

**MINUTES OF THE
WORKFORCE SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE**
November 17, 1999 - 2:00 p.m. - Room 414 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Robert M. Muhlestein, CoChair
Rep. Michael R. Styler, CoChair
Sen. D. Edgar Allen
Sen. Parley G. Hellewell
Sen. Lorin V. Jones
Rep. Sheryl L. Allen
Rep. Ron Bigelow
Rep. Jackie Biskupski
Rep. Ben C. Ferry
Rep. Lloyd W. Frandsen
Rep. Brent H. Goodfellow
Rep. Neil A. Hansen
Rep. Rebecca Lockhart
Rep. Gordon E. Snow
Rep. David L. Zolman

Members Absent:

Sen. Gene Davis
Rep. Jeff Alexander

Staff Present:

Mr. Arthur L. Hunsaker,
Research Analyst
Mr. Keith M. Woodwell,
Associate General Counsel
Ms. Audrey Madsen,
Legislative Secretary

Note: Names of others present and copies of information distributed at the meeting are on file in the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel.

1. Call to Order: Approval of November 2, 1999 Minutes - Chair Muhlestein called the meeting to order at 2:18 p.m.

MOTION: Rep. Hansen moved to approve the minutes of November 2, 1999. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Allen and Reps. Lockhart and Zolman absent for the vote.

2. Annual Report: Families, Agencies, and Communities Together for Children and Youth at Risk (FACT) - Terry Johnson, FACT Coordinator, distributed a handout titled "FACT 1999 Report to the Legislative Interim Committees" from which she made her presentation. Ms. Johnson said that the department is encouraging parental-community involvement in the FACT Council. To further this effort, the council is planning to restructure the steering committee by involving parents, community representatives, and local service representatives.

Sen. Muhlestein asked Ms. Johnson to send copies of the evaluations, goals, and data indicators to staff to be distributed to committee members. He also requested a more thorough presentation for next summer.

3. Staff Report: Payment of Child Care for Welfare Recipients - National Perspective - Mr. Hunsaker provided the committee with a national perspective on child care payment programs. He said that the most common approach is to grant recipients certificates or vouchers to use toward defraying child care costs. Utah and New York are the only states which

provide recipients with access to cash to pay for child care.

Sen. Jones asked about receipt requirements. Helen Thatcher, Department of Workforce Services, said that child care providers are required to turn in the last three months of receipts every three months, in order to receive future payments.

Rep. Allen asked what the assessment of staff time is on the current process. Ms. Thatcher said the new process is more time-consuming for case managers than the previous process, but is less time-consuming for other individuals. Robert Gross, Executive Director, Department of Workforce Services, expressed concern that the front line workers are spending more time than necessary, and suggested that the system be modified.

Johnny Anderson, President, Utah Private Child Care Association, told of a situation where a front line worker of the Department of Workforce Services discovered recipient fraud that apparently was not caught by the audit. Mr. Craig Moody, Utah Private Child Care Association, pointed out that many things are being done to improve the process. Karen Silver, Advocate, Salt Lake Community Action Program, encouraged legislators to get more input from recipient families.

4. Proposed Legislation - Mason Bishop, Department of Workforce Services, introduced two draft bills that have been accepted by the Employment Advisory Council. The first bill, titled "Amendments to Unemployment Insurance," would conform the state's definition of wages to the Internal Revenue Service definition, and remove the requirement for a recorded hearing in cases of fraud.

MOTION: Rep. Hellewell moved to adopt the proposed bill. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Bigelow absent for the vote.

Mr. Bishop introduced the second bill, titled "Amendments to Public Assistance Time Limits." He explained that the change in this bill would not count a recipient who has been subject to abuse against the state's 20% extension limit on benefits.

Sen. Jones expressed opposition to the bill and pointed out that it may lead to abuses of the system. He said that the 20% safety net seems to be sufficient. Rep. Zolman asked how many persons are included in the "battered and extreme cruelty" category. Ms. Thatcher said that it is less than 50 individuals.

Rep. Allen expressed her support of the bill. Committee discussion followed. Sen. Allen asked what the fiscal impact would be. Mr. Bishop said that there would be no impact. Ms. Thatcher said that the fiscal impact would affect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds (TANF).

Ms. Gina Cornia, Utah Issues, expressed support for the proposed legislation. Linda Robinson, YWCA of Salt Lake City, urged the department to examine that section more closely. Lisa Manuel, League of Women Voters, expressed support for the proposed legislation. Dee Roland, Catholic Diocese, expressed support for the proposed legislation.

MOTION: Rep. Hansen moved to adopt the proposed bill and expressed his willingness to sponsor it. Committee discussion followed.

Rep. Ferry asked if the federal guidelines clarify who can and cannot be included in the 20% extension. Mr. Bishop said that it is left up to the state. Rep. Biskupski pointed out that individuals experiencing extreme cruelty will be directly affected by the decisions made today. Rep. Hellewell asked if individuals in less threatening situations would be taken off of the 20% list in order to allow a more serious situation to receive the help they need. Ms. Thatcher said that when the 20% maximum is reached, the criteria would be made more restrictive. Sen. Jones suggested this issue be considered when the 20% safety net is full.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Rep. Zolman moved to go on to the next agenda item. The motion passed with Sen. Allen and Reps. Allen, Biskupski, Frandsen, Goodfellow, and Hansen in opposition.

5. Committee Business/Adjourn -

Mr. Hunsaker informed the committee that The Navajo Nation is requesting \$1,320,000 in capitol outlay funds, and \$607,746 in maintenance and state surplus funds to help establish a program that would place the Navajo Nation in charge of administering the TANF program for tribe members as permitted by federal law. He said he would communicate all additional information he receives.

MOTION: Sen. Jones moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:42 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

