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Deanna Halliwell
Operator's Signature

10/3/03
Date

2003 HOUSE FINANCE AND TAXATION

HB 1342

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. **HB 1342**

House Finance and Taxation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 20, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		0.6
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Janice Stein</i>			

Minutes:

REP. WESLEY BELTER, CHAIRMAN Opened called the hearing to order.

REP. ARLO SCHMIDT, DIST. 7 Introduced the bill. He stated the Silver Haired Assembly did not know where to go to get funding. He stated their funding was cut off in 1995. During the last session, they tried to have a line added on the income tax forms, however, the tax department said there was no more room for any lines. This time they picked on the Watchable Wildlife.

REP. WEILER Asked if there was a certain age limit.

REP. SCHMIDT Stated he thought you needed to be 65 years of age.

CAROL SIEGERT, REPRESENTING THE SILVER HAired EDUCATION ASSN.

Testified in support of the bill. See written testimony.

REP. BELTER Asked if she was still employed with the Treasurer's Office.

CAROL SIEGERT State she was retired.

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REP. BELTER Asked if she knew how many senior citizens were active in their local communities.

CAROL SIEGERT Stated she didn't have the figure, but assumed someone at the hearing would have the figure.

LARRY WAMLER, SILVER HAired ASSEMBLY, Testified in support of the bill. He submitted a handout giving information relating to this organization. See written copy. He stated he wanted to emphasize more, the future than the past. We can't change the past, but we can shape the future. He stated the information presented is being presented in Atlanta, this coming week-end. They are being invited to come to North Dakota in 2004 for their committee meetings. There is one representative/delegate from every county. There are eight regions who have a delegate. Every county has several towns with senior citizens, and everyone has the opportunity to vote for their delegate, which mirrors what our own government at the state and national level does. He stated senior citizens need communications and informed citizens for voter participation. He stated you have to be sixty years of age to be a member. He stated they have junior high school students and college students who participate as pages in their senior citizen centers and bring information to them. He felt doing this on a three generation level, with seniors sharing their wisdom, from experience in the community, everyone will gain information.

CURTIS HERMAN, MAX, ND, PRESIDENT OF THE SILVER-HAired EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. Testified in support of the bill. See written testimony plus several handouts relating to this organization.

REP. BELTER How much money were you hoping to raise?

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CURTIS HERMAN Stated, in his conversation with seniors in North Dakota, which is approximately 180,000, each one said they would be willing to give at least one dollar. I am hoping we can raise about fifty thousand dollars. If we were to set up an office and start all over again, it would cost anywhere from twenty to thirty thousand dollars.

REP. BELTER As policy makers, the next bill which is coming before us, removes all check-offs from the income tax form. As a legislator, I have no problem with your organization, my problem, where does it end, as far as the number of organizations, that would like to be put on the form and have a check-off. You have fifty thousand members, that would be one dollar per year in dues, was that approach ever looked at?

CURTIS HERMAN That is how we have continued to operate, since 1997.

REP. BELTER Asked if there was a lot of objection to that.

CURTIS HERMAN No, but it is hard to go out and beg for the money. It is not our intent to take away from any other organization, but I guess that is what is happening.

REP. DROVDAL The check-off we are talking about is on the short form, is it not?

CURTIS HERMAN I believe it is on both forms.

REP. WEILER You said this was written after the Missouri Silver Haired Association, how do they get their funding?

CURTIS HERMAN To my knowledge, it has been from senior centers.

LARRY WAMPLER Intervened and stated in many states, they have received funding from the tobacco settlements.

REP. WEILER Asked whether they had any administrative costs.

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CURTIS HERMAN At this point, we pay expenses from the Steering Committee. We meet twice a year, our hope is to set up an office again and have a director.

REP. WEILER Have you considered writing a letter to these fifty thousand members and asking for donations, has that been tried?

CURTIS HERMAN We have done this since 1997.

BERNIE WAGNER, SILVER-HAIRED DELEGATE FROM BARNES COUNTY,

Testified in support of the bill. See written testimony.

JIM COATS, PRESIDENT OF THE MANDAN GOLDEN AGE CLUB Testified in support of the bill. He stated there are thirteen hundred members. They have begged their members to send two delegates to the Silver-Haired Legislature. It is a worthwhile learning experience. They are willing to learn and willing to support themselves by this one dollar check-off.

BILL PFEIFER, ND WILDLIFE SOCIETY, Testified in opposition of the bill. He stated he was not opposed to the Silver-Haired Organization, but questioned the position it put the legislators in to have to decide between this or that. He didn't think that was proper legislation. He didn't think legislators should be put in a position to remove one organization and install another.

RON LUETHE, CITIZEN OF BISMARCK Testified in opposition of the bill. He stated he has seen what the Watchable Wildlife has done for North Dakota. He uses the education material for seminars he puts on. He stated he attended the Market Place of Ideas in Grand Forks, and that Market Place was based on nature based tourism. It brings people into North Dakota, and the education material this fund provides, fits very nicely with the nature based

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tourism. I belong to several organizations, and the funds they raise come from dues from their members.

DEAN HILDEBRAND, DIRECTOR OF THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME & FISH

DEPARTMENT Testified in opposition of the bill. He submitted several handouts relating to birds and wildlife in North Dakota. See written testimony. He stated that if the 180,000 people over sixty years of age pay one dollar each, it will bring in much more money than the check-off would.

REP. SCHMIDT Stated, when this bill was drafted, they did not know that you couldn't access this by law.

DEAN HILDEBRAND I didn't know until I read the bill, that the bill was coming in. I am sort of with you, I would certainly endorse an alternative method of funding. He gave an example of the different calls they get from other areas requesting handouts relating to wildlife, etc. They really encourage nonresidents to birdwatch in our state.

MIKE DONAHUE, REPRESENTING THE NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE

FEDERATION AND THE UNITED SPORTSMEN OF NORTH DAKOTA, Testified in opposition of the bill. Stating this fund applies to everybody from six months old on up to grandpa and grandma.

DAVE ANGELL, TEACHER IN BISMARCK, Testified in opposition of the bill. He stated he has personally been involved with creating an owl site at Bismarck High School, below their marquee on the intersection of seventh street and Ave. C. Students in the environmental club helped construct that and design that. I don't know if you can go to a school in North Dakota that does not have posters for wildlife, and birds. We have had kids make, in the neighborhood

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of two hundred boxes which have been distributed throughout the state. I would hate to see this check-off go, because it has been very positive for our state.

With no further testimony, the hearing was closed.

COMMITTEE ACTION Later in the day, Tape #2, Side A, Meter #15.5

REP. BELTER Stated he felt he could not support taking one organization off of the check-offs and putting another organization on as in the situation of HB 1196 and HB 1342. He felt he would rather get them all off.

REP. KLEIN Submitted handouts relating to the Watchable Wildlife fund and the programs it covers. He felt it was a worthwhile program and that it does a lot of good for the schools, and should stay on the state tax form.

Other committee members felt that there are a lot of good programs, but, they cannot all be on the tax forms.

Some committee members felt the two programs in question are different than other programs as they are being administered by state agencies.

After discussion, Rep. Belter stated the bill would be acted on at a later date.

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COMMITTEE ACTION 1-21-03, Tape # 1, Side B, Meter #35.9

REP. DROVDAL Made a motion for a **DO NOT PASS.**

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

11 YES 3 NO 0 ABSENT

REP. IVERSON Was given the floor assignment.

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