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MINUTES

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE - NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE - 58th SESSION

April 23, 1975

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mello at 8:00 A.M. in the Ways and Means Committee Room.

PRESENT: Chairman Mello, Mr. Bremner, Mrs. Brookman, Mr. Dreyer, Mr. Glover, Mr. Howard, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Weise and Mr. Wittenberg.

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Sheehan, John Kimble, Don Perry, Walt Martini, John Reiser, Assemblyman Jim Banner, Jim Wittenberg, Robert Vaughn, Howard Hill, Gene Oakley, Carrol Evans, Eugene White, Sheriff Allen, Stan Warren, Quint Pachoska, Bill Skupp, Bob Gregory, Colonel Lambert, Senator Mel Close, Assemblyman Bob Barengo, Bill Bible and John Dolan.

SB 311 "Expands class of recipients of Senior Citizens Property Tax Assistance Act." BDR 32-818

Jack Sheehan explained that this bill would invest authority on a local level. The question of how many individuals receive a given income and pay a given property tax cannot be answered. This bill would provide that an individual would receive a flat percent discount on property tax. He explained the formula on page five of the bill. The calculations of the Legislative Council Bureau Audit Division would cost \$1,201,000. They estimate that 24,000 to 26,000 are eligible senior citizens. Mr. Sheehan estimates only 50% participation. Renters are also eligible and he feels that 50% of rent is a reasonable amount. They are hopeful that the refunds will not exceed the estimated \$1.2 million. Group Care Facilities also come under renters as these are apartment type facilities and the people rent a room from them. Mr. Wittenberg felt that this was just a subsidy for income to those who rent. Every senior citizen lives somewhere and the purpose of the bill is to prevent people from losing their homes. Mr. Sheehan felt that renters should not be included if this is a property tax program. It is becoming a welfare program. Mrs. Brookman stated that the original concept two years ago included renters. Renters only qualify if the land that they are living on is taxed. John Kimble stated that he represents 16 counties and they unanimously support this bill. Most of the senior citizens are living at a poverty level. Mrs. Brookman stated that members of the Advisory Board urge a do pass on this bill. Mr. Don Perry, Chairman joint Legislative Committee, stated that they unanimously approve the philosophy behind this bill. Mr. Walt Martini, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce for Aging urges passage of the bill.

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Mrs. Brookman made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass". Mr. Bremner seconded. Motion passed.

SB 330 "Creates silicosis and disabled pension fund and makes appropriation for such fund." BDR 53-834

Mr. John Reiser, Nevada Industrial Commission, stated that the intent of this bill is to provide supplemental benefits to the permanently, totally disabled and the continuation of silicosis benefits. Section 5 provides for a special silicosis program to be administered through the Health Department. There is a reserve set up for lifetime benefits.

AB 385 "Qualifies all services performed in public employment for unemployment compensation." BDF 53-1003.

Assemblyman Jim Banner stated that he has a great concern for Clark County employees, but this bill will also accommodate the state employees. He is not speaking, however, for the state employees as they were included in this bill unknowingly and does not want it to have any affect on anything the other groups might be doing in the way of unemployment insurance. They have had a problem in Clark County where people have been terminated because of politics. Each time a new person is elected in the District Attorney's office, the Assessor's office, etc., some of the employees are terminated.

Jim Wittenberg, State Personnel, stated that the talk on the National level is to extend the benefits they are now providing and would not want this

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to interfere with the Federal money. They would rather see Federal money used instead of State money for as long as possible.

Robert Vaughn stated that he did not think this bill would cause any problems. He would like to see subsection b restored on page 2, line 13, however. He would like to see the bill amended on line 30 of page 3 to include "after July 1, 1975 or upon termination of Special Assistance Program whichever is later." This would take care of the problem since they are not sure of what the President is going to do. This bill would cover 30,000 people and cost about \$3 million next year. 20% would be state General Fund money and 80% would be local government money. Based on estimates about 20% would be state employees.

Mr. Wittenberg did not feel that Washoe County would be able to handle this and felt that it should be optional.

AB 161 "Establishes state communications system." BDR 18-336.

Gene Oakley stated that with this system they could send up to 420 different messages. They are requesting money to complete the system and provide technicians.

Carrol Evans, Crime Commission, stated that the purpose is not to control the local police departments, but to consolidate all systems into one state communication system. The justification for this is based on the request of the Highway Patrol, the Highway Department, hospitals, ambulances, emergency medical services, etc. \$1.5 million has already been put into the system. This would provide communication if the service by the phone lines is disrupted.

Eugene White felt this was very important to law enforcement. He felt that nothing was worse than being in the field and not being able to communicate with anyone.

Sheriff Allen stated that he was very much in favor of this bill.

Stan Warren, Nevada Bell, is opposed to this piece of legislation along with other telephone companies. He is in favor of improving police mobile radios and would like to see service extended to emergency medical services and school buses. He is opposed to state involvement. They are asking that the Legislature fund an agency that will operate a system that is not completed and the bill has no controls to limit its scope. The taxpayers want a greater certainty that there will be a savings. The money that is requested does not include wages, travel or operation costs. They should consider several other factors: 1. Risk of loss by fire, snow and wind and they have not considered insurance costs or the fact that eventually equipment will have to be replaced. 2. Maintenance costs. The bill calls for two technicians, but there is too much equipment for just two men. Eventually more positions will be funded. 3. Special vehicles. They will be using four-wheel drive vehicles, but in the winter they will need snow vehicles at an approximate total cost of \$25,000 including equipment. 4. Reliability of System. It would cost \$108,000 to put a safety feature in the system. 5. There is a great expense for buildings and fences that need to be durable, have heat, light and generator facilities. 6. Depreciation. 7. General Overhead in training expense, road maintenance and bookkeeping. He questioned that the system would be self-supporting in the second year as the cost is higher than the amount charged for use. The telephone company provides 24 hour maintenance and they provide training. They also employ 2000 people to meet the needs of the people and they pay their share of taxes. A lot more needs to be spent than what is requested. He read a proposed amendment "Any proposal designed to provide telecommunications service, equipment or facilities to the State of Nevada shall be provided by the private sector unless significant savings can be achieved as demonstrated by a complete study of all the factors involved."

Quint Pachoska stated that Mr. Warren did not mention that Bell Company paid for the study he referred to. He stated that this is an Executive order by the Governor over 3 years ago and almost same as legislation and they had no complaints by the telephone company then.

Ron Strupp, Chief of Identification and Communications stated that they plan to get off the teletype system that Bell provides.

Bill Skupp, Highway Department, stated that the budget was developed based on a system that has been in existence since 1968. Other agencies have

snow vehicles that would be used and each user agency has a technician to maintain the system. The road maintenance and maintenance of the system is based on good estimates of sites up and in operation. The on-going maintenance charge will be picked up by the user agency. The Highway Department has not been supplied a mobile radio system which is needed and this system would include the Highway Department.

Bob Gregory, Civil Defense, stated that Civil Defense would also use this system and money has been supplied by the Federal Government and flows through this office for a system. As the system grows, the money will increase. They are not trying to eliminate the telephone system, but when this system goes out a back-up is necessary for emergencies.

Colonel Lambert, Highway Patrol, stated that every mountain top that will be used is already developed. The \$1 1/2 million includes the LEAA grant. They have consolidated the shops and the technicians in the Highway Patrol are microwave technicians which would eliminate most of the maintenance problems. They have utilized other snow equipment and have leased helicopters when necessary. When equipment is leased it always comes with a maintenance contract.

Howard Hill, Department of Motor Vehicles, stated that there would be a significant savings by using the microwave system compared to the phone company.

Mr. Dreyer made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" on AB 161. Mr. Robinson seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Glover is recorded as not voting and Mr. Weise voted no.

SB 140 "Makes appropriation to state communication board to complete statewide microwave system." BDR S-856

Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to recommend a "Do-pass" on SB 140. Mr. Dreyer seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Glover is recorded as not voting and Mr. Weise voted no.

Over

Senator Mel Close and Assemblyman Bob Barengo from the Judiciary Committees explained SB 399 which has not been yet introduced. They have received conflicting testimony in their committees as to what can and cannot be done. They are requesting \$12,500 for legal counsel in this regard. Both Judiciary Committees have voted to proceed forward to see what can be done. A law firm in Washington, D.C. has been recommended for this study, as they are a labor specialty group. The Attorney General has committed \$1000 to do work in this area. 20 states regulate union activity and 20 other states regulate union activity in some way. After the study is completed it can be decided as to whether to continue or not. The firm in Washington, D.C. has stated that they will put their full staff on this and should have the information back by the end of this week. They asked if the Senate passes this, if the Ways and Means Committee and Assembly would concur.

The committee unanimously stated they would concur.

SB 187 "Increases motor vehicle registration fee designated for supplementary patrolmen." BDR 43-796.

Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass". Mrs. Brookman seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Weise and Mr. Robinson voted no.

Highway Patrol Special Fund - Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Glover seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Robinson voted no.

Drivers License - DMV - Mrs. Brookman made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Bremner seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused to testify in Government Affairs Committee.

Motor Vehicle Inspection Program - Mrs. Brookman made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Glover seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Law Enforcement Highway Patrol - Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mrs. Brookman seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

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PSC Regulatory Fund - Mrs. Brookman made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Wittenberg seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Contingency for Southern Nevada Prison - Mr. Glover made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mrs. Brookman seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Weise voted no and Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Prison Administration - Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to amend this budget by including \$8000 for law books. Mr. Bremner seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Weise, Mr. Glover and Mr. Howard voted no. Mr. Glover made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor and as amended. Mr. Weise seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

National Guard Benefits - Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to delete the license plate program from the budget. Mr. Weise seconded. Mr. Bible stated that the General indicated he is requesting this benefit to aid in recruitment. Chairman Mello stated that if he is depending on free license plates to recruit young men, they are not needed. Motion passed. Mr. Robinson and Mrs. Brookman voted no. Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor and as amended. Mr. Weise seconded. Motion passed. Mrs. Brookman voted no. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

AB 181 "Authorizes payment of privilege tax and registration fees for national guardsmen." BDR 36-547.

Mr. Wittenberg made a motion to recommend an "Indefinite Postponement." Mr. Weise seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Glover, Mr. Robinson and Mrs. Brookman voted no. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Social Security Disability Adjudication - Mr. Robinson made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mrs. Brookman seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Over

Bureau of Alcohol and Drug abuse - Mr. Glover made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Weise seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Services to the Blind - Mr. Glover made a motion to add an additional mobility instructor in Reno and one in Las Vegas. These positions were not requested. Mr. Weise seconded. Mrs. Brookman stated that these people would work on a one to one basis and teach the blind how to cook, walk around the streets, do housekeeping, etc. Motion passed. Mr. Glover made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Weise seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Dreyer was excused.

Vocational Rehabilitation - Mr. Glover made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mrs. Brookman seconded. Mr. Dolan stated that Senate Finance amended this budget to place these new positions under Federal Funds. Mr. Bible stated that presently most of them are supported by Federal Funds. Mr. Weise made a motion to amend this budget by placing all new positions under Federal funds with the exception of the Physician Range C. Mr. Howard seconded. Motion failed. Motion passed on the recommended by the Governor.

Rehabilitation Victims of Crime - Mrs. Brookman made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Dreyer seconded. Motion passed.

Child Protection - Mr. Glover made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mrs. Brookman seconded. Motion passed.

Committee to Hire the Handicapped - Mrs. Brookman made a motion to recommend a "Do-Pass" as recommended by the Governor. Mr. Glover seconded. Mr. Weise stated that the Rehabilitation Department has enough people who already help in educating the employer and helping the handicapped person. Mr. Howard, Chairman Mello, Mr. Wittenberg and Mr. Weise voted no. Mr. Dreyer was excused. Motion failed and budget held.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.