

MINUTES OF MEETING - WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE - NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE
1968 SPECIAL SESSION - FEBRUARY 20, 1968

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Glaser at 10:50 AM in the Ways and Means Room.

Present: Glaser, Mello, Bowler, Ashworth, Young, Howard, Tyson
Jacobsen, Webb

S. B. 7: Creates welfare categorical grant fund; specifies its uses and makes appropriation. Cost to state: \$50,000

Mr. Karl Harris, Director, Health & Welfare Department, went over the problem outlined on Page 28 of the Budget Book. There is a deficit in the ADC category of \$72,500 because of an increased case load, above the estimate. There are savings in the OAA, Aid to the Blind and Handicapped Children categories of \$35,492, \$18,000 and \$2,492 respectively. The total deficit in the Foster Care category is \$32,385 and in the Unwed Mothers category \$12,188 making a total of \$51,393. So, S. B. 7 provides for an appropriation of \$50,000.

Mr. Gene Phelps of the Budget Division said that the increases are directly related to the increased case loads. The average grants have not increased. The bill did not come out exactly the way we recommended, but we can live with it. We had recommended that we be given authorization to transfer the funds between categories. We already have that authority with ADC OAA and Aid to the Blind. With that and this appropriation of \$50,000 we can live with this bill as presented.

Mr. Ashworth asked the percentages for the areas where the recipients are. Mr. Harris said about 70% are in Clark County.

Mr. Webb asked if this increase is tied directly to increase in population. Mr. Harris replied, yes.

Mr. Howard mentioned the lack of controls on cases where a man is living with the unmarried woman and children receiving aid and is not contributing any money, but living off her welfare grants. ... Mr. Daniels of the Welfare Division said this is a rarity. There is a provision that we can accept money from the man, but this has to be on a voluntary basis. There is no law that says we can demand it. Mr. Harris said that the number in the household is included in the original application and we have 2 investigators to take samplings of cases. If abuse of the aid is found, we do cut off the ADC. Yes, we are invoking this. He said that from the point of view of the mother, no mother would have another child just for the \$30 a month.

Mr. Ashworth asked what the average case load is - number of children. Mr. Daniels said it would have to be the same as the national average of children per family - 4.5. We do not have the figures on the largest number of children in our case loads. This is taken into the general computation. However, he could get the figures.

Mr. Glaser asked if the family planning clinics are being taken advantage of by the welfare recipients. Mr. Daniels said, yes. However, this is voluntary; no one can be pressured into doing this. He estimated 82% of the welfare recipients are taking advantage of them. Mr. Harris said that Clark County started with 4 clinics and now have 8. There are also an increased number of clinics in Washoe County. The birth rate in Nevada has decreased substantially during the past 3 years; he thinks this is probably due to the pill and other devices.

Mr. Mello asked if it were found that many women recipients cannot afford to go to work. They get more in aid than from working after deductions. Mr. Harris said that child care is certainly no inexpensive matter, so she would net little from working with the skills she has. However, the law provides that these mothers will be enrolled in a work training program so they may gain the skills necessary to gain employment at higher wages.

Mr. Brand of the Welfare Division said it was his understanding that the majority of mothers on ADC are working intermittently, so they do make something in addition to the basic grant.

Mr. Mello suggested that something should be done, possibly more time spent, in finding out the cases where a man is living with the family on welfare. Mr. Harris said that California has just completed a 3 year study on this very matter. It was found that, dollars and cents-wise, the cost of the investigators equaled the amount saved in aid. However, if the concern is from the standpoint of moral obligation to the citizens of the State of Nevada, this might be a worthwhile thing. ... Mr. Mello commented that perhaps California made this study too late; perhaps we should do it right now.

Mr. Daniels agreed that this problem does, in fact, exist. However, we are trying to eliminate it through the training programs whereby employment can be gained at a sufficiently high level to pay them to get off welfare. The problem is not that they don't want to work; it is, rather, they cannot make enough money with their skills to be able to. This program to which he referred is one to be phased in by July, 1969, as Title V is being phased out. It will be partially funded by the federal government, greater in the beginning with diminishing federal shares. This program will take over the funds presently being given to Title V and when that runs out, there will have to be a provision made for more.

Mrs. Tyson asked if there has been a decrease in grants to the west side of Las Vegas, due to the birth control clinics. ... Mr. Harris said he had no statistics on the particular areas, but would assume so.

Mr. Young asked about the age limits on ADC. ... Mr. Brand: 16 years of age; between 16 and 18 may be included if the child is in school and has passing grades.

Mr. Glaser asked for an example of an ADC grant. ... Mr. Harris: a maximum grant for an unwed mother with 2 children would be \$114 per month which includes everything - heat, food, etc. There would be approximately \$21 additional for each additional child.

The witnesses were excused at 11:15 AM.

Mr. Glaser said this bill creates a fund which he assumes we would have to keep beefed up. It also allows flexibility in transferring funds between certain categories.

Mr. Webb commented that all the problems this year seem to be connected with this one Department. He cannot agree with the case load increase directly related with population increase because the population has not increased 10% as the case load has.

Mrs. Tyson said that the economics in the area has contributed to the increased case load. She commented that, again, we are tied in with a federal bill and lack control. However, she feels that the witnesses here today, and the Department in general, are very concerned and are being cooperative. She mentioned the meetings in Washington, D. C., attended by welfare officials from all states, which are being held now in an effort to meet these problems.

Mr. Ashworth said that, from a philosophical view, the federal government is trying to get out of this give-away program because of Viet Nam costs, etc. and will soon start cutting back their participation much faster than we now anticipate. This will result in our having to kick in more. We are in danger of becoming a welfare state like California, attracting welfare recipients because of lenient programs. He would rather see this thing cut down or put into one big package so that each year we won't be faced with money for this program or that, such as the \$50,000 this year.

Mr. Bowler said that he is serving on an interim subcommittee of the Welfare Division. Because 90% of the problem is in 2 counties, Chairman Hug split the committee to make the study, rather than holding a series of meetings with the entire group. We are already finding out in Clark County that welfare recipients are coming in daily by the carload. We have a better program than their home states, so they come to collect. We are also getting some back from California.

Mr. Webb does not agree with the argument against the hiring of investigators. He feels that just the presence of the investigators alone would discourage recipients from taking advantage of the program. Also, he suggested the next session of the Legislature looking into the matter of allowing greater flexibility in the transferring of funds between all the categories.

Mr. Bowler mentioned a cause of the problem being the over-zealous case worker. If we cut some money out, they will still do their job. It would cause them to look a little closer to money and qualifications for the aid.

Mr. Ashworth does not believe we should allow the switching of money from budget to budget. It would make it too hard to get information on the particular categories and thus too hard to control. The Aid to the Blind fund was cut down and some in CAA and all given to the ADC programs. If allowed to, they would channel all their budget into these child welfare services.

Mr. Webb said he would concur with Mr. Ashworth on this.

Mr. Howard suggested that perhaps at the next session of the Legislature a bill should be looked into which would empower the Welfare Division to collect from these men who live off the welfare of the unmarried mother and children. The only way to detect these cases is through investigators

It seemed to be the feeling of the committee that fiscal control must be kept through separate budgets for the separate categories of aid and that money appropriated for investigators for enforcement of program regulations would be well spent. They disagreed with the transfer provisions of 2. under Section 1 of S. B. 7.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.