

Approved: February 2, 2000
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dave Kerr at 11:00 a.m. on January 31, 2000 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Michael Corrigan, Asst. Revisor of Statutes
Debra Hollon, KS Legislative Research Department
Judy Bromich, Administrative Assistant to the Chairman
Ronda Miller, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Janet Schalansky, Secretary, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Paul Johnson, Public Assistance Coalition and Kansas Catholic Conference

Others attending: See attached list

SB 436: Repeal of child support pass through

Secretary Janet Schlanasky, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, appeared before the Committee to review child support collection pass-through as discussed in her written testimony (Attachment 1). She told members that repealing the \$40 pass-through would affect approximately 2,000 families each month, and she noted that each family that receives the monthly \$40 pass-through has an offsetting reduction in food stamps of \$13 per month.

In answer to a question, Secretary Schalansky stated that it was her understanding that reinstatement of the pass-through legislation in 1997 happened late in the session and its impact wasn't well understood. She said she believes that the \$50 rebate that existed prior to 1996 was seen as a benefit to families, but, at that point in time, the federal government did not take a percentage of the collections.

There was discussion regarding the impact this proposal would have on low-income families, and members asked what the Department would substitute for it. The Secretary told members she believes that this plan is not the fairest way to pass benefits to families because not all families in need receive child support. She stated that in a difficult budget year, the Department has to balance issues of fairness and equity and yet has to make adjustments in the agency's budget. She said that SRS would not propose a new initiative this year. There was general consensus that this program is not the most cost effective way to provide money to clients.

Mr. Paul Johnson, Director of the Public Assistance Coalition of Kansas, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB 436** and reviewed his written testimony (Attachment 2). In answer to a question regarding the establishment portion of the SRS child support system, Mr. Johnson stated that there is a backlog of approximately one-third of the open child support cases that do not have child support ordered at this time. He expressed some concern that administrative costs associated with the program might be included in the \$1 million identified by SRS as pass-through monies. The Secretary stated that administrative costs are not included in the \$1 million figure (Attachment 2-3).

The Chairman stated that **SB 436** would be held in Committee.

A response from the Department of Corrections in answer to the hypothetical situation of the Legislature not providing additional beds for inmates was distributed to members (Attachment 3) (See minutes of January 18, 2000). The Chairman told members that he had just recently received a response from the Executive Secretary of the Sentencing Commission to the same request, and he would provide copies of

CONTINUATION SHEET

SENATE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES

that letter for members. He stated that he had received a call from the warden at the Hutchinson Correctional Facility who expressed concern about the fact that five inmates are being housed in cells designed for three. The Chairman stated that something may need to be done fairly quickly to address that problem. A member of the subcommittee on the Sentencing Commission requested that Legislative staff provide a summary of the options offered by the Secretary of Corrections and the Executive Secretary of the Sentencing Commission as well as proposals offered in a bill introduced at the request of the Sentencing Commission. It was requested that the summary also include any proposals recommended by Committees that would free up prison space by the use of federal monies in the community. In response to a request, the Chairman stated that he would check on the status of a response to questions asked on January 18, 2000 regarding debt service and operating costs from the Department of Corrections. Senator Ranson noted that she would appreciate having that information because of the possibility of building private prisons.

It was moved by Senator Lawrence and seconded by Senator Jordan that the minutes of the January 25, 26, and 27 meetings be approved. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m. The next meeting will be held February 1, 2000.