

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

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ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

2211

2007 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2211

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2211

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 1-24-07

Recorder Job Number: 1786

Committee Clerk Signature

Mary K. Monson

Minutes:

Senator J. Lee, Chairman, opened the hearing on SB 2211 to provide an appropriation to the department of human services for assistive technology services.

Vice Chairman Senator Erbele recognized Senator J. Lee.

Senator J. Lee (District 13) introduced SB 2211 and said it was an appropriation for assisted technology services.

Senator Heckaman (District 23) stood in support of SB 2211.

Judie Lee (Executive Director, Interagency Program for Assistive Technology – IPAT) testified in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #1 includes two packets)

Senator J. Lee asked her to put a face on this to make it easier to understand.

Ms. Lee (Meter 19:15) gave examples.

Senator J. Lee followed up with an example where someone is able to live at home even though they might have a lot of physical challenges as a result of disability.

They discussed different ways people are helped with customized items for particular needs.

Senator J. Lee asked how they interact with HERO.

Ms. Lee said the HERO has a number of medically necessary kinds of equipment and, when people call, IPAT has knowledge of all those entities that are helping people and they can refer

them. IPAT tries not to duplicate any service already provided so they refer people to the existing services and put their energies and resources into those projects that somebody isn't doing.

Senator J. Lee asked what they do with the schools since they have an obligation to meet pretty much all of the needs of kids.

Ms. Lee said probably their biggest demand from schools comes within their equipment loan library. (Meter 24:10)

Senator Heckaman addressed voice activated computer systems and said that is probably a service that can be provided to the schools.

Ms. Lee said they can do that through their demonstration sites. It has been very valuable because they can compare features.

Bob Puyear (Bismarck) testified in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #2)

Senator J. Lee said it was valuable to have users of IPAT technology be a part of this discussion.

(Meter 32:30) There was a short discussion on the consumer advisory committee and their duties.

Jillian Schaible (Bismarck) presented testimony in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #3)

Senator Heckaman asked what her position was.

Ms. Schaible said she works directly with the volunteer director to help learn computer stuff and cardiac.

Pam Weng (Housing Assistant of Affordable Housing Developers, Inc.) testified on SB 2211 in support of funding for IPAT.

James Moench (Executive Director, ND Disabilities Advocacy Consortium) (Meter 45:15) He added an example of a farmer who had an accident and was helped through IPAT.

Bob Vandal (Bismarck) testified in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #6)

Senator Dever asked him how he became aware of the technology that is helping him.

Mr. Vandal replied that he served on the advisory committee.

Senator J. Lee asked how he found them.

Mr. Vandal said through Bob Puyear.

Senator J. Lee said she was intrigued with his vision technology. It is so portable.

Mr. Vandal explained what it can do and how it helps him. (Meter 51:00) He teaches part time at BSC and it has been beneficial in helping him with that.

Senator J. Lee asked about the cost.

Mr. Vandal replied it was approximately \$2800.

Senator Heckaman asked if he uses any other kind of assistive technology in his daily life.

Mr. Vandal said currently he does not.

Senator Dever gave an example of his mother who was legally blind and who had frustrations that people are not aware of the devices available to help them. He asked if there is a greater awareness of the things that are available now than there used to be.

Mr. Vandal answered that the consumer advisory committee tries to help IPAT staff get the word out. They try to identify agencies and partners and assisted technology in getting brochures out to try to inform the public what is available. There is a lot of information and awareness to get through yet.

Mary Wahl, representing her 96 year old mother, her friends and neighbors, testified in support of SB 2211. (Meter 57:00) She addressed the problem her mother had with macular degeneration which resulted in serious problems with using basic equipment in her home. She also spoke to the problem and frustrations of finding devices that would work for her.

She said an important point to make is that IPAT is the only program in ND specifically funded to insure people with disabilities and those experiencing the effects of aging have access to the technology devices and services they need to be active participants in society or to remain in their home like her mother.

Karen Cossette provided testimony in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #7)

Al Kloster spoke in favor of SB 2211. (Meter 75:25) He gave examples of how IPAT has helped him and others he knows.

Craig Sinclair (ND Protection and Advocacy Project – P&A) testified regarding the need for funding for the services provided by IPAT. (Attachment #8)

There was no opposing or neutral testimony on SB 2211.

Senator J. Lee asked Judie Lee about the budget.

Ms. Lee replied that the current operating budget is around \$505,000. That is reflective of a reduction in staff because they have been preparing for this cut back in federal funding. (Meter 82:50) The way they came up with the extra \$500,000—with the \$316,000 they currently get from the federal government, the additional \$250,000 per year would put their income at \$566,000. That would allow them to reinstate another coordinator and would pay for basic operating costs.

Senator J. Lee asked if they were looking at maintaining a service level that they have had before they had to cut back but not enhancing.

Ms. Lee said that was right.

Senator Erbele asked how long they had been short the staff person.

Ms. Lee said they had been short this staff person for 1 ½ years. (Meter 84:25) This has resulted in waiting lists for up to 5-6 months.

Senator Warner asked how they interface with vocational rehabilitation.

Ms. Lee said their vocational rehabilitation is very specific to the client. They have a number of V R counselors that refer their clients for assessment, for demonstration of equipment, to borrow equipment. Those are probably the ways they interface with them the most.

Senator Warner asked if they have resources IPAT can borrow from them.

Mr. Lee said there is an exchange of resources.

Senator J. Lee asked if IPAT is in the governor's budget.

(Meter 86:57) The answer was that the governor's budget does include funding of \$681,000 of federal funds which would only cover one year, essentially, of operations.

Senator Dever moved a Do Pass and rerefer to Appropriations.

The motion was seconded by Senator Erbele.

Roll call vote 6-0-0. Motion carried. Carrier is Senator Dever.

Date: 1-24-07

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2211

Senate HUMAN SERVICES Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass - Refer to Appropriations

Motion Made By Sen. Dever Seconded By Sen. Erbele

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman	✓		Senator Joan Heckaman	✓	
Senator Robert Erbele, V. Chair	✓		Senator Jim Pomeroy	✓	
Senator Dick Dever	✓		Senator John M. Warner	✓	

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Dever

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2211: Human Services Committee (Sen. J. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2211 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.

2007 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2211

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2211

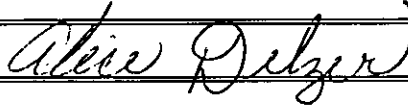
Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 2, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2680

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on SB 2211 which would provide an appropriation to the department of human services for assistive technology services.

Senator Judy Lee from District 13 (Fargo) introduced SB 2211.

Senator Mathern asked if this portion was left out of the governor's request for 2012 or if it is in addition?

Senator J. Lee answered that it is an OAR and yet it is something that we have been funding. Have also received some federal funding. It is run extremely efficiently.

Senator Dick Dever from District 32 (Bismarck) spoke in support of the bill. Spoke of personal experience with this issue. His mother had trouble with eyesight and received helpful technology services to assist her with daily living. There is an OAR in the budget and also a bill to do the same thing and—whatever way—one will hopefully pass.

Senator Krauter asked about past funding from '03-'05 and '05-'07? [08:11]

Chairman Holmberg responded that OMB was looking for info and that this bill will also go to subcommittee.

Brenda Weisz from the Department of Human Services gave explanation and quoted figures regarding to past appropriations [08:20].

Senator Krauter asked if the requested funding would be general funds?

Brenda Weisz said yes, the additional funds would be general funds due to the reduction of the federal granting for this program.

Judie Lee, Executive Director of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT), spoke in support of SB 2211 and provided written testimony (Attachment 1). Explained assistive technology and the infrastructure of assistive technology in North Dakota (p. 2-6, Attachment 1). Also referred to personal letters (Attachment 1) of how assistive technology has affected people all over the state.

Senator Mathern asked the name of the non-profit that supervises the money and who pays for the salaries of the IPAT employees?

Judie Lee answered that the non-profit is the ND Association for the Disabled and the salaries come through them, but they contract with the Department of Human Services so that federal dollars can flow.

Senator Mathern asked who signs the check?

Judie Lee answered ND Association for the Disabled.

Senator Lindaas asked if this involves people in nursing homes or if it is strictly in-home?

Judie Lee answered that they can get involved with anybody that calls. Some calls from nursing homes.

Senator Lindaas asked if the target figure of people over the age of sixty included the people in nursing homes?

Judie Lee did not have that answer.

Senator Bowman asked if this program was started by a federal grant?

Judie Lee said yes.

Senator Bowman commented that this happens often. The federal government provides funding to start a program and then turns it over to the state. It's a good program, but the state ends up having to pick up the bill.

Judie Lee said that this program started in 1988 under a federal act [26:15]. North Dakota applied and received funding in late 1993 and started the program in 1994.

Bob Puyear, member of the IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee, spoke in support of SB 2211 and provided written testimony (Attachment 2). Spoke of personal experience with assistive technology devices.

Peggy Shireley read written testimony (Attachment 3) for **Jillian Schaible** in support of SB 2211. Jillian earned her BS with the help of services provided by IPAT.

Mary Wahl gave oral testimony in support of SB 2211. She spoke of her 96-year old mother who lives in her own home and has macular degeneration. The disease progressed rapidly and Mary began looking for household devices that would assist her mother. Mary's sister-in-law heard an IPAT presentation and they visited the office to see what IPAT had to offer. IPAT provided helpful advice, hands-on demonstrations, and equipment to try at home. IPAT also has a loan program to help you purchase the equipment if you cannot afford it. They also provide a "buy, sell, swap, or donate" program. This program is important for elderly people now, but it is also going to become more and more important as the rest of the population ages. As people age, they should be able to continue to be productive, independent members of society. Staying at home at her [Mary's mom] home has been priceless and IPAT has helped her to do that.

Barb Owens, Housing Director of Affordable Housing Developers, Inc., provided written testimony (Attachment 4) in support of SB 2211.

Gennie Kilzer, a speech language pathologist in the Bismarck-Mandan area, gave oral testimony in support of SB 2211. Has used IPAT as a resource and provider of loaner communication devices since they began operating. The cost of renting directly from the manufacturing company is great. Many companies will not lease devices and make trials nearly impossible. Clients often need trial periods for more than one device to meet their needs. Video conferencing are available at the new IPAT location in Bismarck. Clients will be able to come to this IPAT location and confer directly with IPAT therapists in Fargo.

Craig Sinclair, Assistive Technology Attorney for the North Dakota Protection Advocacy Project, noted his appearance in support of SB 2211 and gave written testimony (Attachment 5).

Chairman Holmberg stated that the subcommittee would be looking at the bill and making recommendations.

The hearing on SB 2211 was closed.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. **SB 2211**

Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: **February 12, 2007**

Recorder Job Number: **3419**

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on HB 2211 indicating technology is in the amendments and there's been a motion:

Senator Grindberg moved a DO NOT PASS on HB 2211, Senator Bowman seconded.

Discussion followed. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 13 yes, 1 no, 0 absent. The motion passed and Senator Robinson will carry the bill.

Chairman Holmberg indicated this should be carried after the budget.

Chairman Holmberg closed the hearing on HB 2211.

Date: 2/12/07
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2211

Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken D N P

Motion Made By Grindberg Seconded By Bowman

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Ray Holmberg, Chrm	✓		Senator Aaron Krauter	✓	
Senator Bill Bowman, V Chrm	✓		Senator Elroy N. Lindaas	✓	
Senator Tony Grindberg, V Chrm	✓		Senator Tim Mathem	✓	
Senator Randel Christmann	✓		Senator Larry J. Robinson	✓	
Senator Tom Fischer	✓		Senator Tom Seymour	✓	
Senator Ralph L. Kilzer	✓		Senator Harvey Tallackson		✓
Senator Karen K. Krebsbach	✓				
Senator Rich Wardner	✓				

Total (Yes) 13 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Robinson

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 12, 2007 8:17 p.m.

Module No: SR-29-2971
Carrier: Robinson
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2211: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends DO NOT PASS (13 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2211 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 TESTIMONY

SB 2211



INTERAGENCY PROGRAM FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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Senate Human Services Committee

Senate Bill 2211

January 24, 2007

Chairman Lee, members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Judie Lee, Executive Director of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). I am here today to ask you to support SB 2211 requesting \$500,000 for the upcoming biennium for the purpose of supporting and maintaining assistive technology services for the elderly and people with disabilities provided through IPAT.

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) was established in 1994 to ensure people with disabilities of all ages and those experiencing the effects of aging, have access to the assistive technology devices and services they need for work, school, and home. IPAT operates and maintains eight essential service components, which make-up an unduplicated statewide AT infrastructure.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)

Assistive technology devices are items, pieces of equipment, or product systems that are used to increase or maintain functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities; computer adaptations, communication devices, specialized phones, and environmental control systems. Assistive technology services are any services that directly assist an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Who Needs Assistive Technology (AT)

People who have been injured in accidents.

People who are impacted by disease both sudden and chronic.

People who are experiencing the effects of aging.

People who were born with disabilities.

Provided for you is a map of North Dakota depicting by county the targeted populations for assistive technology services. Two groups are identified on this map, those who self identified as having a disability and those who are 60 years of age or older. These populations are, or at some future time, will be in need of assistive technology.

North Dakota's AT Infrastructure

IPAT has built an assistive technology (AT) infrastructure in ND over the past 13 years which provides AT services to people of all ages and with all types of disabilities. This comprehensive AT program is used by individuals, families, businesses, employers, schools, community organizations, health care providers, and numerous state agencies. This AT infrastructure is made up of 8 essential service components:

1) Direct Consumer Assistance

Staff is available to answer AT questions via phone, on-line, mail, videoconference, or person-to-person. IPAT provided direct consumer assistance to 2,758 individuals in the 2005-06 program year.

2) Equipment Loan Library

A large inventory of equipment is available for residents to borrow to try in their own environment for a period of 6 weeks. This helps people make the right decision and reduces the number of expensive purchasing mistakes. IPAT asks individuals to pay a rental fee ranging from \$10 to \$40 and shipping costs which helps to pay for maintenance and repairs. In the program year 2005-06, IPAT made 376 equipment loans.

3) Equipment Demonstration Sites

IPAT supports 2 AT demonstration sites, one in Fargo and the other in Bismarck. These sites provide an opportunity for people to have hands-on exploration of AT devices. It is important to note that much of this equipment is not available at a local store and this is one of the only opportunities people have to see it and try it out. In the program year 2005-06, IPAT demonstrated AT equipment to 375 individuals.

4) Alternative Financial Loan Program

IPAT applied for and was awarded federal dollars to establish an alternative financial loan program. These dollars can only be used for making loans to individuals to purchase assistive technology. Financial loans are available to eligible ND residents for the purchase of AT devices or services. The rates are approximately 1% below prime and terms can be extended for longer periods making payments affordable. Loans range from \$500-\$50,000. The development of this program started in 2003 and to date has made 11 loans for a total of \$165,625.

5) Assistive Technology Swap 'n Shop

There is a great deal of used equipment that can be reused. IPAT established a used equipment bulletin board for individuals and entities to buy, sell, swap, or donate used AT. It is housed on the IPAT website or can be accessed through a toll free number. This past program year, 88 devices were exchanged for a saving of \$161,577. We are in the process of establishing a partnership with a statewide trucking company who has agreed to pick-up and deliver items for consumers at no charge. This service will eliminate the transport barrier of someone in Williston wanting to buy a lift chair from someone in Drayton.

6) Training and Public Awareness

IPAT staff delivers training on a wide range of AT topics. This past program year IPAT trained 773 people. Public awareness is an ongoing challenge and an integral part of the IPAT program. Last program year, IPAT set up displays and showcased equipment at 27 exhibits and fairs attended by 3,593 people. IPAT also produces a bi-monthly newsletter, provides toll free numbers for information and assistance, and maintains an accessible website www.ndipat.org

7) Coordination and Collaboration

IPAT serves the state as a no-cost resource by collaborating with and providing AT expertise to agencies such as: the Department of Human Services, Secretary of State, Department of Public Instruction, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Aging Services, Information Technology Department, Protection and Advocacy, Veteran's

Administration, and numerous private sector businesses and organizations.

8) Additional Services

The final component of this AT infrastructure is categorized under Additional Services. Because the seven critical components just described are in place, IPAT is poised to partner with other organizations for special projects. For example, IPAT participated in the Real Choice Project, funded by the Department of Human Services, to explore and deliver assistive technology devices and services for state residents who were at risk of moving to an institution. The outcome report of this special project is titled *Remaining at Home...Priceless* and is included in your handouts. This project showed that when the assistive technology provision is part of the service delivery plan, it can delay or eliminate institutional or other high-cost placements. The average cost for a device was \$681 per participant and the average AT service cost was \$552. Compare this to the annual average cost of a nursing care or assisted living care facility. A breakdown of the costs for the AT devices and services, the types of devices purchased, and a profile of the participants can be found within the report.

IPAT is also able to provide AT assessments and consultations for individuals who otherwise may have to leave the state for this service or go without. IPAT provided 44 such assessments this past program year.

This infrastructure, which is in place and ready to carry-out special projects and/or services, is a significant resource to entities within ND.

IPAT Funding Sources

IPAT's main funding source is federal dollars awarded through The Assistive Technology Act of 2004: Public Law 108-364. Congress recognized the importance of maintaining the State AT programs and they changed from discretionary grants to formula programs. This means IPAT will continue to receive federal funding, however, the amount has been reduced. IPAT has had a 50% reduction in federal funding and all carry-over dollars have been expended. The current operational costs, which reflect a reduction in staff, are approximately \$500,000/year and the federal award is \$316,000/year. The requested \$500,000 would make it possible for IPAT to reinstate one of the lost positions and maintain the services described. Without the \$500,000, additional positions will be lost resulting in a decrease of services available. We are already experiencing waiting lists for equipment loans and assessments, have to decline presentation requests, and can't man the demo centers the number of hours needed to meet the needs.

IPAT's move to supplement with fees for service and specific grant dollars help with some program expenses such as equipment maintenance, but do not cover the operational costs. The demand for AT services provided by IPAT to ND residents continues to build while funding declines.

IPAT is requesting the sum of \$500,000 for the purpose of maintaining the assistive technology services established. These funds will be used towards

salaries and basic operating costs of the essential components of the AT infrastructure.

Why Should the State Invest in IPAT

North Dakota's assistive technology infrastructure is in jeopardy without some state funding. IPAT has carefully and wisely managed the federal dollars. A fee schedule for individuals who can afford to pay has been put in place, grants to support equipment for the loan library and demonstration centers have been actively pursued and with some success, vendors are persuaded to loan equipment to the centers or give reduced rates, and practices that encourage efficiency and save staff time are implemented, (such as video conferencing for training, demonstrations, and assessments). Under the AT Act, the Governor is allowed to appoint an entity to implement the program outside of state government. In 2004, IPAT requested to be moved into the private sector under the umbrella of a non-profit. Governor Hoeven honored this request. The money flows through DHS to a non-profit who provides fiscal oversight to IPAT at no cost. IPAT has implemented cost effective measures while providing quality AT services to many segments of North Dakota's population.

Momentum for technology has been started and will not be stopped. The need for assistive technology can only be expected to increase as our population ages and demands to be productive and independent. IPAT is responsive to consumers and has a proven track record of collaboration with state agencies, private entities and organizations. It is cheaper and more cost effective to maintain the infrastructure IPAT has established and continue to tailor it for the

state's use than to let it decline and then try to rebuild it later. An investment now will help to ensure the rapid advances in technology are not leaving hundreds of North Dakotan's with disabilities and those experiencing the effects of aging behind at work, school, home, and in their community.

What Difference Did AT Make in People's Lives in ND

AT has:

Delayed or prevented entering nursing homes

Made success in school possible

Made employment possible

Made continued employment after injury possible

Increased independence and safety at home

The letters provided in your packet are from individuals and service providers telling their real life stories of how IPAT and assistive technology has impacted their lives and work. Chairman Lee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. If you have any questions, I will be happy to respond.

Judie Lee
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