

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Minutes of the

WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE

Thursday and Friday, September 4-5, 1997

Roughrider Room, State Capitol

Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Jim Yockim, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 4, 1997.

Members present: Senators Jim Yockim, Judy L. DeMers, Judy Lee, Bob Stenehjem, Russell T. Thane; Representatives LeRoy G. Bernstein, Linda Christenson, Connie Johnsen, Ralph L. Kilzer, Carol A. Niemeier, Clara Sue Price, Robin Weisz

Members absent: Senators Tom Fischer, Donna L. Nalewaja; Representative Jack Dalrymple

Others present: See attached appendix

It was moved by Senator DeMers, seconded by Representative Kilzer, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the June 19, 1997, meeting be approved as mailed.

WELFARE REFORM STUDY

Chairman Yockim invited Ms. Carol Olson, Executive Director, Department of Human Services, to comment on the committee studies and the state's implementation of welfare reform in North Dakota.

Ms. Olson provided testimony, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Olson discussed her management approach for the Department of Human Services that includes a team approach emphasizing a "flat" administrative structure to allow staff most closely associated with the issues to take an active role in the department's decisionmaking process. She said regarding welfare reform monitoring and evaluation, a joint legislative and executive branch effort is essential for welfare reform to be successful. She said the department is proceeding with the implementation of the temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) block grant and the training, education, employment, and management (TEEM) project in the state's welfare reform effort. She said TEEM will be implemented in the remaining counties beginning in January 1998 with all counties having started or completed conversion from aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) to TEEM by July 1998.

Ms. Olson said regarding the federal funding of evaluation efforts, North Dakota was awarded a federal grant of \$25,000 to complete the design of an

evaluation plan, the evaluation plan was submitted in July 1997, and the plan included funding requests for an independent evaluation and a performance audit by the State Auditor's office. She said the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has expressed an interest in funding the evaluation, but official approval has not been received. She said HHS also indicated that the performance audit component would not be funded. She said if the entire evaluation plan is rejected, evaluation of welfare reform programs will be conducted within the department. She said regarding the administration of the employment and training program for TANF recipients, the existing job opportunities and basic skills (JOBS) program will be redesigned to meet the TANF requirements and provide a solid work force preparation and placement program. She said a request for proposals will be released within the next several weeks to allow public and private providers to submit plans, with successful proposers required to meet a number of performance-based outcome measures relating to job placement and retention, case closings due to employment, and client recidivism rates.

Ms. Olson said the recently passed Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997 includes funding for welfare-to-work grants to allow states to provide employment services to TANF recipients. She said the welfare-to-work grant program, which is administered by the United States Department of Labor, will involve the state's Private Industry Council. She said the caseload ratio related to the implementation of TEEM is a concern for both the department and the counties.

Ms. Olson discussed the departmental responsibilities relating to revised administration of TANF pursuant to Section 76 of 1997 House Bill No. 1226. She said certain policies under TEEM may require change in order to accomplish the integration of the food stamp and Medicaid programs with the TEEM program. She said regarding the simplified food stamp program, the federal agency may determine that the TEEM asset limit, which is higher than that allowed for regular food stamps, jeopardizes cost

neutrality, requiring an adjustment to the TEEM asset limit to meet the food stamp requirements. She said regarding Medicaid eligibility, if the appropriate state plan change requested is not approved, the TEEM asset limits would differ from the required Medicaid limits and could not be used. She said the Medicaid program requires eligibility to be determined according to state AFDC eligibility rules in effect on July 16, 1996.

In response to a question from Representative Johnsen, Ms. Olson said department representatives have been meeting with representatives of the Board for Vocational and Technical Education and the Board of Higher Education regarding the welfare-to-work and JOBS training programs.

Mr. Kevin Iverson, Director, TEEM Division of the Department of Human Services, provided testimony regarding the state's implementation of the TANF program, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Mr. Iverson said the state's TANF plan was accepted by the HHS on June 26, 1997, and implemented in North Dakota on July 1, 1997. He said waivers have been requested of federal agencies regarding Medicaid and food stamp eligibility. He said when the TEEM project is implemented statewide, the waivers related to TANF and Medicaid would likely be terminated, subject to the approval of the committee. He said the statewide implementation of TEEM will require a different approach for the new food stamp program, the simplified food stamp program. He said the TEEM project, with some modification to accommodate the food stamp requirements, will be used as a basis for the simplified food stamp program. He said when the state's simplified food stamp program plan is approved, the waivers related to food stamps should be terminated. He said this plan is under review by the Food and Consumer Services Office of the United States Department of Agriculture for cost neutrality. He said this should be completed by early October 1997. He said two major areas have been identified as concerns, the household composition rules and elements of the benefit calculation process relating to the use of a shelter expense deduction. He said the state will change its household composition rule to conform with the current food stamp policy as the federal agency is unwilling to negotiate this requirement. He said the benefit calculation issue should be resolved through compromise with the federal agency.

Mr. Iverson said once the federal agency completes the cost neutrality analysis, changes can begin on the TEEM computer system, which will be accomplished by contractual arrangement. He said it will be well into 1998 before the simplified food stamp program is operational as a part of the TEEM program.

Mr. Iverson said Governor Schafer has informed HHS that North Dakota will not require mandatory community service for recipients on the program for more than two months, a state option under the TANF provisions. He said a task force is being formed to address domestic violence, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, statutory rape education and prevention, and pre-pregnancy family planning. He said the Indian tribes will operate their own employment and training program, known as the native employment works (NEW) program, requiring a coordinated referral process between the tribes and the state for tribal members who receive state TANF assistance but participate in the tribal NEW program. He said a memorandum of understanding has been drafted through a cooperative state, county, and tribal effort to identify the respective roles and responsibilities.

Mr. Iverson discussed the impact of the Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997 which includes the following welfare-to-work grant program and technical amendments:

- States have the option to exclude tribal employment and training participants from the states' work participation calculation, an advantage to North Dakota.
- The percentage of individuals that may receive vocational education and be counted for work participation is increased from 20 to 30 percent.
- Two-parent families are considered one-parent families for the work participation requirement if one parent is disabled.
- Any adult receiving assistance and residing in "Indian country" would receive an exemption from the five-year time limit if the related unemployment rate exceeds 50 percent.
- Welfare-to-work grants are administered by the Department of Labor and delivered through the states' Private Industry Councils. One percent of the funds is available each year for tribal programs; additional funds may be used for evaluation of the grant and for performance bonuses, and the remaining funds are distributed to the states as allocated funds (75 percent) and competitive grants (25 percent). States are not required to accept the funds but must meet the state's TANF maintenance of effort and match the federal funds with 33 percent state matching. North Dakota would receive \$2.7 million for federal fiscal year 1998 and \$2.5 million for federal fiscal year 1999, requiring state matching of \$891,000 for 1998 and \$825,000 for 1999.
- Seventy percent of the welfare-to-work grant must be designated for TANF recipients or

noncustodial parents who meet at least two of the identified criteria.

Mr. Iverson also presented information regarding the TANF program caseload which currently has 3,859 families, a decrease of 116 cases from June 1997 and 853 cases less than July 1996. He said while many counties have experienced a drop in caseloads, most of the reservation counties have had steady or increasing caseloads. He said the unemployment rate for most reservation counties is substantially higher than the state average. He said a child care market survey will be conducted this month to assist the department in determining child care availability and to adjust reimbursement rates. He said some of the funds appropriated for child care for the 1997-99 biennium will be obligated to certain projects to meet federal requirements, including \$1.8 million for direct child care for children on Indian reservations, Head Start expansion projects, and child care centers serving low-income families. An additional \$1.25 million will be obligated for activities to improve the quality of child care and \$100,000 will be designated for minigrants to the northeast region to cover costs resulting from flood damage.

Regarding the evaluation of welfare reform, Mr. Iverson said a proposal was submitted in conjunction with the evaluation contractor, Berkeley Planning Associates, for a 28-month evaluation and indications are that part of North Dakota's plan may be funded.

Ms. Michon Sax, Director, McKenzie County Social Service Board and Williams County Social Service Board, provided testimony regarding the implementation of welfare reform in the two counties. A copy of her testimony is on file in the Legislative Council office. She said the two counties intend to implement all the TANF regulations and policies, while some other counties are delaying the implementation of the requirement that a caretaker with a youngest child age four months or over be referred to a job contractor. Ms. Sax discussed the caseload changes. She said a total of 54 cases were closed from June to August 1997 in Williams County. She said TANF requires participation by all caretakers not otherwise exempt in either a tribal or state JOBS program. She said the tribal plan allows for the greatest level of success by targeting individuals who have educational needs, and providing the tribes the ability to deliver services where the individual resides and near tribal economic development and jobs development agencies. She said Williams County has completed its TEEM changeover and McKenzie County plans to by March 1998.

In response to a question from Senator Yockim, Ms. Sax said five counties are involved in providing assistance to members of the Three Affiliated Tribes.

In response to a question from Senator DeMers regarding the tracking of individuals leaving assistance, Ms. Sax said Williams and McKenzie Counties need to do additional followup work, but she believes that the majority of the jobs people take when they leave assistance are for minimum wage, with little or no benefits and for less than 40 hours per week.

Senator Thane said the state's unemployment rate is 3.05 percent due in part to an increase of "food service" jobs, which do not typically provide a long-term career opportunity.

In response to a question from Senator Stenehjem, Mr. Iverson said "Indian country" is not specifically defined but would probably include Indian reservation land and adjacent Indian-owned lands. He said the determination of the reservation area unemployment rate is the state's responsibility, and rates available from the Bureau of Indian Affairs would include all eligible workers, projecting a higher unemployment rate. He said the North Dakota Job Service rate includes only those individuals seeking work and currently unemployed.

Representative Price said individuals may move from Minot to the reservation area to avoid the five-year time limit on benefits. Mr. Iverson said that may happen but the person would be required to meet the TANF work requirements.

In response to a question from Senator DeMers regarding child care funding, Mr. Iverson said a certain percentage of the federal funds must be obligated during the federal fiscal year, which was not known during the 1997 Legislative Assembly.

In response to a question from Senator Thane, Mr. Iverson said some families will need assistance for longer periods and the 20 percent exemption will allow the state to continue to meet those families' needs.

In response to a question from Representative Kilzer, Mr. Iverson said the state's matching funding for the welfare-to-work grants was not included in the 1997-99 Department of Human Services appropriation, the state does not have to accept the federal funds, and the state's cost will be approximately \$800,000 to \$900,000 per fiscal year.

Senator Lee said the state and federal government do not have primary responsibility for providing child care, as child care is the parent's responsibility.

Senator Yockim asked questions regarding the TEEM project computer changes, related costs, and the request for proposals process. Mr. Iverson said IBM does have an advantage because of its prior TEEM work but other companies will be considered as well. Chairman Yockim asked that Mr. Iverson keep the committee informed regarding computer changes for the TEEM project.

The committee recessed at 11:55 a.m. for lunch and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Kathy Hogan, Cass County Social Services, Fargo, provided testimony regarding welfare reform, including a review of Job Service North Dakota's Partnership Role Supporting Welfare Reform, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Hogan said the AFDC caseload in Cass County has decreased by approximately 100 families in the last 12 months. She said the Job Service report indicates that the Fargo region has exceeded performance standards in the area of clients entering employment, the percentage employed on a permanent full-time basis, educational attainment, wage standards, and a reduction in the client recidivism rate after 26 weeks from 30 percent to 19 percent.

In response to a question from Senator Yockim regarding the availability of day care, Ms. Hogan said there are new centers open and others close on a steady basis. She said the day care needs include coverage for evenings and weekends. She said there is one large child care provider in Fargo that provides 24-hour, seven-day per week availability.

Mr. Jerry Hegstad, Department of Human Services, presented a report on the impacts of the spring storms and flood of 1997 and the services provided by the Department of Human Services in response, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. The document discusses the department's disaster response efforts, recovery efforts, and recommendations to improve future response efforts.

Mr. Mike Schwindt, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Human Services, provided information regarding the department's funding request of the federal government to recover costs resulting from the spring storms and spring flooding. Mr. Schwindt said the department spent approximately \$18.3 million on related services, of which approximately \$525,000 could be the state's share. He said the department expects to bill for services provided for mental health crisis counseling and some other areas if it is determined to be reasonable. He said the department has been denied reimbursement for lost revenue at the human service centers.

Chairman Yockim asked representatives of the Department of Human Services to provide information at the next committee meeting on the impact of the spring storms and flooding on welfare reform efforts in the northeast part of the state.

Mr. Jess Cooper, Vice President, Governmental Affairs, Greater North Dakota Association, provided testimony regarding the participation of the private sector in welfare reform efforts, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Mr. Cooper's testimony includes copies of newspaper articles on welfare reform efforts and businesses' responses to welfare reform and the results of a Greater North Dakota Association survey of members regarding employment opportunities for welfare recipients.

Mr. Cooper said the survey results indicate it is too early in the welfare reform program for human service agencies to have contacted North Dakota businesses regarding hiring welfare recipients and that although some firms do have job openings for which recipients could apply, all firms responding indicated that when they have future job openings they would consider employing qualified welfare recipients.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Iverson said that the Private Industry Council consists of some members of the Workforce Development Council. He said Mr. Fraine Zeitler is the director. Mr. Iverson provided a copy of the press release naming the membership of the Workforce Development Council, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Chairman Yockim asked that the Legislative Council staff provide the committee with a listing of the membership of the Private Industry Council in North Dakota.

Ms. Corrine Bennett, Administrator, Early Childhood Services, Department of Human Services, provided testimony on child care and welfare reform, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Bennett discussed the child care development fund and the federal child care funds available. She said approximately \$8.8 million per year or \$17.7 million for the biennium is available for child care for approximately 10,500 children.

In response to a question from Senator Yockim regarding the department's response to Grand Forks flooding, Ms. Bennett said the department sought and received a grant of approximately \$350,000 from the Bush Foundation for family child care and made \$300,000 available from departmental funds for equipment replacement for child care providers.

In response to a question from Senator DeMers, Ms. Bennett said the United States Department of Agriculture changed its rate for food supplements provided by child care providers, thus reducing the funds received by child care providers and requiring them in effect to increase their charges for services. Ms. Bennett discussed an article in *Working Mother* magazine that rates child care provided by the states, which indicates that North Dakota receives a low ranking in the availability of and state officials' commitment to child care. Ms. Bennett distributed a copy of the article to committee members, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Ms. Linda Reinicke, Lutheran Social Services, discussed the child care resource and referral program which assists families in finding child care and offers support and resources to child care providers. A copy of Ms. Reinicke's testimony is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Reinicke discussed the reduction in child care spaces in Williston from 600 in January 1997 to 400 currently. She said

there is a shortage of evening, weekend, and infant care in the state, especially in the areas where new industries with nontraditional work hours have opened. Ms. Reinicke submitted letters regarding the provision of child care from Ms. Rae Moore, Director, Merit Care Child Development Center, Fargo, and Ms. Cheryl Ekblad, Program Director, Minot Head Start, copies of which are on file in the Legislative Council office.

Ms. Ardella Kopp, day care provider, Bismarck, discussed the needs of day care providers. She said families are concerned with the lack of available quality child care and more providers are needed. She said most day care providers are loving people that are interested in providing quality services.

Ms. Kopp distributed copies of a letter from Ms. Lee Anderson regarding a survey of child care providers in Grand Forks, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Theodora Menge, People Escaping Poverty Project, Fargo, provided testimony regarding the needs of families on assistance. She said assistance families need support, affordable child care, and an opportunity to keep their dignity. She said recipients should be able to receive training that exceeds 12 months as many of the better paying jobs require 18 to 24 months of training. Ms. Kris Bjelde, YWCA, Fargo, provided a letter from Ms. Mary Plene, Fargo, regarding her difficulties in supporting her family. A copy of the letter is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Duke Schempp, People Escaping Poverty Project, Fargo, submitted a letter from Ms. Adrienne Neeland, Fargo, regarding her difficulties supporting her family with minimum wage employment, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Ms. Caryl Penner, People Escaping Poverty Project, provided testimony and submitted a letter from Ms. Michelle Anderson regarding what support she needs to get off welfare. A copy of the letter is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Chairman Yockim distributed a copy of a letter from Mr. Christopher T. Dodson, Executive Director, North Dakota Catholic Conference, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Representative Price provided a report on the Welfare Reform Task Force nominating committee. Representative Price and Senator Lee are members. She said the nominating committee has had two meetings, has discussed task force goals, and has developed a list of individuals to be considered as members of the Welfare Reform Task Force.

Representative Christenson, a member of the Legislative Council's Child Support Committee, discussed the testimony received at that committee's meeting regarding child support issues.

Chairman Yockim informed the committee that Representative Price and Representative Christenson

will provide additional updates at future meetings regarding these issues.

The committee recessed at 4:30 p.m. and reconvened at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 5, 1997.

STUDY OF INDIAN TRIBAL WELFARE REFORM ISSUES

Mr. Iverson presented testimony regarding the impact of welfare reform on North Dakota's Indian tribes, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said in August 1997 there were a total of 551 American Indian TANF cases in the eight reservation counties. He said the tribes provide training and employment services under the NEW program with the reservations providing training to 310 participants. He said the state's contractors, Job Service North Dakota and Curtis and Associates, will serve the clients not receiving services from the NEW program through the JOBS program. He said that even though adults in the tribal areas may be exempt from the lifetime limit if unemployment is over 50 percent, they will still be subject to the work participation requirements and are included in the calculation of the participation rate unless they are participating in a tribal employment or training program. He said the Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997 allows states the option to exclude tribal NEW and employment and training program participants from the state's work participation rate calculation. He said the North Dakota Private Industry Council is a subgroup of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council and has between six to eight members. He said Oregon provides state funds for matching tribal TANF programs and Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and South Dakota do not. Mr. Iverson discussed the tribal TANF plan requirements which include providing services for a three-year period specifying whether the service will be provided by the tribe or through agreements with other entities. The plan also must identify the population and service area the tribe will serve as well as the employment opportunities on or near the service area. He said the tribes may negotiate with the federal agency for work requirements, time limits, and penalties as part of the tribal TANF plan.

Mr. Iverson said that the American Indian cases in the eight counties containing the Indian reservations represent 44 percent of the statewide TANF caseload and benefits paid represents 46.7 percent of total benefits paid for August 1997. He said American Indians represent between 52 to 53 percent of the caseloads statewide.

In response to a question from Senator DeMers, Mr. Iverson said the department has conducted a number of meetings with representatives of the tribes

and the recent discussion focus has been with the tribal NEW coordinators.

In response to a question from Senator Yockim regarding tracking TANF clients, Mr. Iverson said that when a case is closed the client has no additional responsibility to report to the department, making followup surveys difficult. He said tracking will be strengthened by the additional contact that workers will have with clients in the TEEM program.

It was moved by Senator DeMers, seconded by Senator Thane, and carried on a voice vote that the committee invite representatives of the Board of Higher Education to provide information regarding higher education institutional goals contained in the six-year plan that relate to welfare reform.

Senator Yockim asked that the Board of Higher Education also discuss the child care needs of students and faculty, how the needs are being addressed, and the possible use of state facilities by private providers to meet the needs.

It was moved by Senator Thane, seconded by Senator DeMers, and carried on a voice vote that the committee invite representatives of the Department of Human Services, North Dakota Job Service, and the Private Industry Council to provide information regarding North Dakota's implementation of the welfare-to-work grant program, including state funding responsibilities and the respective agency responsibilities.

Representative Johnsen said there is some confusion that exists regarding the education provisions of 1997 House Bill No. 1226 and she asked that the Department of Human Services be invited to provide information regarding those provisions and to also provide information regarding the "life skills" training provided clients.

Mr. Leo Cummings, Employment Training Department Administrator, Three Affiliated Tribes, New Town, provided testimony regarding welfare reform, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Mr. Cummings said the Three Affiliated Tribes Business Council established a tribal Welfare Reform Task Force to study the tribe's option of providing its own TANF program. He said because federal funding is based on fiscal year 1994 caseloads which are less than current caseloads, and because the state does not provide matching funds, the tribe has decided to not implement its own TANF program. Mr. Cummings discussed the tribal/state memorandums of understanding and the continued need for state/tribal coordination providing services to TANF clients.

Ms. Deborah Painte, Executive Director, North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, Bismarck, discussed the issues relating to tribal welfare reform. She said reimbursement for the tribes is based on fiscal year 1994 caseloads and most tribes are

experiencing increased assistance caseloads. She said in addition the federal reimbursement represents roughly 70 percent of the current costs of providing assistance to recipients. She also suggested the tribes be provided an opportunity to be a contractor to provide job preparation training for tribal assistance recipients.

Mr. Thomas Disselhorst, staff attorney, Three Affiliated Tribes, New Town, provided testimony regarding welfare reform, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said welfare reform will require increased cooperation between the tribes and the state government, will require job creation, will need to address what happens to recipients when the welfare eligibility time period expires if enough jobs are not available, and the related federal funding does not allow a tribe to adequately fund their own TANF program, especially in light of increased caseloads.

Ms. Myra Pearson, Tribal Chairman, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, Fort Totten, said she supports the welfare reform changes and is concerned with the jobs lost in the Devils Lake area as a result of flooding. She said job creation on the reservation will be difficult and welfare reform success will require a joint effort between the tribe and the state government.

Mr. Raphael DeCoteau, Chairman, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Belcourt, testified regarding welfare reform. He said the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa has discussed the possibility of a tribal TANF program. He identified tribal assets that include tribal sovereignty and independence, an ability to respond to tribal needs, and potential development of a new casino and resort complex. He said the tribe had approximately 800 recipients in early 1997 and 1,000 in July 1997, with the increase due in part to relocation as a result of spring flooding in Grand Forks. He said there are approximately 26,000 tribal members, of which 16,000 live on the reservation. He said the tribe has 59 percent unemployment and approximately 79 percent of the reservation families live below the federal poverty level. He said the tribe is in need of training funding to reduce the unemployment level. He said the tribal summit being held in Bismarck is the first time such a summit has taken place and the tribes need to take responsibility for reservation conditions. He said he represents the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe in a spirit of cooperation to improve conditions on the reservation and reduce unemployment.

Ms. Jana Shields Gipp, Administrative Officer, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Fort Yates, provided testimony regarding tribal welfare reform. She said the committee should remember that reservation Indians have a dual citizenship, the reservation and the state. She said one challenge the tribes are experiencing is that for many recipients entering the job market they

are first generation workers and have transportation and communication obstacles. She said the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has approximately 14,000 tribal members, of which one-third live off the reservation. She said the tribe has limited resources and employment opportunities, including two casinos providing approximately 300 jobs. She said the casinos are not a long-term solution to reservation unemployment. She said federal funding provided through the tribal economic recovery fund (TERF) relating to flooding cannot be used for TANF programming on the reservations.

In response to a question from Representative Kilzer, Ms. Gipp said the Standing Rock Community College has had a big impact by educating tribal members but is seriously underfunded.

Ms. Verna Bailey, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Fort Yates, provided information regarding the tribal welfare reform efforts. She said the tribe has hired an attorney to analyze the law and has discussed the obstacles to implementing its own TANF program. She said as the reservation is located in both North Dakota and South Dakota, the tribe has also worked with South Dakota in the development of a TANF plan. She said the TANF program was originally planned to be implemented on January 1, 1998, but will be delayed. She said the tribe would like to provide the job training services that Curtis and Associates currently provides under contract with the state.

Ms. Kathy Vallee, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Fort Yates, discussed the tribal NEW program, which has received \$73,000 to provide job training programming for 60 clients in North Dakota and South Dakota. She said there are some casino jobs available on the reservation, but tribal members may not be qualified, may lack adequate transportation, or do not have affordable day care available.

In response to a question from Representative Bernstein, Ms. Vallee said her office discussed with the casino the possibility of operating a day care, but the casino indicated it was not interested in providing day care services.

Ms. Rose LeBeau, Employment Training Administrator, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, Fort Totten, discussed the employment training tribal efforts and the need for coordination between the state and tribes. A copy of her presentation is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Nhalin Shaw, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, Fort Totten, discussed the employment opportunities on the Spirit Lake Reservation. He said there are between 60 to 200 construction jobs, 400 casino jobs, and up to 300 manufacturing jobs. He said the main problem is adequate transportation. He said jobs development and training programs are necessary.

Ms. Dinah Breland, supervisory social worker, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Belcourt, discussed welfare reform. A copy of her testimony is on file in the Legislative Council office. She said it is the consensus of the Welfare Reform Task Force of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa not to actively pursue the implementation of a tribal TANF program because of high caseloads, a high unemployment rate, the difficulty of job development and placement, and the lack of the state's matching funds.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Representative Christenson said the committee, as it proceeds through its study, needs to take into consideration what may happen to recipients at the end of the five-year time limit if they are unable to be employed.

Senator Thane said the committee needs to periodically revisit the child care issues, including why large employers are reluctant to provide child care onsite. He said welfare reform is unlikely to be successful without employers' participation.

The Legislative Council staff offered to summarize the issues that have been identified during the meeting relating to welfare reform for the committee's use at future meetings. Chairman Yockim asked that the staff prepare the summary.

Representative Price said that previous Legislative Council committees have studied child care and suggested that some of the information provided the committees may be of interest to committee members. Chairman Yockim asked the Legislative Council staff to provide any relevant information regarding recent child care studies to the committee.

Senator DeMers asked that the agenda item at the next committee meeting regarding the welfare-to-work program discuss tribal needs and address the option of the tribes providing training programs.

The committee adjourned subject to the call of the chair at 12:17 p.m.

Jim W. Smith
Assistant Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

Chester E. Nelson, Jr.
Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

ATTACH:1