

MINUTES OF THE SENATE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Senator Pete Brungardt at 12:00 p.m. on March 30, 2001 in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Chairperson Nancey Harrington, Excused

Committee staff present: Russell Mills, Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor
Nikki Kraus, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Representative Tony Powell
Senator Lana Oleen

Others attending: See Attached List

Vice-Chairman Pete Brungardt opened the informational hearing on:

Sub SB 192—Legislative executive officer compensation; commission

Staff reviewed the substitute bill for the committee. (Attachment 1). Theresa Kiernan presented a brief note concerning the bill. (Attachment 2).

Following questions, Representative Tony Powell presented testimony in favor of the bill. He stated that as a result of poor compensation, campaigning for and holding a legislative position was very difficult for many potential candidates. He stated that it seemed like the Legislature did not have the political will to increase compensation, so the commission created by the bill would solve that problem. He stated that he felt that this was the last chance for this bill because the House had supported it and a lack of Senate support would destroy it. He stated that this was a good opportunity because it was not an election year.

In response to questions from Senator Barnett, Representative Powell stated that state employees influence this decision by electing appointees to the commission. He stated that past commissions held public hearings which made recommendations which were never carried through by the Legislature.

Senator Teichman stated that in the public's eyes, this would look like the Legislature wanting a salary increase, and she would have difficulty justifying that to her constituents who would ask why that money could not be devoted to education. Representative Powell stated that the commission would not necessarily mean a guaranteed raise, although it might be painted in that light. He stated that the budgets which have been created this year have devoted over \$60 million toward education, so she might want to present that fact to her constituents. In response to comments from Senators Teichman and O'Connor, he stated that the Legislature should not fail to do one good thing simply because it may not be able to do every good thing.

Senator O'Connor asked if the commission would seek out Legislators to speak and provide information since there would be no legislators on the commission, and Representative Powell said yes.

Senator Vratil stated that the opponents of this bill say that the commission would be determining a pay increase for the Legislature, so they must think that there is a pay increase needed or they would not automatically present it that way. Representative Powell stated that if a legislator did not want the increase, he or she could decline it.

Senator Lyon stated that he would prefer if the commission would make a recommendation, not binding

CONTINUATION SHEET

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law. Representative Powell stated that such a condition existed in current law, but no action was ever taken on the recommendations of past commissions.

Senator Lana Oleen presented testimony in favor of the substitute bill. (Attachment 3). She also presented a diagram entitled "2000 Annual Legislative Salary, Legislator Per Diem (Allowance for Daily Expenses) During Legislative Session and Approximate Numbers of Days in Session" in favor of the bill. (Attachment 4).

Senator Oleen stated that she was concerned that the only people who were going to be in the Legislature were people who could afford to be, who have businesses that allow them to be, or that were retired. She stated that the proposition was for \$1000 per month salary and \$1000 per month for constituent services. Senator Oleen stated that she did not know if this was the best plan going, but that it would allow people outside of the Legislature decide what the salary and expenses ought to be for representing 64,000 people. She stated that she did not believe that the Legislature should say that the commission is the wrong approach, and that although money was tight this year, people have been told to reallocate monies, and that the interim committee budget ought to be reduced.

Senator Oleen stated that interim committees were not worth all of the money and effort put into them because their results were not treated with any more reverence than spontaneously created bills and amendments. She stated that the elimination of conference committees would also send a message that people would not be pulled away from their jobs as much. Senator Oleen stated that she felt that additional day expenses should be eliminated simply for traveling over 100 miles in order to attend a meeting.

Senator Oleen stated that in the past, the movement to support what is contained within this bill lacked leadership and thereby left the rank and file to flounder, but that was no longer the case.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on Call of the Chair.