

Approved: Al Ramirez 3-4-93
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Al Ramirez at 1:30 p.m. on February 23, 1993 in Room 531-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Lee - Excused
Senator Reynolds - Excused

Committee staff present: Julian Efird, Legislative Research Department
Bill Edds, Revisor

Jackie Breymeyer, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Oleen - SB 326
Tom Day - Kansas Corporation Commission
Senator Hensley - SB 226
Ron Schofield - Homeless Veteran Advocate
Don McIntyre - American Legion
Stan Teasley - Executive Director, Kansas Commission on
Veterans Affairs
John Hill - Disabled American Veterans

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Ramirez called the meeting to order and stated the first order of business would be **SB 326** - concerning the state corporation commission. He welcomed Senator Oleen to the committee.

Senator Oleen began by stating that this particular bill dealing with the Corporation Commission had two years of previous study plus an interim, so it had quite a bit of thought before it was brought forward. This bill actually spells out in more detail the organizational structure of the Kansas Corporation commission. A small part of this bill was amended last year into for HB 3196. SB 326 actually mirrors what is done with all other state agencies in that it codifies in statute the organizational structure. This bill passes the enabling legislation for the structure to be placed in the statutes. The area that affects utilities was in a different bill. That piece of legislation did not get passed.

Staff added that there is a statute which allows the personnel in that division to be in the unclassified service so there is a separate controlling statute.

Senator Oleen stated that in any state agency there is an organizational structure that is codified. She doesn't know why it is not codified in the Corporation Commission, but she is not going to give up.

Tom Day, Director of Administrative Services, addressed the bill. He stated that he did want to bring to Senator Oleen's attention that the provisions of Section 2 were amended into HB 3196 basically to make sure the directors of all the divisions within the Corporation Commission are statutorily set out. In other provisions within the statutes, most of the division directors are set out separately. HB 3196 did take care of the remaining directors to set them out in the statutes.

The question of why did the governor veto the bill, was asked. Mr. Day stated he did not recall the exact veto message. Bill Edds, Revisor, stated the veto message could be found in the Session Laws. He read the governor's veto message.

After a few comments, the Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 326**.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION, Room 531-N
Statehouse, at 1:30 p.m. on February 23, 1993.

The next order of business was the hearing on **SB 226**. Senator Hensley, bill sponsor addressed the committee and went through the bill. The bill would establish within the limits of appropriations a state-wide, toll-free telephone service which would provide emergency housing referral and placement service for homeless veterans, using both public and private emergency shelter resources and providing information and other assistance or referral services to veterans in general. Senator Hensley stated there is a significant problem in Kansas related to being sure that veterans understand and are aware of some of the services that are available to them and this is a problem that particularly relates to veterans who are homeless. Senator Hensley introduced Mr. Ron Schofield, homeless veteran advocate, who by the good graces of an auto dealer in Hutchinson, was provided transportation to today's hearing.

Mr. Schofield stated that he gave this bill to Senator Hensley last summer. He thought that an after-hours toll-free number would be the best after four o'clock because the shelters in this state are not open until six. People that are left out of the shelters, instead of freezing to death, would be able to have access to other shelters in the area to see if there was a bed. Mr. Schofield stated that to have this toll-free line for veterans does not strictly serve the purpose as it could be used for all homeless people. The bill is a workable one that would help all homeless in the state. There is a real need for this to be addressed.

Don McIntyre, American Legion, distributed copies of his testimony and spoke in favor of the bill. (Attachment 1) Testimony contained the statement that should this be approved and funded, it will provide a valuable service to veterans and their families.

Mr. Stan Teasley, Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, spoke next in support of the bill. (Attachment 2) Current estimates reveal that approximately one-third of the nation's homeless population are veterans. Nearly one-half of the homeless males are veterans. To Mr. Teasley's knowledge there is no state funded entity which provides referral and placement assistance specifically to veterans.

John Hill, Disabled American Veterans, spoke in favor of the bill. His concern is that with the toll-free line becoming available it will have to be staffed and that will cost money. There will be all kinds of calls with people asking all kinds of questions. The question of how do you tell a widow with a pension problem that the number she has called is a line for the homeless. This type of question and other questions will have to be dealt with.

Mr. Schofield again addressed the committee. When he had spoken with Senator Hensley, he had asked for a budget of \$41,000. The 800 number would be used exclusively for homeless and homeless veterans. He is not concerned with benefits or anything in that area. The bill was not initiated for that program. The budgeted money would be used for the line, supplies and a person to staff. Twenty-five dollars would be allotted to house each homeless person. This bill was met to be entirely for the homeless.

Chairman Ramirez thanked all the conferees, closed the hearing on **SB 226** and asked for the committee's attention on some bills for final action. He asked them to turn to **SB 238** - certified public accountants. There were two cleanup amendments; page 2, line 7 before the word continuing inserting the word "and" on page 4, line 21, before the word remedial, striking 'on' and inserting "and".

Senator Feleciano, seconded by Senator Gooch, moved to amend SB 238 with these balloon amendments and recommend the bill favorably for passage. The motion carried.
Senator Harris will carry the bill.

The Committee turned to **SCR 1610** - Kansas City Blue Devil Cookoff. Senator Harris, seconded by Senator Papay moved to adopt the Senate Concurrent Resolution. The motion carried.

Senator Sherman Jones will carry the Resolution.

The Chairman directed the committee's attention to **SB 326**. Senator Bogina, seconded by Senator Papay recommended the bill favorably for passage. The motion carried.
Senator Oleen will carry the bill.

The chairman asked for a motion on a bill introduction dealing with unpaid leave for police and firemen who volunteer their time. The bill will be introduced, but not heard until next year.
Senator Bogina moved to introduce the bill with a second by Senator Papay. The motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 24, 1993.

GUEST LIST

COMMITTEE: Separate Gov. Organization

DATE: Feb. 23, 1993

[illegible]

SENATE BILL NO. 226
TESTIMONY BY DON MCINTYRE, DEPARTMENT STAFF
THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
FEBRUARY 23, 1993

On behalf of the more than 61,000 members of The American Legion Department of Kansas, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you today in support of Senate Bill 226.

Should SB226 be approved and funded by the legislature it will provide a valuable service to veterans and their families as well as enhancing the services of the KCVA.

Among the services the American Legion envisions the KCVA being able to provide are: the ability to inform callers when and where field office personnel will be in their specific area to assist them in filing claims, filling out VA required forms, etc; we also believe a toll free number will provide the KCVA with the ability to obtain information from clients which can be relayed to a field office thereby providing that Field Office an opportunity to prepare in advance to service the client's individual needs in a more timely fashion.

I should make it clear that The American Legion believes the Field Offices are doing an outstanding job in serving veterans and their families; my point is a toll free telephone line will provide the ability to enhance that service.

The American Legion firmly believes a toll free telephone line should not in anyway be used to replace field offices now or in the future. Nor does The American Legion believe funding for a toll free line should be deducted from the current or future KCVA budget and must be funded separately to prevent any temptation to tamper with the KCVA budget, which we feel is already underfunded.

Y. G. Compton
Attachment 1
2/23/93

The detailed complexity of VA forms and other types of assistance which Field Office personnel provide veterans and their families cannot be replaced by a telephone system because one on one face to face assistance is required in almost every instance due to the unique nature of each individual's claim, inquiry, or need. Another factor to consider, regarding the need for continued face to face assistance, is the average age of clients currently being served by the KCVA which is elderly veterans and their widows.

Again thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you today in support of Senate Bill 226.



KANSAS
COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
KANSAS
Jayhawk Towers, Suite 701, 700 SW Jackson
Topeka, Kansas 66603 913-296-3976

STATEMENT OF STAN TEASLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KANSAS COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
BEFORE SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 226
FEBRUARY 23, 1992

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs appreciates the opportunity to present its views on Senate Bill 226, which would establish for the Central Office of this agency, subject to the limits of appropriations, a state-wide toll-free telephone service to provide referral and placement services specifically for homeless veterans and provide veteran benefit and service information to Kansas Veterans and their dependents in general.

The agency would like to go on the record of supporting this legislation as it represents a positive addition in terms of the ability of the agency to fulfill our important mission of providing comprehensive and responsive service to Kansas Veterans and their dependents.

The Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, the only state funded agency with the responsibility of providing direct services to Kansas Veterans, is comprised of 22 offices located throughout the State of Kansas and in every U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the VA Regional Office. The presence of a toll-free telephone service would enhance our ability to promote the availability of veteran benefit services, which would be of a direct benefit to Veterans and their dependents and also an overall benefit for the State of Kansas by increasing the economic status and quality of life of Kansas citizens. Many claims we currently are involved with pertain to VA pensions. Individuals seeking pension benefits are usually low income and do not have the resources to make long distant phone calls to seek assistance. A toll-free telephone service that could direct them to the proper office to obtain services would be very beneficial to those individuals. This service would allow Kansas citizens to call our central office whereby they would be referred to the closest agency office or informed of the next itinerant visit in their area so they could obtain benefit assistance. In addition, many veterans and their dependents are eligible for VA benefits, but are unaware of their eligibility or the manner in which to obtain those benefits. A toll-free telephone service properly promoted would certainly be a significant position development in addressing this problem.

G.O. Comm.
Attachment 2
2/23/93

Current estimates reveal that approximately one third of this nation's homeless population are Veterans. Nearly one half the homeless males are Veterans. To my knowledge there is no state funded entity, which provides referral and placement assistance specifically to Veterans.

This toll-free service would not only allow this agency to provide referral and placement information to homeless Veterans, but would allow agency personnel the opportunity to review their overall current situation to make a preliminary assessment on whether they could be eligible for VA benefits. The placement and referral activity would be achieved by creating a data base in the central office containing a list of homeless assistance agencies and entities in each county and city. The homeless Veterans seeking assistance would be referred to those agencies or entities in his/her area, who could be of service. If it is determined that one of our agency offices could be of direct assistance, contact would be made to that office to ensure that comprehensive service would be provided in addressing the Veterans homeless situation. Although the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs could not provide any direct monetary benefit or housing, the agency could be the central contact point for veterans seeking assistance with their housing situation, and hopefully help Kansas Veterans and their dependent obtain temporary housing and possible future assistance to correct their homeless status on a permanent basis.

It is estimated that the fiscal note on this bill would be \$4,767, consisting of \$3,744 per year on usage charges, \$800 on publicity, and \$223 on monthly rental fees. It is not anticipated at this point that additional staff will be required to implement this bill.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I would urge favorable passage of Senate Bill 226.