

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SEN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

14405

2001 HOUSE FINANCE AND TAXATION

HB 1405

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1405

House Finance and Taxation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 31, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	X		5,069
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Jamie Stein</i>			

Minutes:

REP. AL CARLSON, CHAIRMAN, Opened the hearing.

REP. DALE SEVERSON, DIST. 37 Introduced the bill as the prime sponsor. He stated this bill was tried in 1997, but unfortunately, didn't succeed. He submitted a bill which did succeed at that time, which allowed the fire district in the state of North Dakota, to raise their mill levies from ten mills to thirteen mills. Currently, in North Dakota law, the ambulance districts are allowed to levy up to five mills within a county. This bill will allow it to ten mills. Many of our rural communities, even at five mills, we don't raise that. In Cooperstown, we are at our maximum of five mills, we get seventy two hundred dollars a year. Every seven years, maximum, we have to buy a new ambulance, and ambulances, currently, are running between sixty and eighty thousand dollars. Some of the arguments we have heard in the past, is that ambulance services also get reimbursed. If you sat on Human Services, you would find out that medicare and medicaid reimbursement, is only a portion of what we actually need.

REP. RENNER Related to SB 2141 from 1997, are you suggesting that it needs to have a receipt of a petition by not less than twenty percent of the qualified electors?

REP. SEVERSON What I handed out was a bill that was passed in 1997, the ambulance bill is very similar to that. It is just to demonstrate to you that it has been done in the past.

REP. CARLSON You are not interested then in having the elections as part of the bill?

REP. SEVERSON Our verbage in the session of 1997, was exactly identical to what was passed in SB 2141, we do not have any counties and cities, that will not send this to the vote of the people. I am not opposed to that, but we did not think it was necessary.

REP. DROYDAL How many ambulance districts are there and how many are capped out?

REP. SEVERSON There are one hundred forty three ambulance services in North Dakota, the people that follow me, may have how many are capped out.

The reason they do not use the five mills, we live in a community that is fairly good size, for rural North Dakota in this day and age, Finley does not opt to go to the five mills because of, the small town syndrome. Once you are taxed, the contribution is down. These ambulance services in small towns, have actually raised more money with bake sales and everything else, then the tax that is due them. Therefore, they opt not to use the tax because then the contribution goes down. This, at least, would give them the option to do that.

REP. CARLSON We have heard this as long as I have been around here, about the funding of our ambulance services, and one session, there was a real concerted effort to assign someone to help these services to collect the payments which is owing to them, but because nobody really knew how to do it, there was a tremendous amount of money which was not collected, because no one was filling out the forms, is that better or worse?

REP. SEVERSON That was a pilot program that actually, the Health Department, I believe in 1997, was passed. We do have available to ambulance services, to use this service. The service is actually, out of Minot.

REP. CARLSON Is that working?

REP. SEVERSON It has been very neutral. The ambulance services which don't have the opportunity to bill, or doing it because they are privately owned, or private volunteers, those ambulance services will come forward, but they have not really noticed a big change in the income.

REP. CARLSON Stated, we are still wrestling with the decision of how much authority do we want to grant this level for raising a mill levy. We need compelling reasons, and you are giving some, and there are probably more, but the response we get, is giving you the ability to raise taxes at home, that hasn't sat very well here. What we are needing from you and your constituents are compelling reasons for us to grant authority to raise mill levies. This is about the fourth bill this week.

REP. RENNER What was the reason the bill was introduced in the session before?

REP. SEVERSON It was introduced along with the firemen, they had a bill and we had a bill, their's passed and ours failed, and we can't understand to this day, why. One of the things in our bill was, it went from five to thirteen.

REP. HERBEL Why did you go to ten, if you felt you needed thirteen two years ago?

REP. SEVERSON The people who brought this forward, thought we shouldn't go that high because it failed before, we certainly wouldn't mind that kind of an amendment.

REP. SCHMIDT Stated he called home to check with his ambulance service, they operate on small donations, they have a mill levy too, but it is small. The people are concerned that if we give them that mill levy, they will lose that donation. Is that a concern?

REP. SEVERSON Gave an example of what happens in Cooperstown. Even though they have the five mills, they have four major fund raisers per year, because the five mills are inadequate to fulfill their needs. Many of the small towns, even with the five mill levy, are doing the same thing. We do more now for the patients, but it costs a lot more to do. We want the opportunity to be able to do that. I do not know if ten mills would eliminate the problems we are talking about.

REP. CARLSON Asked how many districts have the availability to raise their mill levy, but don't.

REP. SEVERSON Stated he didn't have numbers on that, but could get it.

DEREK HANSON, PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH DAKOTA EMS ASSOCIATION,

Testified in support of the bill. See attached written testimony.

REP. RENNER Would you be opposed, if this bill was amended, to have language which would add that it has to go to the vote of the people?

DEREK HANSON Our association would not be opposed to that.

REP. HERBEL Of these one hundred forty ambulance units, are they all maxed out on this?

DEREK HANSON No they are not, some ambulance services don't take advantage of the mills for a variety of reasons, because they can get the donations, and that type of thing. Also, services who are using the mills, some of them are maxed out, and some of them are not. Gave an example of Kidder County, which has to divide the money up between several services in that

county, in Kidder County it is a full five mills and they are only generating thirty six thousand dollars. One service who would want to save up for an ambulance, a sixty or eighty thousand dollar ambulance, would have to put away for many years to come.

REP. SEYERSON Returned to the podium. He shared what was happening in his district.

Right now, we are having a struggle to keep the volunteers on board. We are looking at a county wide mill levy to operate an EMS system. In Cooperstown the ambulance service is owned by the city. They have a quick response unit in Hannaford and an ambulance in Binford which is fifteen miles away. They can't keep going this way. We are approaching the county and asking for a mill levy. Cooperstown ambulance now needs to become an advanced life service, so they have paramedics and those types of people on board to provide the service. The two entities, Binford and Hannaford, which Hannaford is already quick response, will become our first responders. The people in our specialized ambulance service need to be full time, paid paramedics to provide this service. The base salary for paramedics coming out of college right now is twenty one thousand dollars per year. As I told you earlier, five mills provides us with only seventy five hundred dollars. By allowing us the ten mills, would also allow us to go county wide, which would raise about thirteen thousand five hundred dollars.

REP. CARLSON The frustration I have had over this issue over the years, is that we have enabled mills to be raised, and your arguments are very compelling, and when you sympathize with those, and then when you take them back home, they won't give you the mill levy. They are the people who will be benefiting from the services you just described. It is frustrating to hear it again and again and again.

REP. SEVERSON That is exactly correct. In the instance that I talked about, we do need to go to the local people. When we got our mill levy in 1988, we did just that. We sold it to the Cooperstown people, and they passed it. The reason it never got to the counties, is because, Hannaford didn't have anything, and Cooperstown does most of the ambulance service.

NORM STUHLMILLER, REPRESENTING THE OLDER PEOPLE IN THE RURAL

AREAS, Testified in support of the bill. When these people have to call 911, that is the first chance they have of getting any help. My home town is Dodge, I don't know where the closest ambulance service is there. Probably Killdeer, thirty miles away. I may be dead before he gets there. I live in Bismarck, I always join the ambulance service here, it costs me forty dollars a year. People say, why are you doing that, medicare will pay for it. What good does it do, if everybody in the country pays for it, and we don't have the ambulance. I am concerned for these people who live in the rural areas, they need this badly.

REP. BRANDENBURG TO REP. SEVERSON How many people died along the Interstate and the ambulance service was called

REP. SEVERSON Gave statistics - in 1998, they did take that survey of how many people were taken care of locally or how many were transients. Eighty two percent of the ambulance runs were local, the other sixteen to eighteen percent were the transients. Our ambulance service is required, by law, to take them where they want to go.

With no further testimony, the hearing was closed.

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House Finance and Taxation Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB 1405
Hearing Date January 31, 2001

COMMITTEE ACTION 2-5-01, TAPE #2, SIDE B, Meter # 0 - 700

REP. RENNER Made a motion for a **do pass**

REP. BRANDENBURG Second the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

11 YES 3 NO 1 ABSENT

REP. BRANDENBURG Was given the floor assignment.

Date: 2-5-01
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1405

House FINANCE & TAXATION Committee

- Subcommittee on _____
or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Rep. Renner Seconded By Rep. Brandenburg

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
CARLSON, AL, CHAIRMAN	✓		NICHOLAS, EUGENE	A	
DROVDAL, DAVID, V-CHAIR		✓	RENNER, DENNIS	✓	
BRANDENBURG, MICHAEL	✓		RENNERFELDT, EARL		✓
CLARK, BYRON	✓		SCHMIDT, ARLO	✓	
GROSZ, MICHAEL	✓		WIKENHEISER, RAY	✓	
HERBEL, GIL	✓		WINRICH, LONNY	✓	
KELSH, SCOT	✓				
KROEBER, JOE	✓				
LLOYD, EDWARD		✓			

Total (Yes) 11 No 3

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Rep. Brandenburg

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 6, 2001 8:22 a.m.

Module No: HR-21-2438
Carrier: Brandenburg
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1405: Finance and Taxation Committee (Rep. Carlson, Chairman) recommends DO PASS (11 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1405 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2001 SENATE FINANCE AND TAXATION

HB 1405

2001 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1405

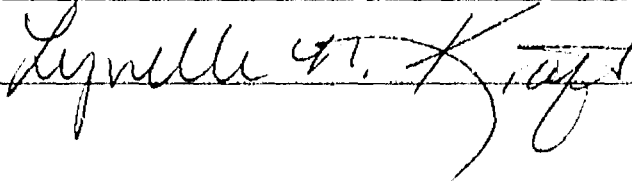
Senate Finance and Taxation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date 3/5/01

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		40.3-end
		x	0-4.8
3/6/01 - 2	x		48.6-end
		x	0-5.4
3/7/01 - 1		x	15.1-22

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Senator Urlacher: Opened the hearing on HB 1405, relating to the county tax levy limitation for ambulance services.

Senator Harry Tallackson: Co-sponsored the bill, testified in support. This a local way of handling this by the commissioners. It has to go to a vote of the people.

Representative Dale Severson: Prime sponsor, testified in support. Back in 1997, the ND EMS Assoc. sponsored a bill which moved the levy from 5 to 13, it was amended from 13 to 10, and failed. EMS is doing a lot more than they have before, equipment costs are up, ambulances cost more, plus training for personnel. Not every community will use the 10 mills. The commissioners would put it on the ballot or petition.

Senator Christmann: Right now, the most commissioners can go up to is 5 without a vote?

Representative Dale Severson: Yes, but they rarely do it without going to a vote.

