

franzini

Assembly

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
FEBRUARY 3, 1971

56 ASSEMBLY SESSION

1- 48

ALL MEMBERS PRESENT

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jack Cunningham, County Commissioners' Association
Mr. Ray Knisley, Mr. Settlemyer
Assemblyman Getto's daughter and friends
The meeting was called to order by Chairman Smith.

It was the decision of the committee to change the meeting time to 30 minutes after the first quarter hour after P.M. adjournment.

The following bills were assigned to Assemblyman Ronzone's sub-committee:

AB 49 - Subjects certain water and sewer public utilities to Public Service Commission Control.

AB 61 - Permits boards of county commissioners to assume jurisdiction over water companies.

AB 63 - Expands definition of "public utility".

The three bills are to be combined into one bill which will cover the material in all three bills.

AB 44 - Permits boards of county commissioners to fix meeting dates.

An amendment to line 13 to read "as fixed by ordinance" was presented.

Assemblyman Dini moved "DO PASS AS AMENDED".

Assemblyman Lauri seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously carried.

AB 5 - Creates position of ombudsman.

Assemblyman Norman Hilbrecht spoke to the committee on the purpose of the bill and pointed out that in effect the Members of the Assembly were now acting as ombudsmen for the people they represent.

He defined an ombudsman as the peoples' representative who would intervene for the people with the bureaucracy. As the bill is written the ombudsman would be an arm of the legislature and would be in a position to suggest legislation which he found through his investigations to be necessary. It was Assemblyman Hilbrecht's opinion that this was an inexpensive way to solve a great many problems and would eliminate the necessity for many boards and commissions.

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The cost of the office was estimated at \$50,000.00 annually, however, since this estimate was made two years ago the cost would be greater now.

Assemblyman Dini questioned what would prevent the ombudsman from becoming too powerful.

Assemblyman Hilbrecht explained that his power was limited to recommendations and that he must first take his findings to the head of the agency involved and in most cases the agency head would be the first to want any situation cleared up.

Assemblyman Lauri questioned the lack of qualifications in the bill.

Assemblyman Hilbrecht explained that the ombudsman would be selected by the Legislative Commission, with the approval of both houses, and that the Commission would set the qualifications.

Assemblyman Lauri suggested that the ombudsman could withhold information gained during one of his investigations and use this information for personal gain.

Assemblyman Hilbrecht pointed out the same situation could exist with district attorneys and grand jury foremen and even the Attorney General of the State.

Assemblyman Lauri felt that the situation differed as the district attorney or Attorney General can not act until information is brought to them.

Assemblyman Branch felt that once the office was established that that there would be so many matters brought to the ombudsman that he would not have time to make investigations on his own.

Assemblyman Lauri mentioned that the ombudsman system had been tried in Reno at the University and had not been successful.

Assemblyman Dini stated that he did not believe that the situations could be compared.

Assemblyman Ronzone asked what the growth factor of such an office would be.

Assemblyman Hilbrecht stated that at present there were only 35 persons employed in the system in the Country of Sweden. The State of Hawaii has a staff of 5.

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Assemblyman Getto stated that at present his constituents were quite close to him and he questioned the effect the ombudsman would have on his situation.

Chairman Smith stated that the people would probably still bring their problems to their legislators but the legislators would have a place to take the problems which at present they do not have.

Chairman Smith thanked Assemblyman Hilbrecht for his time.

AJR 7 - Memorializes President and Veterans' Affairs Administrator to establish veterans' hospital in Southern Nevada.

Assemblyman Dini moved "DO PASS".

Assemblyman Bryan seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

AJR 8 - Memorializes Congress to establish a national cemetery in Southern Nevada.

Assemblyman Bryan moved "DO PASS".

Assemblyman Lauri seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

AB 123 - Removes time limits and restrictions on repayment of public employees' retirement contributions after withdrawal from and return to system; requires redeposited contributions to be accompanied by compound interest.

Assemblyman Bryan suggested the bill be amended to read compound interest or average yield from the retirement fund which ever was the greater.

Mr. Knisley pointed out that this system would not work because of the matching funds which the State contributes would not be in the fund and drawing interest.

The bill was referred to the Public Employees Sub-Committee for study.

AB 116- Enables counties to enact rent control ordinances.

AB 139 - Reduces residence requirements of North Las Vegas elective officials.

AB 142 - Provides for the election of North Las Vegas City Attorney.

All three bills were referred to the Local Government Sub-Committee.

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AB 147 - Permits relatives to be employed by any police or fire department.
Referred to Public Employees Sub-Committee.

AB 58 - Authorizes county assessors to appeal to State Board of Equalization.

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Assemblyman Bryan questioned what type of hearings were held by the State Board of Equalization, if they merely reviewed the records of the County Boards of Equalization or if they heard testimony from all parties involved. Mr. Cunningham explained that this was one of the measures suggested by the County Commissioners' Association, which would give the assessors the same rights as the public.

Assemblyman Hawkins pointed out that as the legislation was written at present it could be read and understood that any citizen would have to have the consent of the county commissioners to appear before the State Board of Equalization.

Mr. Knisley suggested that this might bring a great many more cases before the Board and increase the work load and the expenses.

No action was taken on this bill.

Chairman Smith thanked Mr. Knisley and Mr. Settlemyer for their help.

The meeting was adjourned.