opposition to HB 72. EXHIBIT 12

Questions From Committee Members and Responses:

REP. ROSE asked Mr. Latham if there would be qualified and experienced people to run the curriculum in rural districts if the county superintendent's position were to be removed. Mr. Latham responded it is already the responsibility of each individual district.

REP. SIMPKINS requested Larry Stollfuss to comment on the hierarchical structure between the county superintendent, the local board of trustees, and the state board of education. He requested that Mr. Stollfuss explain who is responsible to whom. Mr. Stollfuss responded he could not answer the question fully, except to announce in his belief no one position encompasses the other two.

REP. SPRING asked Larry Stollfuss if there were any counties in Montana with a county superintendent in a less-than full-time position. Mr. Stollfuss responded there were eleven or twelve such counties. He explained in most cases they were held by
individuals who held a combined position of county treasurer/county superintendent.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. BIRD stated HB 72 does not preclude counties from appointing a county superintendent of schools. She commented it would have been helpful to have heard the companion bill during the same hearing. She said HB 72 will help the education process in Montana.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4:11 p.m.

H.S. "SONNY" HANSON, Chair

SUSAN LENARD, Secretary

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23-5-205. En. Sec. 583, Pen. C. 1895; re-en. Sec. 8409, Rev. C. 1907; re-en. Sec. 11152, R.C.M. 1921; Cal. Pen. C. 1907; re-en. Sec. 11152, R.C.M. 1935; Sec. 94-3005, R.C.M. 1947; redes. 94-8-305 by Sec. 29, Ch. 513, L. 1973; R.C.M. 1947, 94-8-305.


23-5-211. En. Sec. 589, Pen. C. 1895; re-en. Sec. 8415, Rev. C. 1907; re-en. Sec. 11158, R.C.M. 1921; re-en. Sec. 11158, R.C.M. 1935; Sec. 94-3011, R.C.M. 1947; redes. 94-8-311 by Sec. 29, Ch. 513, L. 1973; R.C.M. 1947, 94-8-311.

23-5-212 through 23-5-220 reserved.

23-5-221. Definition. As used in this part, “Calcutta pool” means a form of auction pool conducted by an organization authorized by the department. The Calcutta pool must be an auction pool in which:

(1) a person’s wager is equal to his bid;

(2) the proceeds from the pool, minus administrative costs and prizes paid, are contributed to a charitable or nonprofit corporation, association, or cause;

(3) the rules of the pool are publicly posted;

(4) no more than one wager for each competitor is allowed;

(5) at least 50% of the total pool is paid out in prizes;

(6) persons may not bid or wager money on any elementary school or high school sports event; and

(7) the underlying event has more than two entrants.

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 550, L. 1987; amd. Sec. 60, Ch. 642, L. 1989; Sec. 23-5-1101, MCA 1987; redes. 23-5-221 by Code Commissioner, 1989.

23-5-222. Calcutta pools authorized. It is hereby lawful to conduct or participate in a Calcutta pool as defined in 23-5-221.


23-5-223. Penalty. A person who violates a provision of this part is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable pursuant to 23-5-161.
Mr. Chairman, members of the House Education Committee, proponents and opponents, HB 72 would submit to the voters an amendment to the Montana Constitution eliminating the requirement that one form of county government include an elected county superintendent of schools.

Article XI, Section 3, of the Montana Constitution states that the legislature shall provide methods for governing local government units and procedures for incorporating, classifying, merging, consolidating, and dissolving such units, and altering their boundaries. It states that the legislature shall provide such optional or alternative forms of government that each unit of combination of units may adopt, amend, or abandon an optional or alternative form by a majority of those voting on the question. Article XI further states that one optional form of county government includes, but is not limited to, the election of....(and it names all the elected county officials).

Should this issue pass a vote of two-thirds of the legislature, it would be presented to the voters in the 1994 general election. The ballot would simply state: FOR eliminating the requirement that one form of county government include an elected county superintendent of schools, or AGAINST eliminating the requirement that....

I am here because I care about education in Montana. This interest is derived, in part, from the fact that my mom was an elementary teacher, my uncle is a chemistry professor (Ames, Iowa), and my son benefited greatly from the implementation of gifted and talented programs. It mostly comes, however, from the fact that I care about our kids and the quality of education they are promised, and because, as a fourth-generation Montanan, I care deeply about the future of our state and its financial picture.

A good number of years ago I was blessed to served as deputy county treasurer in Park County. My duties included financial accounting for the school districts, and I worked closely with our then Co. Supt. of Schools, Evelyn Rustad, for whom I still have a fine sense of appreciation. I learned a lot from her and her assistant, Adena Newell.

I realize there are a number of county superintendents in the state who do a superb job. I am aware that there are a few counties with rural schools for which supervision needs to be provided, if this bill were to pass through the legislature and if the amendment were approved by the voters of Montana. It has also
become apparent through this process that there may be some counties in which a county superintendent of schools may no longer be necessary.

My conversations concerning this issue include MSBA, SAM, MEA, the Missoula, Yellowstone, and Lake County Superintendents of Schools, OPI, and the treasurers of Mineral and Glacier Counties, and various school board trustees in the state, among others. I have also sought the counsel of a number of senators and representatives who either sit on their respective education committees, or are also interested in education issues.

As a result these contacts, and in conjunction with my campaign promise to streamline government wherever possible, I made a decision to proceed with HB 72 and give this issue the opportunity for a fair hearing.

It appears to be a given during this 1993 legislative session, that the process of government can and does need to move forward to the good of the state wherever possible - that is what the people want. And because Montana is so large and so diverse it is often difficult to propose legislation that meets the needs of everyone affected to their level of satisfaction.

This past Friday afternoon, I picked up my other "education" bill from drafting. This legislation would eliminate the financial accounting duties of the county superintendent of schools and transfer those duties to the superintendent of public instruction, county treasurer, or clerks of the school districts.

It is only fair that all of you are aware of this legislation. My regret is that these bills will not be heard together, and so I do ask the indulgence of the committee, Mr. Chairman - that you will hold executive action until both of these bills have been heard.

In my deliberations with these many Montanans, I have come to believe that the schools are very capable of working directly with the office of public instruction (OPI) with regard to financial accounting duties. I am fairly convinced that we can get along well without this third party pass-through. Granting this ability to your local schools does not affect the issue of local control as some would have you believe (a worthy concern of local governments). It does not appear to pass increased costs on to the counties, but allows the county treasurer and commissioners to remain involved in the process. Thus, HB 72 is a good government bill, and toward that end it is responsible legislation.

I have spoken with school folks who assure me they are capable of properly carrying out these financial accounting duties, and have also been assured that this bill would not add FTEs to the OPI
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PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED TESTIMONY WITH SECRETARY. WITNESS STATEMENT FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU CARE TO SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY.
staff. This legislation is premised on the probability of some kind of unification of school districts in Montana.

Because this committee faces such a tremendous responsibility in its decision-making effort this session, I am asking those of you here who may remain in opposition to HB 72 to put your collective effort into proposing a viable alternative, a workable solution to streamline this area of education in local government. I hope all of you will seriously consider a regional manager concept as part of that process, in lieu of county superintendents of schools.

Many of you are cognizant of another bill which provides for hearings officers other than county superintendents of schools. If all of the legislation I have mentioned during this testimony were to pass out of the legislature, it would appear that only the duty of dealing with curriculum would remain with county superintendents of schools. I am confident that this committee is, however, prepared to address that issue, as well.

* * * * * * * * * *

Closing remarks:
It is my hope that this bill will serve as a catalyst for change in how the financial accounting duties of education are handled at both local and state level. I leave the details to the wisdom of this committee, and thank you for this hearing.
January 11, 1993

House Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
Montana House of Representatives
Helena, Montana

Dear Committee Members,

I write this letter as President of the Montana Association of County School Superintendents in opposition to House Bill 72. I can confidently say that every member of our organization is opposed to this legislation.

H.B. 72 is an ill conceived attempt to reduce school administration in Montana. Will it reduce State expenditures? No. In fact it will cost the State additional dollars as many of the duties will have to be transferred to the Office of Public Instruction. Will it reduce County Expenditures? No. Chances are that there will still be a county person involved in school district business. Will it reduce School Districts expenditures? No. Those duties not taken on by the state will be assumed by the district.

Will it simplify the operation of the education system in Montana? No. The massive changes that this bill would mandate will create chaos for many years.

Does H.B. 72 spell out the transfer of duties? No. It only calls for a vote of the people to determine whether the office of County Superintendent would be maintained. Should it pass, the legislature would then have to change the statutes to transfer or do away with the duties of the County Superintendent. I’ve been told that the bill to do that would be at least 100 pages in length.

Testimony by others will fully describe what we do and why we are an important part of the education system.

Please remember as you listen, “We are elected local officials, responsive to the needs of our taxpayers and that we work very hard to insure that the education of Montana’s children is done effectively, efficiently, in every county in this State.”

Thank you for your consideration of our position on H.B. 72 and again I would ask each and every one of you to vote NO.

Larry Stolfuss
President
Montana Association of County School Superintendents
Chouteau County Superintendent of Schools
Fort Benton, Montana
CHAIRMAN HANSON, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, I AM KARL ROOSA, POWELL COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

LET THE RECORD SHOW THAT I AM OPPOSED TO THIS BILL.

I AM GOING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY AS IT RELATES TO PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. TO UNDERSTAND THIS RESPONSIBILITY YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE THREE DISTINCT LEVELS OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INVOLVED -- STATE, COUNTY, AND SCHOOL DISTRICT. AS YOU KNOW, PUPILS LIVING BEYOND THREE MILES FROM SCHOOL ARE PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION WHICH THE STATE AND COUNTY PAY FOR. THE COUNTY PAYS HALF AND THE STATE PAYS HALF. TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE AMOUNT, A BUS ROUTE WHERE THE FURTHEST PUPIL LIVES 35 MILES FROM SCHOOL, IS PAID $36,000 IF A FULL-SIZE BUS IS USED.

NOW LOOK AT THIS FROM AN AUDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW. WHO MAKES THE CLAIM FOR THE $36,000?--THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. WHO DETERMINES IF THE CLAIM IS VALID?--THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT. WHO PAYS $36,000?--THE COUNTY AND STATE. IF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT IS ELIMINATED THE COUNTY AND STATE TREASURERS WOULD MAKE PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO DISTRICTS. IT THEN WOULD BECOME THE COUNTY TREASURER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO VALIDATE CLAIMS. TO DO THIS, THE COUNTY TREASURER WOULD HAVE TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S BUS ROUTES. SINCE THE TREASURER IS NOT A SCHOOL PERSON, THIS NO DOUBT WOULD TAKE QUITE A LITTLE EXTRA WORK. AT THIS POINT I HESITATE TO QUESTION THE INTEGRITY OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS. HOWEVER, I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT THAT A DISTRICT IN A DESPERATE FINANCIAL CONDITION
COULD VERY EASILY TRY TO FAKE A WHOLE BUS ROUTE, OR FAKE THE NUMBER OF MILES IN AN EXISTING ROUTE. SUCH FABRICATION MIGHT NOT EASILY BE NOTICED BY A PERSON UNFAMILIAR WITH THE SCHOOLS OF THE COUNTY.


TO BROADEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT'S TRANSPORTATION DUTIES, I SHALL LIST THE OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE.

(1) FILE AND FORWARD BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATES TO OPI.
(2) NOTIFY BUS DRIVERS BY LETTER OF CERTIFICATES ABOUT TO EXPIRE.
(3) Distribute blank contracts for individual transportation with instructions.
(4) Distribute prior to the annual transportation meeting, accurate reporting forms for proposed bus routes.
(5) Preside over the county transportation committee meeting.
(6) Conduct mail ballot voting of the county transportation committee on issues which arise in the middle of the year.
(7) Communicate with county transportation committee on county transportation matters.
(8) Convene county transportation committee for controversy
HEARINGS ARISING OUT OF TRANSPORTATION ISSUES.

(9) CALCULATE REVENUES AND FIX LEVIES FOR DISTRICT AND COUNTY TRANSPORTATION BUDGET REQUIREMENTS.

(10) FILE AND FORWARD INDIVIDUAL PUPIL TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS TO OPI

(11) FILE AND FORWARD SCHOOL BUS ROUTE REGISTRATION TO OPI

(12) FILE AND FORWARD HIGHWAY PATROL BUS INSPECTIONS TO OPI

(13) FILE AND FORWARD BUS PUPIL LISTS TO OPI

(14) FILE AND FORWARD CLAIMS FOR BUS AND INDIVIDUAL TRANSPORTATION TO OPI.

(15) VERIFY OPI CALCULATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND BUS RATES.

(16) ORDER THE TREASURER TO PAY CLAIMS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND BUS TRANSPORTATION.

(17) CALCULATE REVENUE AND LEVY FOR BUS DEPRECIATION REQUIREMENTS.

(18) ATTEND WORKSHOPS TO KEEP ABREAST OF LATEST TRANSPORTATION LAWS AND SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TRENDS.

(19) PROMOTE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY.

(20) COMMUNICATE WITH DISTRICTS REGARDING LEGAL BUS OPERATION.

(21) IN MY CASE, BE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION.

(22) IN MY CASE, BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

(23) IN MY CASE, BE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SOUTHWEST MONTANA EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE WHERE OCCASIONALLY SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS ARISE.

(24) IN MY CASE, CONDUCT WORKSHOPS FOR NEW COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS ON PUPIL TRANSPORTATION.
(25) BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER PHONE CALLS ADDRESSING LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS.

(26) ATTEND SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS TO HELP TRUSTEES FIND SOLUTIONS TO TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS.
ATTN: Joyce Wegner
FAX 444-4809

AFTER DISCUSSION WITH FULL BOARD OF LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WE UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSE HB 72. WE INSTEAD CHOOSE TO SUPPORT SJRS WITH STRONG EMPHASIS ON LOOKING AT CONSOLIDATION OF OTHER OFFICES AS WELL.

WE FEEL ALSO THAT THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT POSITION WOULD BE BETTER FUNDED UNDER SCHOOL FUNDING SOURCES AND CONTROL.

Respectfully,
Mike Hutchin
CHAIRMAN
LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PS SORRY FOR HANDWRITTEN MESS BUT
HAD NO SECRETARY AVAILABLE.
PLEASE CALL IF POSSIBLE TO ASSURE RECEIPT OF THIS FAX.

/ Mike
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB72 BEFORE THE EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, JANUARY 11, 1993, 3:00 P.M., ROOM 312-1:

Honorable Chairman Hanson and Members of the Education Committee: I, Joyce Decker Wegner, Lake County Superintendent of Schools in Polson, Montana, vigorously oppose HB72 for the following reasons:

1) HB72 is an unfair, piecemeal attack on needed local services. Later I will address the service county superintendents provide in teacher supervision and work with trustees while my colleagues testify to other services.

2) HB72 attempts simplistic solutions to complex issues of restructuring in both county and school government. The office is a prime facilitating agent for regional discussions and solutions. Elimination of the office could indeed hinder county-wide consensus building so necessary for any restructuring goals.

3) Elimination of the county superintendent saves no money for the state or the schools while lulling the public into believing something substantial is accomplished to cut costs. County superintendents provide the cheapest educational administration that the taxpayers receive.

Needed local services provided by the county superintendent are extensive. Teacher supervision and work with trustees are two vital parts of those duties. While providing constant rural supervision and trustee advice, our role is one of close interaction and cooperation with other districts, regional coops, professional organizations, the Office of Public Instruction, and university schools of education.

Teacher supervision involves instructional assistance,
monthly observations, and formal evaluations as a part of quality staff development. With staff and community input county superintendents plan the PIR days which include staff and curriculum development workshops often taught by the county superintendent. The county superintendent receives all districts' PIR Reports, therefore we often coordinate the sharing of staff development workshops throughout the county. Staff development includes grant writing and management for cooperating rural districts. Supervision also includes curriculum development to meet accreditation standards and provide the best quality education possible in our rural schools. Many county superintendents play pivotal roles on regional curriculum coops. Several county superintendents supervise student teachers providing a needed liaison between schools in the field and university teacher development. Lake County has a specific need for Native American teachers, administrators, and counsellors. Thus our school districts, Salish Kootenai College, and the University of Montana joined forces for an Indian Education Program grant to encourage and provide that training. I represent our superintendents on that board. In summary, county superintendents provide essential needed services in the area of teacher supervision and the office should not be eliminated.

The service county superintendents provide to trustees is also extensive. County superintendents provide crucial budget information for all districts and often help formulate various options for trustees' consideration. We educate trustees and the public on school finance and assist rural trustees at public
information meetings and budget hearings. We offer assistance and advise on policy formation, hiring, legal procedures, tuition, transportation, attendance, and accreditation standards. My office helped trustees reopen a school, researched unification and/or consolidation, formed coops, facilitated inter-district conflict management, chaired meetings and wrote summaries on debt service problems, and advised a district on recall procedure while trying to facilitate healing. County Superintendents have heard appeals finding for and against trustee decisions. My office has organized various inter-agency meetings on topics such as: tuition, P.L.874 applications, attendance duties, and minority teacher recruitment and development. Increasingly the office of county superintendent facilitates between district trustees and other agencies to accomplish regional goals. Thus eliminating the county superintendent's office as a county office does a disservice to local government.

I urge the committee to kill HB72 because its simplistic, piecemeal approach to restructuring local government would unfairly deprive the public of needed local educational services provided by the county superintendent of schools.
Annually in April school districts must conduct their trustee election. This election could be accompanied by a voted levy election. Other elections that may need to be held at this time or other times throughout the school year are bond levy and consolidation elections.

In Gallatin county and many other counties, the school districts must conduct their own elections. In my county I inform each trustee whose term is to be renewed by letter. The county superintendent assists the clerk of the school districts with these elections by supplying information and materials. He/she offers assistance to clerks by providing answers to election questions, providing forms for the election, and holding meetings to inform the clerks of the correct procedure. New clerks don't have any training with regard to elections; even though, they are responsible for the election in their school district. OPI does not have election specialists and refers all questions to the Secretary of State's office. Local control of elections is more understandable than control from a state agency.

Results of the elections are collected by the county superintendent and combined onto lists for public information. This information is requested by the public regularly.

A recent election manual, the Montana School Election Handbook, collaborated efforts between OPI, the Secretary of State's office, school clerks and county superintendents. Of the thirteen people acknowledged for contributions, six of them were county superintendents. They are knowledgeable and are asked to share their expertise.

When trustees resign during the their term, the school district has 60 days to appoint a new member. If this timeline is not met, the county superintendent has the authority to appoint a new member.

Who would accept our election responsibilities? OPI does not have a person to answer questions regarding elections. The Secretary of State's office would have to provide more answers. The County Clerk and Recorder's office would take on extra responsibilities for elections.
January 11, 1993

TO: Members of the House Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

FROM: Rachel A. Vielleux, Missoula County Superintendent of Schools

RE: County Superintendents and Records Retention

The Local Government Services Bureau of the Department of Commerce has published suggested records retention schedules for the office of the county superintendent. The schedule includes permanent records such as school boundary records, pupil census data, teacher certification and trustees' financial summaries as well as records with a limited retention period such as budget work papers, transportation agreements and personnel rosters. Because these are public records, we must have the capability to store and retrieve these documents.

Perhaps the obvious question at this juncture is why don't we store this information on microfilm, why don't we transfer documents via computer and modem. While other entities have entered the much-heralded "Electronic Age", local and state government in Montana are still hovering at the doorway because of I-105 and the size of the state deficit respectively. Should the office of the county superintendent cease to exist, I would expect the state would have to take delivery of countless boxes of materials and develop some retrieval system for that information. If the documents remained at the county level, the public access would be severely limited by the county's inability to realistically support records management for a defunct office.

We have repeatedly encouraged state level offices to enable us to transfer information electronically. At this stage, at least one department's computers are now so far behind those at Missoula County that they can no longer read our data. OPI has lacked the financial wherewithal to allow us to submit all budget and trustee report data electronically; at this time, we send them actual paper records which they send on to Salt Lake City for data entry, a truly inefficient method of information transfer from our point of view and no doubt theirs as well.

While the role of records management is not one that looms large in terms of time for our office, the fiscal note to transfer this responsibility would be astronomical.
To: Montana House Of Representatives  
   House Education Committee

From: Rick Bartos  
   Representative  
   Montana Association of County School Superintendents

Reference: House Bill 72

TESTIMONY

Mr. Chairman, Members of the House Education Committee:

House Bill 72 is a dangerous, ineffective and expensive proposal to create alternatives in county government by constitutional amendment. The legislation attempts to usurp the powers of local government and this legislative body to decide priorities in government services and the form of local government and ignore the fact reality that local government presently can be altered.

We respectfully urge a do not pass recommendation from this committee.

IMPACT ON STATE GENERAL FUND AND INEFFECTIVENESS OF PROPOSAL

1. House Bill 72 is costly and ineffective. There is no fiscal note attached to the bill. The bill calls for a constitutional amendment to be voted on a statewide ballot.

   The Montana Secretary of State's office should be consulted to determine the cost of the ballot measure itself. This cost does not include the appointment of a state committee to argue for and against the amendment, nor does it include the costs involved in preparing and printing the voter information pamphlet. Nothing is gained by a large state general fund expenditure.

2. The constitutional amendment does nothing to streamline or create efficiencies in county government. Presently, the Montana Constitution allows for alternative forms of county government. The flexibility to redesign county government is reserved to both the county commissioners and the local electorate, if they so choose. This constitutional amendment would only preclude the allowance of the
state general fund associated with the elimination of the county office. Presently, the costs of the office are assumed by the county general fund.

CENTRALIZE CONTROL OF SCHOOLS IN HELENA

Whether real or perceived, there would be further centralized control by state government of small and rural schools. Eastern Montana schools especially would be placed in a position to genuflect to the wishes of those in control from Helena.

Article X, section 8 of the Montana Constitution reminds all of us that local control remains with the local school board. As you have heard from previous testimony, there is a special relationship between the county superintendent and local school boards. They serve to buffer the school from further state intervention. For example, the Montana Accreditation Standards require the rural schools to employ a principal if it were not for the county superintendent exercising the evaluation of teachers responsibilities.

PROONENTS MISSED THE BOAT

If the proponents of this proposed constitutional amendment is troubled by the duties and responsibilities of the office of county superintendent, it is more responsible and prudent to present legislation to specifically address those statutory mandates. It is this legislative committee who is prepared and equipped to make those decisions. The use of a constitutional amendment does not resolve the concerns raised by the proponents.

The 1972 Montana Constitution celebrated its twentieth anniversary last year. During that time, two highly public forums were available for Montana citizens to express their opinions as to whether the constitution should be amended. Several members of this committee participated.

In neither forum did anyone remotely identify the county superintendent office as needing the dynamics and importance of a constitutional amendment.

THE STABILITY OF THE CONSTITUTION DESERVES OUR GREATEST ATTENTION

This committee is acutely aware of the powers inherit in the state constitution.
Government by constitutional referendum is neither wise nor a responsible means to govern. Day-to-day activities of local government should be addressed by the legislature and the local government. This is where decisions of the roles of various county offices belong. It does not require the magnitude of a constitutional referendum. It does not require that local disputes or controversies elevate to the level of constitutional change. The constitutional founders knew that when they required a 2/3rds majority of each house to allow a constitutional amendment to be presented to the people for a vote.

For the foregoing reasons we urge the committee to vote no on House Bill 72.
Representative Joann Bird

We would like to go on record as being against HB 72. If you would like to discuss this further please feel free to call our office.

Sincerely,

Judy Reddig
Richard Shoopman
Doug Baron
January 11, 1993

House Education and Cultural Resource Committee
Sonny Hanson, Chairman
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Chairman Hanson and Committee Members,

Due to local weather conditions, I am unable to give testimony in person. Therefore, I am submitting this letter in opposition to House Bill 72.

In the few brief years that I have worked in this position, I have handled a tremendous back log of work as well as kept pace with the current needs for this county. I have also come to realize the importance of this office in that it is unique because it deals with both state and district needs. Any auditor will tell you that we are an important link in educational funding. To say the least, there are times when we are not liked by districts and or the state. In this position, we are mandated by law to handle duties and we tend to be the party to catch problems or potential problems.

The vested interest in the County and its Districts truly lies in this Office. The fiscal, legal and resource needs that this Office provides are necessary. No other agency can provide the service that we give in the County we represent.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn M. Pfister
January 11, 1993

House Education & Cultural Resource Committee
Sonny Hanson, Chairman
Capitol Station
Helena, MT  59620

Dear Chairman Hanson and Committee Members,

The Board of County Commissioners of Musselshell County would like to submit this letter in opposition to House Bill 72.

Musselshell County has illustrated the hazards of a non-functioning Office of County Superintendent of Schools. In one year alone, Musselshell County lost $30,000.00 in retirement funding from the state lottery. One district in this county lost over $100,000.00 in funding in one fiscal year. These loses and other miscalculations have had a greater cost in programs available to the students of Musselshell County. This Office has been justified on fiscal needs in themselves.

Now that Musselshell County has a working Office of County Superintendent of Schools, fiscal and legal duties are handled on a timely and efficient basis. Musselshell County takes pride in the growth and management of this office and appreciates local control of county school issues.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue M. Olson, Chairperson
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Please leave prepared testimony with Secretary. Witness statement forms are available if you care to submit written testimony.
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<td>Michael</td>
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PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED TESTIMONY WITH SECRETARY. WITNESS STATEMENT FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU CARE TO SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY.