

2009 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2194

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2194FN

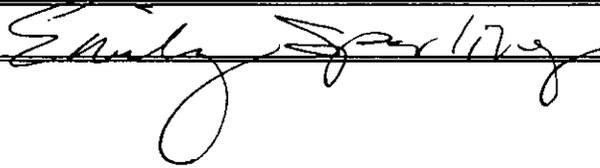
Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 01/26/2009

Recorder Job Number: 7731

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Senator Lee Opened the hearing on SB 2194 FN.

Senator JoNell Bakke Introduced SB 2194. See attachment #1.

Ellen Chaffee was unable to attend so she submitted written testimony. Wrote in support of SB 2194. See attachment #2.

Renee Stromme Executive Director, ND Women's Network. Spoke in support of SB 2194.

See attachment #3.

Senator Lee I have always struggled with gender specific issues. So what about men?

Stromme If you look at the representation that women have in the legislature, it is 15.9%. The voices of the women are not as strong or potent as men's in the legislature. There are also gender specific health issues. Women deal with issues of sexual abuse and domestic assault at a greater rate. Breast cancer and cervical cancer are specific health issues for women. I believe there are other venues for addressing men's issues. Childcare is certainly an issue for both though we still see most women are the primary care givers.

Senator Lee I agree with some of what you are saying but this is not dealing with health issues. I have a problem with the fact that we have federal funds for the Woman's Way, which I think is a wonderful program, but we do not have anything for colon or pancreatic cancer. We

don't have similar programs for men. I think sometimes we focus on an area that may be important but the unintended consequence is not allowing some of those resources to be allotted to a broader scope of issues. I am not disagreeing with the proposal you are putting forward but I don't think the issues you are addressing should be singularly focused on woman's issues. I prefer to look at health issues in a broader sense.

Stromme I would agree and I think there is a forum for those issues to be discussed within Women's Way and to discuss how men's issues are a part of women's lives. I think we can interweave all the issues for better health of all ND.

Senator Heckaman Senator Bakke, when you looked at the fiscal note and saw that it was quite large, is there any way it could be lowered?

Senator Bakke I just saw this fiscal note, it is inconceivable to me that this note is so high for a committee that is already meeting. I think that would be a reasonable request.

Senator Lee We could maybe discuss that with appropriations and get more info.

Senator Bakke I would certainly not like to go back to 1964 where they have to pay for their own travel and copies. I think that we need to support that. The other thing I would like to address is the gender equity issue. In ND, women are still underpaid for the same jobs as their male counter parts. I think we need to have a level playing field in all areas of ND. I think Renee is correct when she says men will come into the discussion. I think there is still a strong need to address women's issues.

Amy Nelson Executive Director of the Fair Housing of the Dakotas. Spoke in support of SB 2194. See attachment #4.

Senator Lee I would think that the department of labor is now addressing the issues you brought up.

Nelson The complaints are being filed and dealt with but we always support anything that educates the public and cut down on complaints filed.

Linda Johnson Wurtz AARP. Voiced support for SB 2194.

Linda Isakson ND Council on Abused Women's Services. Voiced support for SB 2194.

Tara Holt Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women. Spoke in opposition to SB 2194. See Attachment #5.

Senator Heckaman Could you tell me if there is some place that I can actively participate in the next 3-4 weeks?

Holt We have a forum that we are setting up in Fargo that we are bringing the community together to discuss childcare. We are a partner so we do not always plan the event but work with others.

Janne Myrdal Chairwoman for the Concerned Women of America ND. Spoke in opposition.
See attachment #6.

Senator Lee closed the hearing SB 2194.

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2194 FN

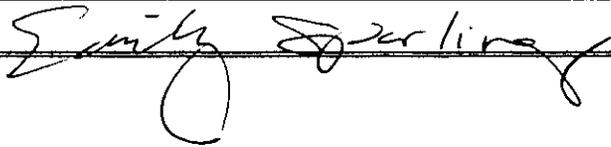
Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 01/27/2009

Recorder Job Number: 7919

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Senator Lee Reopened the discussion on SB 2194. Passed out neutral testimony from Shane Goettle, Commissioner, ND Department of Commerce. One of the things that was mentioned by Tara Holt is that they do not always have their name on programs but they do partner with other organizations. That is part of what Goettle's testimony addressed as well.

Senator Heckaman I would also like to know what their budget has been as this fiscal note is pretty large.

Senator Lee I am not crazy about this fiscal note. The information from Tara Holt does not include budget information. Dane, can you contact the commissioner and ask for more info about their budget and personnel?

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2194FN

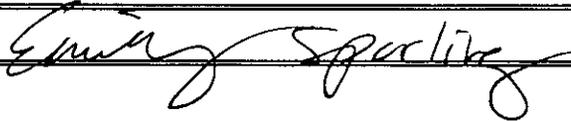
Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 01/28/2009

Recorder Job Number: 8503

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Senator Lee Reopened the discussion on SB 2194. Discussed written testimony and information gathered. Shane Goettle is neutral. Read Shane's testimony to the committee.

Senator Heckaman Where does their budget come from now?

Senator Dever They don't have one. It seems like they are doing quite a bit right now without it.

Senator Pomeroy They don't charge mileage or anything. It would be interesting to look at Ellen Chaffee's testimony. Read parts of her testimony. I think women are suffering from marginalization.

Senator Lee There is no way that I can support that fiscal note. All of the issues that Ms. Chaffee is mentioning are addressed in other areas of our legislative life as well. There is a big push right now for childcare opportunities.

Arnie Smith Department of Health. When we put the fiscal note together for this bill we looked at section 4 and a lot of the duties assigned by the committee fall on our commission. We were particularly concerned with page 3 which discussed consulting help, that jacked up the fiscal note. We saw that falling on us and that is a large piece. I know our staff is working with

Senator Bakke to work through some of these issues as her intent was to have the committee do all the work rather than the commission.

Senator Heckaman Would there need to be a fiscal note or should there be a fiscal note?

Smith We are concerned about the reporting requirement; we discussed keeping a half of a program person and half of a clerical person. The other piece is that we do not have a woman's health person. That is all dictated by the federal government. So, we would not eliminate the fiscal note but reduce it.

Senator Lee Do you see any areas now that are lacking that this bill is likely to help?

Smith This bill was not a priority for us. Our domestic violence program is getting a lot of funding and we are focusing on that. We do not have a women's health program so it might be nice to have one. Childcare is a huge issue. A lot of that is in human services.

Senator Heckaman I still can't believe that this commission wouldn't want any funds to assist in that area?

Senator Lee I'm sure they do.

Senator Heckaman Well, if you are a vital organization, you need funding.

Senator Lee Or really committed volunteers.

Senator Heckaman I don't think Senator Bakke's intention was to demolish the one that is there but add to the commission.

Senator Dever This is a pretty expensive rewrite.

Discussion about women's needs and the bureaucracy of the various organizations.

Senator Erberle I motion **Do Not Pass**

Senator Dever Second

Discussion about gender specific legislation and what it would do for women and men, if anything.

The Clerk called the role on the motion to **Do Not Pass. Yes: 3, No: 3, Absent: 0.**

Senator Heckaman I move **Without Committee Recommendation**

Senator Pomeroy Second

The Clerk called the role on the motion to move **Without Committee Recommendation.**

Yes:6, No:0, Absent: 0.

Senator Lee will carry the bill.

FISCAL NOTE
Requested by Legislative Council
01/13/2009

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 2194

1A. State fiscal effect: *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	2007-2009 Biennium		2009-2011 Biennium		2011-2013 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues						
Expenditures			\$690,000		\$703,000	
Appropriations			\$690,000		\$703,000	

1B. County, city, and school district fiscal effect: *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

2007-2009 Biennium			2009-2011 Biennium			2011-2013 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts

2A. Bill and fiscal impact summary: *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

This bill changes the number of members on the Commission on the Status of Women from five to eight, adds several issues to be addressed, and adds activities to be conducted including consulting women's organizations and preparing a report.

B. Fiscal impact sections: *Identify and provide a brief description of the sections of the measure which have fiscal impact. Include any assumptions and comments relevant to the analysis.*

This bill changes the number of members on the Commission on the Status of Women from five to eight. The Department of Health will staff the commission and a member appointed by the leader representing the majority faction of the senate shall serve as chairman. They shall meet at least four times per year. The Commission will address the following issues relating to the well-being of women: Economic development focusing on career development, domestic violence issues and recovery services for women and children, child care issues, women's health and women's educational opportunities. It also adds several duties to the commission's responsibilities.

3. State fiscal effect detail: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1A, please:*

A. Revenues: *Explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*

B. Expenditures: *Explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*

The bill requires that the Department of Health provide staff services for the commission. We anticipate that we will need two FTE – one coordinator (\$136,000) and one administrative assistant (\$77,000) and associated operating expenses of \$57,000. We estimate that travel costs of \$45,000 will be needed for the coordinator and reimbursement of members to attend meetings. We will also need \$375,000 for contractors to provide consultant help to local women's organizations in the areas detailed in the bill. Total costs are \$690,000. The increase of costs for the 2011-13 biennium are for increased salary costs.

C. Appropriations: *Explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency and fund affected. Explain the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations. Indicate whether the appropriation is also included in the executive budget or relates to a*

continuing appropriation.

Funds for this project are not included in the Department's appropriation bill (SB 2004). The Department will need these funds and 2 FTE appropriated to carry out this project.

Name:	Kathy J. Albin	Agency:	Health Department
Phone Number:	328.4542	Date Prepared:	01/21/2009

Date: 1-28-09

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2194

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass Do Not Pass Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Adopt Amendment Reconsider

Motion Made By Sen. Erbele Seconded By Sen. Dever

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

Total (Yes) 3 No 3

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

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

Date: 1-28-09

Roll Call Vote #: 2

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2194

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass Do Not Pass Amended Rerefer to Appropriations

Adopt Amendment Reconsider w/o recommendation

Motion Made By Sen. Heckaman Seconded By Sen. Pomeroy

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

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Sen. J. Lee.

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2194: Human Services Committee (Sen. J. Lee, Chairman) recommends BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2194 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

SB 2194

SB2194 – Relating to the commission on the status of women.

Chairman Lee and members of the Human Services committee, for the record my name is Senator JoNell Bakke and I represent district 43 in Grand Forks. I bring before you today SB2194 which relates to the reorganization of the commission on the status of women.

This commission was first established in 1964 with the backing of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs and the American Association of University Women. At that time, the commission had no budget and members even had to pay for their own travel and the printing of their reports. The commission gathered and analyzed statistics, listened to citizens' comments, and examined state law. In 1964, the commission held a conference in Bismarck that was attended by 220 women and men. This commission was responsible for repealing the law that exempted women from jury duty, an equal pay law and a law that repealed denying women overtime pay. Due to the lack of financial and legislative support, the commission dissolved in 1971.

The commission was reinstated in 1989 within the Governor's Council on Human Resources. In 1991, the commission was moved to the department of human services along with the committees on aging, children and youth, employment of persons with disabilities and other committees with a related interest in human services appointed by the Governor. In 1995, all these commissions were created as separate entities but remained under Human Services. Finally in 2001, SB2032 placed the Commission under the Department of Commerce. During this time, the commission met sporadically and never really addressed any women's issues outside the area of employment. There has been no significant legislation requested by this group in many years.

The role and status of women has changed significantly in the past 30 years and the women of North Dakota have a wide array of issues that this commission could and should address. This commission can serve as a voice for the women of our state and provide an opportunity to address the issues that would improve the quality of live for all women in North Dakota.

SB2194 does several things. First it would increase the commission from five members to eight. The members would include four members appointed by the governor representing different areas of the state (rural, urban, Native American, and one at large). Two female members of the North Dakota House of Representatives and two female members of the North Dakota Senate representing

both political parties. Chairmanship of the committee would switch between the majority and minority party as well as between the house and senate on a rotating basis.

The bill moves the commission from the department of commerce to the department of health. This was done as the original purpose of the commission was economic and was designed to look at the role of women in the work place. The new purpose and focus of the commission would better fit under the department of health.

The bill redefines the purpose of the commission as an advisory group to the legislature and governor on the well being of the women of the state including issues such as economic development programs, career development, domestic violence, child care issues, women's health, and educational opportunities. The remaining purposes of the commission are outlined on page 3, lines 2 through 12.

This bill would finally require that the commission submit a report to legislative council by June 1st of each even numbered year outlining the work of the commission and recommendations, if any, for possible legislation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I would stand for any questions at this time.

Testimony in favor of SB 2194

Ellen Chaffee, Ph.D.
January 26, 2009

Madam Chair, members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

My name is Ellen Chaffee and I live in Bismarck. I was a member and president of the North Dakota Commission on the Status of Women in the early 1970s. I was also an active advocate, speaker, and lobbyist in favor of North Dakota's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution. I am pleased to support this bill to strengthen and re-invigorate the Commission, and I regret that I cannot testify in person today.

The Commission seems always to have struggled – struggled to exist, to find resources for its work, and to find a viable mission among the wide array of vital issues that have confronted North Dakota women throughout its history. In those days, American women made \$.59 for every dollar made by American men. As of 2004, women made \$.76 per dollar. That's progress, but nearly 40 years is a long time to close less than half the gap, and I believe that North Dakota was by no means a leader among the states in this area. Meanwhile, domestic violence in North Dakota is either worse or more evident; child care seems both relatively less available and more dangerous; and women-led families are ground down by poverty and lack of health insurance.

The Commission's struggles derive neither from lack of committed leadership nor lack of significant public issues to address. Rather, like women themselves in too many situations, it has suffered from marginalization. I vividly recall sitting directly behind an elderly farmer on the Senate Appropriations Committee when we asked for the NDCSW to become part of the Governor's Council on Human Resources so that we could get some minimal services for our meetings. He said, "I'm against it. The Council is supposed to help people who can't help themselves. All the women I know fight like cats and dogs."

As provided in the bill, engaging legislators as members of the Commission will help a great deal, as will the focus on key issues of interest to the state. I urge you also to give appropriate consideration to a strong, supportive administrative home for the Commission and a budget not only for members' expenses but also for the activities the state would like the Commission to pursue, as defined in the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for supporting the needs of North Dakota's women.

NORTH DAKOTA



WOMEN'S NETWORK #3

Senate Human Services Committee

SB 2194

January 26, 2009

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Renee Stromme and I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Women's Network. The Women's Network is a membership organization working to improve the lives of North Dakota women. The membership of the Women's Network has long been interested in seeing a broader Commission on the Status of Women. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2194.

The Women's Network strongly supports Senate Bill 2194 which would expand the role of the state Commission on the Status of Women. The current statutory identity of the Commission is laudable but only a small portion of the effort needed to bring women into full partnership in the life of the state. Currently the Commission is charged with building women's economic development, which does need support. But, we feel the full array of women's experiences need attention to really achieve a full understanding of how to improve women's status in the state.

Broadening the focus area of the Commission would help thread together the multiple areas of importance in women's lives. It would be invaluable to have together the breadth of information on women's health, education, child care, and safety concerns along with economic development. As the state grapples with solutions to these items, a strong Commission could be instrumental in creating forward momentum for women in multiple areas of their lives.

The change in appointments lends more diversity of ideas and knowledge to the Commission. It is vital that rural, urban and tribal women all have the opportunity to equally contribute to solutions for women of North Dakota. We strongly support these changes as they lend definition to the make up of the Commission and will ensure diversity.

It is our belief that a Commission on the Status of Women should serve in an advisory capacity to various state agencies, political subdivisions, private agencies, business and industry regarding the concerns of women, and to review the plans and proposals of these groups with an eye toward their effect on women. Additionally, the Commission could be a valuable open forum for women of the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill. We urge a do pass to Senate Bill 2194. I will answer any questions.

Renee Stromme
Executive Director

418 E ROSSER, SUITE 100 · BISMARCK, ND 58501 · 701-223-6985

AS LEADERS, THE NORTH DAKOTA WOMEN'S NETWORK WILL SERVE AS THE CATALYST FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF WOMEN THROUGH LEGISLATION, COMMUNICATION AND INCREASED PUBLIC ACTIVISM.

#4

FAIR HOUSING OF THE DAKOTAS

(The Fair Housing of the Dakotas serves North and South Dakota and works to eliminate housing discrimination and to ensure equal housing opportunities for all.)

Telephone: 701-221-2530
ND Relay: 1-800-366-6889 (Voice)
SD Relay: 1-800-877-1113 (Voice)
Address: 909 Basin Avenue, Suite 2, Bismarck, ND 58504

Toll Free: 1-888-265-0907
Fax: 701-221-9597
ND TDD: 1-800-927-9275
SD TDD: 1-866-273-3323

**Testimony before the
Senate Human Services Committee
on Senate Bill 2194
by the Fair Housing of the Dakotas
January 26, 2009**

Madam Chair, and members of the Committee, my name is Amy S. Nelson and I am the Executive Director of the Fair Housing of the Dakotas (FHD). The FHD is a non-profit agency which serves North and South Dakota. We work to eliminate housing discrimination and to ensure equal housing opportunities for all. The FHD educates the public on Fair Housing Laws and also investigates allegations of housing discrimination. The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the rental, sale or financing of housing due to race, color, religion, national origin, gender (sex), presence of children (familial status) and disability (handicap). North Dakota state law also provides these protections as well as due to age (40 and over) and status with respect to marriage and public assistance.

The FHD receives a number of contacts from women regarding their housing situation. In addition to landlord/tenant law issues, these contacts also include issues of housing discrimination relating to sexual harassment by their housing providers, lease issues in domestic violence situations and denial of housing due to the presence of children in the home. Single mothers also tend to be the most common victims in the denial of housing due to receipt of Section 8 vouchers (receipt of public assistance). We have assisted a number of women in understanding their rights under fair housing laws and assisted them with that process. Housing discrimination is on the rise in North Dakota as our numbers reflect as well as those with the North Dakota Department of Labor. We very much support any efforts by the Commission on the Status of Women to address these issues and bring needed attention to them.

The Fair Housing of the Dakotas supports passage of Senate Bill 2194. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.



#5

Senate Human Services Committee
Monday, January 26, 2009
SB 2194

Good morning. My name is Tara Holt from Bismarck and I am the Chairman of The Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission was formed in 1964 during the administration of Governor William L. Guy. In the 1960's barely 30% of the women in the state worked. It was a different time. In the past 45 years our families and our economy have evolved into a diverse mix of parental units and economic models. The number of organizations for and about women has increased considerably. These organizations focused on and working on the behalf of women are often augmented by state and federal programs. Magazines, television, books, and newspaper articles also provide information and advice to, for, and/or about women.

Numerous organizations specifically identify women as their primary target in some of the following areas:

- University education
- Health and wellness
- Women in politics
- Victims of abuse
- Professional fields of practice
- Women in the outdoors
- Athletes-generic and specific sports
- Religion
- Young professionals
- Students
- Financial information sharing (investment clubs and organizations)
- Single mothers
- Service groups such as Junior League
- New mothers
- Breastfeeding mothers
- Women's networks (generic with many areas of interest)
- Women in business
- National organizations for women in blue collar jobs
- Community focused organizations
- Mothers of young children and toddlers
- Women and families in the military
- Childcare
- Farm women
- Rural women

There are also many opportunities in the state for women to network with each other and seek out goods and services for themselves and their families. Some of the events The Commission promotes, sponsors, and participates in include:

- Working Women's Summit
- WomanSong
- First Lady's Healthcare Summit
- Women's Showcases (Fargo and Dickinson)
- Marketplace of Ideas
- Housing Roundtables
- Childcare Roundtables

The North Dakota Department of Labor and the Attorney General's Offices enforce laws relating to any inequality in pay to women in the workplace.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) struggled for many years to find direction. In 1994 CSW gathered women and men to update the issues that would become our major areas of focus. They were prioritized as follows:

- Job security
- Employment accessibility
- Economic and family issues
- Rural access to services
- Healthcare accessibility, coverage and research equity
- Violence
- Discrimination
- Self-esteem
- Childcare access
- Sexual harassment

This assessment, the result of a statewide survey, provided credibility to the needs that had been expressed and gave the Commission direction. When legislation moved the Commission into the Department of Economic Development and Finance in the late 90's, it was done with the survey as documentation of the needs expressed by the citizens. Most importantly, it didn't duplicate services being delivered by others.

As breadwinners, business owners, and community leaders, women wanted to know how to increase job security, find better jobs, manage money to improve the family lifestyle. For instance, many women wanted help figuring out how to make large purchases like homes and automobiles; how to start and grow businesses; how to lead in the community; how to manage finances if they would lose a spouse. Women didn't have the wherewithal to retire and many needed help with financial planning. It was about giving women access to the other economic puzzle pieces in a trusted environment. I still remember the sixty-year old lady who had never written a check! Her husband passed away and left her to run a business she knew nothing about. That business is now thriving and paying taxes.

Today, as a partner with the Center for Technology and Business (CTB), the Commission sees the fruits of their labor. One area of interest is in the leadership in economic development statewide. Economic developers used to be men; now they number almost half women. With these professional economic developers and other statewide contacts we have developed a unique network that allows us to provide CTB staff assistance, partner help, or referrals to a partner with the expertise to assist her when her needs fall outside the economic purview of the Commission or the Center for Technology and Business.

The five members of the CSW Board of Directors include a healthcare professional, an insurance and economic development program expert, a grandmother, an economic developer, and a young husband and father who is a financial advisor. The Young Professionals Network was his brainchild. Yes, we have a man on the Board. Our advisory groups include Native Americans, senior citizens, educators, students, and single mothers.

Studies show that women who become financially savvy are more secure and successful on the job, as parents, partners, and as community leaders. Their children reap the benefits with excellent role models at home. As a partner to the Center for Technology and Business, communities, state and federal agencies, as well as other non-profit organizations, the Commission on the Status of Women has facilitated partnerships nationally and statewide. The results include the creation of hundreds of home-based jobs and targeted training for women in computer and soft skills as well as access to financial literacy training to assist with retirement, buying homes, and starting and growing businesses.

The Commission's work is facilitated by the Center for Technology and Business. Support and administrative services are gratis. The Commission does not ask for an appropriation from the state and services provided to women are not duplicative. Board members pay their expenses when travel is needed, and meetings are often held on conference calls.

Much has been accomplished and there is still more to be done. The CTB/CSW partnership has received national and statewide awards for our innovative programs for empowering women. Moving the Commission on the Status of Women into the Department of Health and gutting the board membership would not only be costly to North Dakota's taxpayers, but it would also set up a competitive, redundant and a negative environment. The Commission was not included in any discussions with regard to this legislation. CSW does not support Senate Bill 2194.

That concludes my remarks and I would be pleased to answer any questions from members of the committee.

Contact information:
Tara Holt
701-224-8041

Beverly LaHaye
Chairman



SB2194 Senate Human Services Committee – Jan. 26, 2009.

Good morning Madam Chairwoman and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Janne Myrdal, and I am the state director for Concerned Women for America (CWA) of North Dakota. We are here in opposition to SB2194.

The Commission on the Status of Women originated in 1964, under then Governor Guy. Its' original and noble intent was to gather information, analyze statistics, listen to citizen's comments and examine current state laws addressing women's inequality in North Dakota. Due to the dedicated work and recommendations of this Commission, North Dakotans became aware of the discrimination against women, and was able to bring reform. We believe North Dakota has been, and will continue to be, in the forefront of making sure that women have equal opportunities and CWA of North Dakota applaud these efforts.

However, it seems the purpose of SB2194 intends to open a whole new arena of the Commission's influence, which among many includes women's health issues. This causes concern for the following reasons. Today, under the definition of women's health issues, we sadly expect it to possibly include abortion services. Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in the nation, and is known to have a working relationship with numerous ND women's groups associated with promoting SB2194. This must be taken into consideration while ascertaining what SB2194 is asking for and how it may relate to abortion services under the expression of women's health as stated in this bill. There is no definition of women's health stated herein, which opens up numerous possibilities, one of which is an abortion minded philosophy.

Is there current evidence that ND women do not receive equal rights in health care? What is the purpose and eventual cost to adding this provision to the Commission on the Status of Women? There is no appropriation attached in SB2194 to allow for the enlarged purpose and potential cost of the Commission. Is it possible that by enlarging the purpose of this Commission, it will create not only a philosophical and educational change to it's' work, but also eventually, under the cover of women's health care, create a pipeline to abortion services?

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA
OF NORTH DAKOTA

Beverly LaHaye
Chairman



There is concern as to why the original intent of this Commission is not sufficient as it stands, and why we are trying to fix something that is not broken. Is there a need or a problem concerning women's issues in North Dakota that can be solved by the massive move SB2194 suggests to further the powers of this Commission? Does it serve ND women, or will it create a State sanctioned Commission to circumvent the following statement of North Dakota policy:

"Between normal childbirth and abortion, it is the policy of the state of North Dakota that normal childbirth is to be given preference, encouragement, and support by law and by state action, it being in the best interests of the well-being and common good of North Dakota citizens." **14-02.3-01. State policy on abortion and childbirth - Use of public funds restricted.**

To sum up the opposition to SB2194, allow me to remind us all once again that the Commission was at its' early stages vital and current to women's' rights. We have had enormous gains in women's equality here in North Dakota due to the early work of this Commission. Women in North Dakota certainly do have **economic equality as stated in the original purpose of this Commission**, and equal access to loans and grants to promote business opportunities.

During this 2009 legislative session, this Committee has heard bills relating to numerous issues including violence against women and day care needs. There are excellent groups in our state which have testified, and is already addressing the issues concerning women in our State. Some work under Departments of State, but many are organizations whom are non-profit in nature. Should we not rather continue to support them as they do their excellent work, while honoring the policy of the State of North Dakota mentioned above?

CWA of North Dakota fails to see the reason for enlarging the purposes of this Commission. Could it be that its' current assumed inactivity is due to the fact that the work of this Commission has been exhausted? May it be that the Commission on the Status of Women has fulfilled its original intent due to its' past excellent work? Is that eventually not how these commissions are designed, to work themselves successfully out of a job?

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA
OF NORTH DAKOTA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TESTIMONY ON SB 2194
JANUARY 26, 2009, 11:30 A.M.
SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
RED RIVER ROOM
SENATOR JUDY LEE, CHAIRMAN

SHANE GOETTLE – COMMISSIONER, ND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Greetings, Madam Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Shane Goettle, Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

The Department of Commerce is neutral on the subject of placing The Commission on the Status of Women under the auspices of the Health Department.

After listening to the testimony today, I do want to outline some of the areas in which I have seen this Commission and its partner, the Center for Business and Technology, in action, advancing issues that affect women in this state.

The Department of Commerce has worked very closely with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Center for Business and Technology (“Center”), which I see as the “operative staffing arm” for some of the economic development programming that affects women in this state.

With regard to programming, Commerce has been the funding vehicle for programming in financial literacy, computer literacy, and community forums in which issues such as daycare and housing are discussed. These programs and issues most certainly cut across gender, but women often experience the “front line” on these issues.

Perhaps the clearest examples of output from the Commission can be seen in some of the legislative proposals that you have taken up recently.

As an advisory group, The Commission on the Status of Women does not draft legislation, but works with state agencies such as the Department of Commerce and North Dakota Housing Finance to make recommendations on legislation based on community forums, surveys (paper and electronic), and targeted roundtables (childcare-housing).

Senate Bill 2225 is the result of the Childcare Roundtables and work with economic development professionals done by the Commission on the Status of Women. These Childcare Roundtables organized state and federal program providers, taking them out to meet around one table with community leaders, parents, economic development professionals, and childcare providers. These meetings brought to light the need for childcare assistance and the role that communities were suited to play in the granting and management process. A report to the governor led to the draft of SB 2225.

In the 2007 session a bill to assist rural individuals with gap financing was the result of the Commission on the Status of Women's Housing Roundtables in the western part of the state. The bill would have increased the possibility that a young family could afford a rural home by reducing the large down payment required due to existing real estate formulas.

In the 2009 session The Commission on the Status of Women has made recommendations to the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency with regard to LMI community home ownership and legislation to cover the gap financing issues in the state covered in HB 1259.

I hope this information concerning the Department of Commerce's support and relationship with The Commission on the Status of Women is helpful in your deliberations on this matter.

Lee, Judy E.

From: Robert Landis [robertlandis@bizlaredo.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 12:16 PM
To: Lee, Judy E.
Cc: Pomeroy, Jim R.; Heckaman, Joan M.; keardoch@invisimax.com; elandis@polarcomm.com
Subject: Changing Mission of The Commission for the Status of Women

Hello Judy and Human Services Committee Members,

I served on the Commission for the Status of Women in the 80's- I understand what it was designed to do and has done.

The goal was not and should not be one of women's health issues aka 'planned parenthood'. There already exists more than enough resources in that area: the woman's health care providers, her spiritual advisors, her public health advisors, her community, and her family.

The role of the commission should be (and I believe has been) to help women improve their financial status and develop their understanding of what is needed to further enhance not only their earning capacity but their satisfaction with themselves and achieving same. (Very briefly put, I realize).

I doubt that even the feds can find anywhere within that mission a calling to interfere in women's health issues.

The feds striving to be intimately involved in all areas of our life is nowhere as intrusive as in reproductive rights- and they do that by using the term Women's Health Issues. I am old enough to know better and I hope those on our Human Services Committee and not only old enough but wise enough to know our Commission should stay out of it!!

Or do you find the commission now superfluous? Has the commission not reached out to help women become productive members of our society adequately, is that the message? Please advise.

I will be following this closely.

Evelyn Landis
701-865-4107
8-791-8647

NDLA, Intern 02

From: NDLA, Intern 02
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 8:27 AM
To: Lee, Judy E.; Erbele, Robert S.; Dever, Dick D.; Heckaman, Joan M.; Marcellais, Richard; Pomeroy, Jim R.
Subject: Commission on the Status of Women Research/SB 2194

Senator Lee and Committee members,

In regards to SB 2194, you asked me to research how many times the Commission on the Status of Women has met during the last two years, what their budget is, and the names of the commission members. Below are the results of my research:

1. Commission has officially met 5 times in the past two years
2. Do not have a current budget
3. Commission members are Tara Holt (Chair), Peggy Erstad, Lindsay Cori, Mathew Stucke, and Rebecca Ternes.

Thanks,

Dane E. Connor
Legislative Intern
Senate Human Services and Political Subdivisions
701-328-3280
Red River Room