

Approved: February 15, 1994
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Flower at 1:30 p.m. on February 8, 1994 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Emalene Correll, Legislative Research Department
William Wolff, Legislative Research Department

Sue Hill, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Others attending: See attached list

The Full Committee on House Public Health and Welfare met in 313-S at 1:30 p.m. to join the Appropriations Committee this date, at which time presentations were given on Welfare Reform by several conferees.

HB 2929- was the topic for conferees, and attachments will be recorded in the minutes of Appropriations Committee this date.

Rep. Phill Kline, Rep. Jim Garner, Rep. Thomas Robinette all spoke of proposals regarding Welfare Reform, i.e., H.O.P.E., Harnessing Opportunity for Personal Excellence. He indicated the proposals would promote and encourage the stability of two-parent families by the elimination of the marriage penalty, keeping families together. Unwed minors who have children must live with parents to receive AFDC (hardship exceptions are provided). AFDC benefits would not be provided unless both parents are identified (hardship exceptions provided). Proposals regarding education, i.e., children could save their earned income for educational purposes without affecting parental eligibility for welfare, cash benefits could be reduced 10% for each child who is unlawfully not attending school. The establishment of "Individual Development Accounts", allowing residents to invest up to \$2000 annually, which accrues tax free interest. These funds are to be used for educational, home-ownership, and health care purposes. Proposals regarding making KANWORK work, i.e., employable participants will work unless their employability will be enhanced by education/job training which is not to exceed one year. Employable KANWORK participants shall only receive base benefits for 2 years, after which they receive existing transitional benefits. SRS shall pilot a debit card program in KANWORK. The debit card will take the place of cash/food stamp benefits. Those who quit their jobs or are fired for gross misconduct will not continue to receive benefits. Persons who are fugitives from a felony charge or conviction shall not receive assistance benefit payments.

Numerous questions were asked by members of both Public Health and Welfare Committee and Appropriations Committee.

Rep. Barbara Allen offered testimony on HB 2929, new Section 5. She stated pure penalties don't improve school attendance, incentives and penalties do improve school attendance. She cited statistics on studies conducted by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation on Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program, which offers a combination of incentives/penalties to encourage school attendance of children in welfare recipient families. She suggested a welfare reform provision providing for both incentives and penalties to encourage school attendance. (Rep. Allen's testimony will also be recorded as an attachment in the Appropriation Committee minutes this date.)

Committee members were excused at 3:10 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 1994.