

2013 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

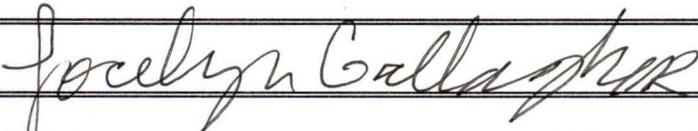
HB 1438

2013 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

House Human Services Committee Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1438
January 28, 2013
17822

Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To provide an appropriation to the DHS for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Minutes:

Testimonies #1, #2

Chairman Weisz: Opened the hearing on HB 1438.

Rep. Kathy Hawken: From District 46 (0:15- 3:11) Introduced and supported the bill. United way funding has helped. The number is around 900 people they are helping. There needs to be a consistency of this activities program and they are asking for a small amount of money to keep these centers up and running.

Rep. Muscha: (3:25) Is there a reason just these two centers?

Rep. Hawken: Tom or Shirley can answer that question better than I can.

Tom Newberger, Executive Director for Red River Human Services Foundation in Fargo and Wahpeton: Testified in support of the bill. (5:13 - 9:19) (See Testimony #2)

Rep. Silbernagel: (9:24) Does the activity center support folks at Frasier, Friendship and other group homes across the board?

Tom Newberger: Yes.

Rep. Porter: Where does the \$103,000 revenue come from?

Tom Newberger: Most is from United Way, \$45,000 and then \$26,000 from the Fargo Park District. The City of Fargo puts in \$12,000 a year.

Rep. Porter: Inside of the communities, the YMCAs, other programs going on, it seems we are separating or un-integrating once again.

Tom Newberger: Your right the law suit did talk about integration. People were kept in the institutions and the goal was to get them out into the community to provide better services.

The YMCA is doing that on a limited basis. We take people to Minnesota Twins and the Fair. They love the indoor activity of ceramics. We do both things in the community and in house with the dollars we have.

Rep. Porter: What about the "me too" effect that this legislation will have? How much do you think the State of ND should be contributing to the overall cost of the program?

Tom Newberger: There is an additional provider in Minot. The "me too" effect would be if they need support we would encourage that. We support people from all the providers from the Fargo area.

Rep. Fehr: When you refer to the activity center, you are talking about a specific center in Fargo?

Tom Newberger: Yes.

Rep. Fehr: I understand there are three activity centers in the state, how does the rest of the state handle this currently?

Tom Newberger: Other providers do the best they can. Many times there is greater family support. Other providers have tried but not been successful.

Rep. Fehr: Talking about providers there are organizations that are contracted by DHS to providing housing and other care needs for individuals. Where is the line between what those providers provide and what the activity center provides?

Tom Newberger: The DHS fund our day programs and provide residential support which is in the evening. We have 11 group homes with 8 people. If you have 8 people you are watching and 4 people want to do something, it is a problem for the 1 staff person. Our goal is to create meaningful life experiences for the people we support. The way is the activity center. We are spreading our dollars with limited residential dollars.

Rep. Muscha: Do you communicate with other centers on a regular basis?

Tom Newberger: Sure, we should have better contact with them. If Minot needed help we would support them.

Rep. Mooney: Currently how is your funding structure?

Tom Newberger: Primarily donations from the city of Fargo, United Way, park district and donations. Members will pay a dollar or two for an activity, they have limited funds.

Rep. Mooney: That structure is similar for the other communities as well?

Tom Newberger: Yes, very similar. There is zero state funding at this point.

Chairman Weisz: You stated you are losing between \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year, so how are you making that up, where is that coming from?

Tom Newberger: We operate charitable gaming. It has filled the niche. We use to do well in, but it is down now.

Charlie Bremseth: Executive Director of LISTEN Inc. in Grand Forks, ND testified in support of the bill. (22:34 - 26:25) (See Testimony #2)

Chairman Weisz: (26:33) Is it your intention that this should become an ongoing funding?

Charlie Bremseth: Yes.

Rep. Mooney: Regarding the 200 people from the community without disabilities, can you tell me what that looks like?

Charlie Bremseth: In 1992 the board decided to open the door to the community. North Grand Forks is mostly low income. We wanted to build those networks between people and develop relationships in case we weren't there anymore. We segregated out our funding. Where we are having the problem is in the area of focusing and funding the developmental disabilities. Saw some of the funding move into other areas, basic needs, housing, etc. The stress that is on communities is also on us.

Rep. Mooney: If appropriated would this help the drop in situation go back to its previous state or only to maintain where you are today?

Charlie Bremseth: It would help us go back to our previous state. We used up all our savings leaving us with no choice but to make those decisions we did.

Rep. Anderson: How many volunteers do you have help?

Charlie Bremseth: We use to get social work students and work study students, but not anymore. We have on the average of 25 volunteers. We need professional staff that is trained.

Rep. Anderson: How many professional staff do you have?

Charlie Bremseth: We have one program director and 4 part-time staff in our agency.

Rep. Oversen: Do you provide services to only individuals in group homes or both in group homes and on their own in the community?

Charlie Bremseth: We provide activities to both.

Chairman Weisz: Further questions from the committee? Further support on HB 1438? Any opposition on HB 1438? Closed the hearing on HB 1438.

2013 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

House Human Services Committee
Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1438
February 11, 2013
Job #18743

Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Vicky Crabtree

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To provide an appropriation to the DHS for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Minutes:

Chairman Weisz: Let's look at 1438. This bill appropriates specific funds for two organizations; one in the Northeast and one in the Southeast for providing recreational services.

Rep. Laning: I move a Do Not Pass on HB 1438. I don't feel we should be narrowing our focus that much to recreational facilities to a couple of communities.

Chairman Weisz: How are they funding themselves now?

Rep. Porter: Local fund raisers and United Way, a DD foundation in Cass County, charitable gaming, and Red River Human Services Foundation.

Rep. Anderson: Second.

Chairman Weisz: More and more we are starting to get into funding private foundations and entities and I've struggled if that is the role of the state. We are taking away local giving in exchange for state funding. We are funding the dental mobile and Great Plains Food Bank which are private organizations. Do we just fund all the non-profits and eliminate charitable giving? I have supported some of these in the past, but we have to be careful how fare down the road we are going to go.

Rep. Muscha: I see this as a prolife bill also because the bill we just passed in the House is exactly the people this deals with. Are we not responsible to care for them?

Rep. Silbernagel: About a month ago the Governor had a statewide conference and apparently the North Dakota receives a \$500,000 grant from the federal government and it is to be disbursed based on need and define your project and show a good use. Apparently this past year they didn't have enough projects to disburse all of the funding. I

think there are opportunities and programs to tap into and we aren't fully utilizing some of the programs that already exist.

Chairman Weisz: For DD?

Rep. Silbernagel: Yes.

Rep. Fehr: Within the DHS there is already a DD funding and this is something done in addition to what is done in the rest of the state. These centers are asking for a funding outside of the DD budget so I am supporting a do not pass because there is already a funding for the DD services across the state.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 10 y 3 n 0 absent

Bill Carrier: Rep. Laning

Date: 2-11-13
Roll Call Vote #: _____

2013 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1438

House Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: Do Pass Do Not Pass Amended Adopt Amendment
 Rerefer to Appropriations Reconsider

Motion Made By Rep. Laning Seconded By Rep. ANDERSON

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
CHAIRMAN WEISZ	✓		REP. MOONEY		✓
VICE-CHAIRMAN HOFSTAD	✓		REP. MUSCHA		✓
REP. ANDERSON	✓		REP. OVERSEN		✓
REP. DAMSCHEN	✓				
REP. FEHR	✓				
REP. KIEFERT	✓				
REP. LANING	✓				
REP. LOOYSEN	✓				
REP. PORTER	✓				
REP. SILBERNAGEL	✓				

Total (Yes) 10 No 3

Absent _____

Floor Assignment Rep. Laning

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1438: Human Services Committee (Rep. Weisz, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (10 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1438 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2013 TESTIMONY

HB 1438

#1

HOUSE BILL 1438

Funding for Intellectual Disabilities

January 28, 2013

Good Morning Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Tom Newberger and I am the Executive Director for Red River Human Services Foundation in Fargo and Wahpeton, North Dakota. I am here today to ask for your support of HB 1438 and to explain why it is important to so many citizens in North Dakota with Intellectual Disabilities.

Red River Human Services Foundation is a Not-For-Profit organization providing licensed residential and day programs to people with Intellectual Disabilities. The State funds these programs as they support the most vulnerable people in the State. I appreciate this funding and I am here today to ask for funding for the Activity Center which is a non-State program providing activities to over 400 people with Intellectual Disabilities in the evening and on week-ends.

Many of the services provided by the Activity Center focus on getting people out of the group home and into the community where social connections and friendships are made which improves their quality of life. For example, Red River Human Services Foundation operates many residential homes with 8 people living in them. In the evening, it is common to have one staff working. It is difficult for one staff to all take eight people plus themselves anywhere in a van. In the old days, we use to have vans that held 12-14 people, but the stigma attached to having so many people with disabilities traveling in one van cast a negative stereotype upon them. To move away from this stereotype, we now use smaller vans.

Another problem we face is when one person living in an eight bed home wants to go out to eat while another wants to stay home and yet another person wants to go to a movie. One staff cannot fulfill their wishes at the same time due to staffing issues. This is where the

Activity Center plays a critical role, for example, by taking people to movies, a ball game or camping. However, the Activity Center is much more the fun activities. The Activity Center is also a safety net for people with Intellectual Disabilities. Many members of the Activity Center live alone in the community and have limited supports by providers. They come to or call the Activity Center when they are in need or crisis. For example, "Mable" is a member of the Activity Center and she lives alone in her apartment. One night she called and asked the Activity Center to come to her apartment because she had the flu and was out of her medication with no funds to purchase them. Staff from the Activity Center bought her medication and went to her apartment. When they arrived, they found that she was nearly out of food too so staff went and bought food for her. The Activity Center supplies food to others with Intellectual Disabilities too. This is an important safety net for many people.

There are many other stories to share such as providing hats, mittens and coats for people in need and I have many other fun stories to share too, but I will now focus on the financial side of the Activity Center. Our current budget has approximately \$150,000 in expenses. Our current revenue is projected to be \$103,000 which translates into a potential \$47,000 loss when our year ends on June 30th. In previous years, our losses were between \$30,000 to \$40,000, but we are seeing an increase in demand for our services. For the year ending on December 31, 2012, we had 438 people, up from 402 the prior year. The \$300,000 in HB 1438 comes out to just under 46 cents per person per day (\$300,000 divided by 2 years divided 365 days divided by 896 people).

I will close with two comments from two prominent people from Fargo. The first is former police Chief Chris Magness who said The Activity Center keeps people out of bars and makes their job much easier. The second comment is from Roger Gress, the Fargo Park District's Superintendent who said they support the Activity Center financially because they can't do what we do with the limited funds they give us.

Thank you for your time and I will be happy to answer any questions.

HOUSE BILL 1438

#2

FUNDING FOR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

JANUARY 28TH, 2013

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Charlie Bremseth and I am the Executive Director of LISTEN Inc. in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and present what I think is an issue of importance and concern which affects citizens of North Dakota who have intellectual disabilities and who are some of the most vulnerable people in our State, and to ask for your support that could help them in HB 1438.

The concept of a LISTEN (Love Is Sharing The Exceptional Needs) Center began to take shape over 40 years ago in Grand Forks as a way of helping people with the transition to community life – for those already living in the community and for those 100 that were soon to come from Grafton State School. It was founded as a grass roots, not-for-profit organization. Today, LISTEN not only operates a locally funded recreation/leisure and educational Drop-In Center, it also provides a State funded, licensed, and fully accredited Adult Day Services program. It is the LISTEN Drop-In Center where I need to focus your attention.

Last year there was a very real possibility that the LISTEN Drop-In program and all that it offers would have been lost. A closing would have impacted 1297 people - **350 folks with intellectual disabilities**, 200 people from the community without disabilities, 200 children under the age of 18, and 547 people served by an outreach grant. Funding was becoming unstable and sporadic. The red warning flags went up. There was news coverage on TV, radio, newspapers that Drop-In was in trouble. Board action reduced operations from 6 days a week to 3 days a week. Staff was reduced from 4.5 to 1.5 and the

#2

budget was cut by 2/3. After a year, attendance levels persisted: 7,770 - down from the pre reduction of the drastic cuts left their mark that it is estimated will take nearly 3 years to rebuild. This now is our current situation.

What IS needed at this time is the support, assistance, and the program stability HB 1438 can offer.

We all know, and understand that people with disabilities and those of low income more often than not, are not able to fund programs that they derive benefit from – at least not without assistance. We are asking for that assistance.

In conclusion you should know that it takes a lot of time and energy to create the dynamics of a community center especially for people with disabilities – and especially with the aim of transitioning them into the community. A major financial crisis can set that process back. If our aim is to ensure that those who have in the past been denied access to acceptance in our respective community's then HB 1438 is a way we can help ensure and enable the transitioning process can happen. You can help.

Thank you once again for giving me this opportunity. I will be happy to take questions.