

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
SFN 2033 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

1307

2001 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

HB 1307

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1307

House Human Services Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 23, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
Tape 3	X		0 to 450 5088
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Courne Easton</i>			

Minutes:

Chairman Price, Vice Chairman Devlin, Rep. Dosch, Rep. Galvin, Rep. Klein, Rep. Pollert, Rep. Porter, Rep. Tieman, Rep. Weiler, Rep. Weisz, Rep. Cleary, Rep. Metcalf, Rep. Niemeier, Rep. Sandvig

Chairman Price: Opened hearing on HB 1307.

Rep. Mary Ekstrom: Presented support of HB 1307.

Chairman Price: We don't have fiscal note on this bill. Is this entirely state dollars?

Rep. Mary Ekstrom: Yes, Madam Chairman.

Chairman Price: On Line 9 you have bordering communities, but you have in here nine centers located in North Dakota.

Rep. Mary Ekstrom: It does include a center located in Moorhead. Both Fargo and Moorhead use these centers.

Chairman Price: So you're anticipating some of the money going to Moorhead?

Rep. Mary Ekstrom: That is correct.

Chairman Price: How would funds be distributed?

Rep. Mary Ekstrom: Through the Health Department.

Senator Tim Mathern: Spoke in support of HB 1307. We need to provide this service for these children.

Chairman Price: Being mandated by the court - should this be in the judicial budget as opposed to the Department of Health?

Senator Tim Mathern: That would be an option.

Jody Bittrich: Rainbow Bridge Director, Rainbow Bridge Safe Exchange/Visitation Center. One of the main goals of Rainbow Bridge is to increase the number of non court ordered referrals as compared to the 95% which was currently court ordered (See testimony in support of HB 1307.)

Rep. Porter: What is your current annual budget?

Jody Bittrich: Our current budget is \$150,000. We split in half because half of our families are North Dakota and half from Minnesota. It is \$75,000 for North Dakota.

Rep. Porter: The source of that money is donations, foundations, United Way - places like that?

Jody Bittrich: Total budget we receive are from one-time grants, parent fees, and donations.

Rep. Porter: How much is the state of Minnesota putting into it?

Jody Bittrich: Approximately \$65,000.

Rep. Porter: Of this \$490,000 in appropriations, if this bill is approved, how much would be going to Rainbow Bridge in Fargo?

Jody Bittrich: Other people testifying would have that information.

Vice Chairman Devlin: What type of growth for court ordered visits are you looking at?

Jody Bittrich: Currently 95% of the families that we serve are court ordered.

Vice Chairman Devlin: Are you looking to serve another 100-200 families that aren't court ordered?

Jody Blittrich: We don't have specific numbers. In looking to expand our program we try to increase that number by 25%. That is across the board whether the court ordered or not.

Rep. Niemeier: What are your current fees? Are your fees fixed or sliding scale?

Jody Blittrich: We operate on sliding scale. Our families are paying the lower end. For safe exchange they range between \$3.00 and \$15.00. For supervised visitations we charge between \$5.00 to \$30.00 per hour.

Rep. Niemeier: You would admit families that couldn't pay?

Jody Blittrich: Yes, to keep kids safe we do what we have to do. We don't want a financial burden for the families to use Rainbow Bridge.

Cathy Ferderer: Representing North Dakota Supervised Visitation Network. (See support of HB 1307 in written testimony.) The North Dakota Supervised Network is composed of the nine providers (monitored) visitation and safe exchange. We currently offer services in 11 locations. Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Grafton, Grand Forks, Fargo, Minot, Oakes, Valley City, Wahpeton, and Wishek.

Vice Chairman Devlin: What is the overall budget spent at these nine centers - North Dakota dollars?

Cathy Ferderer: It varies depending on if they utilize churches or some other community organization.

Vice Chairman Devlin: I was looking for the total amount for all nine centers.

Cathy Ferderer: I don't have that figure, but I can get that for you.

Rep. Niemeier: You said this could fund rural areas where service isn't being provided, how would that be accomplished?

Cathy Ferderer: Some of the money we asked for would include some monies for startup. It would be for training and for safety features. That would be available through a grant source.

Rep. Weiler: There are currently 11 centers across North Dakota now?

Cathy Ferderer: There are nine centers and 11 locations. Valley City has two satellite locations.

Rep. Weiler: Where are funds coming from?

Cathy Ferderer: Various grant sources, client fees.

Rep. Cleary: What are the safety features?

Cathy Ferderer: A breathalyzer, metal detectors, panic buttons.

Darlene Bartz: Preventive Health Section Chief for Department of Health. (See support for HB 1307 in written testimony.) \$45,000 of the requested appropriations of \$499,750 will be allocated to the Department of Health to administer grants and monitor the centers receiving funds.

Rep. Porter: It is the department's intention to hire FTE's to run this or are you absorbing this in your existing number of FTE's?

Darlene Bartz: We will absorb program into our regular staff number.

Chairman Price: Why isn't Minot requesting funds?

Cathy Ferderer: Minot didn't give the reason why they pulled out other than that they feel their funding is appropriate.

Chairman Price: The grants you are working on through STOP, what are the applicant's guidelines when they apply for grants?

Mary Ekstrom: We request a proposal in their budget indicating an estimation of how they plan to use the dollars.

Vice Chairman Devlin: I was trying to get a feel for what the current budgets were for the centers.

Mary Ekstrom: Currently we are budgeting three centers - about a \$178,000 for the total budget.

Susan Beehler: R-Kids. Susan gave her support of this bill. She said it provides an invaluable service and allows the children to see both parents in a safe place.

Cleo Fraser: Bismarek resident. Supported HB 1307 in her written testimony. She and her children have utilized this service.

Sherry Mills Moore: Bismarek Attorney in Private Practice and Lobbyist for the State Bar Association. (See support for HB 1307 in written testimony.) With the supervised visitation center as an option, the courts, lawyers, and parents have been far more willing to establish visitation with a risky parent.

Vice Chairman Devlin: Would you explain GSI to our freshman members?

Sherry Mills Moore: Gross sexual imposition.

Chairman Price: Do you see numbers of court ordered visitations growing dramatically?

Sherry Mills Moore: It is growing steadily, and if courts know this is an option, they may order visitation when otherwise they wouldn't.

Christine Hogan: Executive Director of the State Bar Association. Judges and attorneys are utilizing these centers more and more. Family law mediators are working out agreements for parents to use these facilities. It is enabling family relations to continue. Lawyers of this state feel this fills a distinct legal need.

Chairman Price: Do you see this as a continuing request for appropriations?

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Christine Hogan: I'm not in a position to speak in behalf of the appropriations. I simply wanted you to know that the courts and lawyers are using the system.

Chairman Price: Close hearing on HB 1307.

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1307 A

House Human Services Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 31, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
Tape 3	X		2450 to 3700
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Connie Boston</i>			

Minutes:

COMMITTEE WORK:

CHAIRMAN PRICE: HB 1307.

VICE CHAIRMAN DEVLIN: I will move the amendment that changes the date ending from 2002 to 2003. It was just a typo error.

REP. NIEMEIER: Second.

CHAIRMAN PRICE: All in favor signify by saying Aye (14 YES). Discussion on the bill?

REP. GALVIN: I think it is something that is totally unnecessary.

VICE CHAIRMAN DEVLIN: I see some need, but I also see a \$500,000 appropriation and see all of the centers getting by without state funding. I think we have a lot of priorities to address this session. I would oppose this bill.

REP. CLEARY: I think it really is a good bill and something that is really necessary. You get a lot of animosity from some of the testimony. Maybe we could reduce the fiscal note.

CHAIRMAN PRICE: When this bill first started, I don't remember the year, it was \$230,000 fiscal note.

REP. NIEMEIER: I do remember what we talked about that there was an increase in usage of these centers. They are also looking at expanding some of them where there are no safe centers in the smaller communities. I do support this and feel that it is important when you think of the scenario of families that have to go to the police station to visit.

REP. DOSCH: There is no doubt in my mind that these centers are good, but my feelings are two fold: One is that they are existing on their own now without another government program being put out there, and it seems like every time we turn around there is another government program. When is enough, enough. I am concerned about the user fees. The clients aren't willing to pay a lion's share of this. Why should society keep jumping in. I could see it if they were generating 80% of their funds from user fees.

REP. WEILER: I visited a lady that runs a center in Dickinson. I happen to agree with Rep. Dosch that these places are needed, but we also have a lot of churches they could go to. I spoke with the lady from Dickinson and asked how they were doing now and where they are getting their funding from. She said they were doing fine. I asked what she would do if they don't get the state funding - she said we're just going to keep going. We should continue to let them do it on their own.

REP. SANDVIG: Some of these people when going through a divorce can't see each other without conflict. A lot of these people that are using these centers fall into the low income bracket so they can't afford to pay anything.

REP. GALVIN: Some times we can do things on our own - one way or another.

VICE CHAIRMAN DEVLIN: I will for a DO NOT PASS.

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REP. WEILER: Second.

CHAIRMAN PRICE: Any other discussion.

REP. NIEMEIER: This can be a real help for the rural areas that currently aren't covered. It is a huge safety factor for children to make sure that these centers are being maintained. We're seeing more and more families that are having these difficulties.

CHAIRMAN PRICE: I certainly wish that this would be something that we shouldn't have to discuss. But I do understand that we are forced to prioritize a lot of things in this committee. I also realize that these centers have to be pretty creative in how they do their financing. I am going to have to support the Do Not Pass too for reasons that I have bills we need to push a little harder. Seeing no other hands, the clerk will take the roll on a **DO NOT PASS as amended**.

10 YES 4 NO 0 ABSENT CARRIED BY REP. WEILER

10514.0101
Title.0200

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
Representative Ekstrom
January 23, 2001

VK
2/1/01

HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO HB 1307

HOUSE HS

02-01-01

Page 1, line 10, replace "2002" with "2003"

Renumber accordingly

Date: 1-31-01
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1307

House Human Services Committee

Subcommittee on _____

or

Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken DO NOT PASS as Amended

Motion Made By Rep. Devlin Seconded By Rep. Weiler

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Clara Sue Price - Chairman	✓		Audrey Cleary		✓
William Devlin - V. Chairman	✓		Ralph Metcalf		✓
Mark Dosch	✓		Carol Niemeier		✓
Pat Galvin	✓		Sally Sandvig		✓
Frank Klein	✓				
Chet Pollert	✓				
Todd Porter	✓				
Wayne Tieman	✓				
Dave Weiler	✓				
Robin Weisz	✓				

Total (Yes) 10 No 4

Absent _____

Floor Assignment Rep. Weiler

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

