

2015 SENATE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SCR 4001

2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Political Subdivisions Committee
Red River Room, State Capitol

SCR 4001
January 9, 2015
21783

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Management to study the financial reports required by law to be compiled and filed by political subdivisions to determine whether they are being used to full advantage and whether they should be improved, consolidated, or eliminated.

Minutes:

Attachment #1

All members were present.

Senator Cook introduced SCR 4001. There is some piece of information from a political subdivision that one, two or three legislators seem to want. Before this session is over you will find they tuck in an amendment on a bill asking for a report to be filed every year by a county, city, school district, or township. Legislators are looking for ending fund balances for all the various different accounts. Ultimately, we can get that information. The counties are good to work with if it's not readily available; they go out and get the information. The first purpose of this bill is to look at all of these reports that local governments have to generate, take the time to generate, and to evaluate them as to whether or not they are needed. We talk about transparency a lot, we all want transparency. There is a better way to get it. This is the intent of this resolution, simply to get the folks in the counties, townships, political subdivisions and legislators to this and have a discussion and see what reports do we need, how we can best get them, and what reports can we get rid of.

Senator Anderson asked Senator Cook whether the language of these resolutions or this particular SCR 4001 requires legislative management to study it or if it's optional?

Senator Cook replied this one is optional. **Senator Anderson** asked for directing the Legislative Management to study that is optional?

John Walstad Legislative Council replied because this is a resolution it's not law. It goes on to the chart of sub-legislative management will consider and make a study mandatory it takes a bill and it has to say, "shall study".

Senator Dotzenrod asked Senator Cook, referring to line 1, financial reports. Are there any reports that you discussed in the ACIR that are not financial reports? Are there reports

on some outcome of a conference or the outcome of a project that would not be financial? Can primarily it can be financial, did that come up at all in the discussion?

Senator Cook replied it did come up in the meeting with Legislative Council. We seemed to think the financial reports was the language that was needed to gather the reports that are being generated. It merits further discussion.

Senator Bekkedahl asked is part of this discussion, or has it already been, that there may be a way to have some type of single system for accounting to get this information simply when it's needed versus going to the political subs and say generate this activity for us and bring it forward to us? **Senator Cook** replied yes, end game.

Senator Judy Lee related that Cass County and Morton County are counties that have had recently sophisticated systems for record keeping for a fair amount of time. We've had statements for quite a few years about what taxes have been in previous years. I am not being critical but some of the smaller rural counties they just don't have the money. It is almost the difference between a yellow pad and number two pencil; and a really sophisticated computer. Part of the issue I am asking for a comment has been the capability of the counties to convert to something that might be more in general use and something that would interact well with other systems. We need an interoperable system, would that be reasonable?

Senator Cook replied you should be on the task force that studies this because that is exactly what we've had in our discussions. That is one of our challenges that we have. When I look at the uniform chart of accounts, I right away look up the school financial facts books is on the same uniform chart of accounts. If we create that piece of data that is so valuable to anybody whose every served on the education committee or not. We don't have that for others. It was easy for public schools because we have a Superintendent of Public Schools. We have counties and legislators all working for the same goal, it is just a matter of how do we get there.

Chairman Burckhard asked Senator Cook, so the thought behind this is would it be also to eliminate reports that are no longer needed? **Senator Cook** replied, absolutely, number one priority.

Senator Judy Lee shared an FYI about some legislation about health information hub that is separate from this kind of thing. But it is the same deal because there are registries that have to be done for people diagnosed with autism and immunization records and people with diabetes, people with cancer and all these codely distorted and messed up multiple entries, tremendous staff time, it's just crazy. This is fair warning to all of you, you will be seeing something about this here, but there has been some really great work by engaged stakeholders who are there on their own dime and time working to come up with a something that will be workable to make sure that obviously privacy is protected that is a given, but that proper people including law enforcement if their checking on a concealed carry permit to find out whether or not the applicant has any issues that would interfere with the issuance of that permit. It is not the only place we're going to be talking about it in other areas as well.

Senator Cook replied it's the 21st. century. My favorite saying is "the road to perfection is always under construction".

Terry Traynor (10:13-12:33) Association of Counties. Written testimony #1. We are very much in favor of this bill. This is an exciting opportunity for local government. It has been a growing frustration at least for counties. A great and legitimate interest in reporting how is that money being used in the county. Most of the reporting is financial.

Senator Bekkedahl asked Mr.Traynor about the website information. One of the things that I've noticed is the sophistication to do all these things on the counties and cities level, small counties and small cities just doesn't exist. Sometimes it is a resource issue. Sometimes it's a resource in labor issue; sometimes it's a resource in what the knowledge needed to do all this stuff is. So, there are issues out there that needs to be addressed. I would be in favor of the state would fund to help that out because of the small communities and small counties issues.

Terry Traynor replied(14:00-15:04) that he wasn't sure it was a question or statement, but he agrees with it and am hoping that through this study that maybe we can look at those issues.

Chairman Burckhard closed the hearing on SCR 4001.

Senator Anderson moved do pass on SCR 4001.
Senator Bekkedahl 2nd
Yea 6, Nay 0 Absent 0
Carrier Senator Anderson

2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 4001

Senate Political Subdivisions Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

- Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
- Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Senator Anderson Seconded By Senator Bekkedahl

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chm. Burckhard	✓		Senator Jim Dotzenrod	✓	
V. C. Howard Anderson, Jr.	✓		Senator John Grabinger	✓	
Sen. Bekkedahl	✓				
Senator Judy Lee	✓				

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Howard Anderson

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4001: Political Subdivisions Committee (Sen. Burckhard, Chairman) recommends DO PASS (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4001 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2015 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SCR 4001

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Political Subdivisions Committee
Prairie Room, State Capitol

SCR 4001
3/12/2015
24723

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Amanda Muscha

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Directing the Legislative Management to study the financial reports required by law to be compiled and filed by political subdivisions to determine whether they are being used to full advantage and whether they should be improved, consolidated, or eliminated.

Minutes:

Testimony 1

Chairman Klemin: Opened hearing on SCR 4001

Samantha Kramer: This would direct Legislative Management to study the financial reports required by law to be compiled and filed by political subdivisions to determine whether they are being used to full advantage and whether they should be improved, consolidated, or eliminated.

Terry Traynor: Testimony 1

Representative Koppelman: Do pass and placement on the consent calendar

Representative Klein: Second

A Roll Call Vote Was Taken: Yes 11, No 0, Absent 3 (Strinden, Anderson, Beadle)

Motion carries

Representative Oversen Will carry the bill

Date: 3/12/2015
 Roll Call Vote #: 1

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
 ROLL CALL VOTES
 BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SCR 4001**

House Political Subdivisions Committee

Subcommittee Conference Committee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations

Other Actions: Reconsider consent calendar

Motion Made By Koppelman Seconded By Klein

Representative	Yes	No	Representative	Yes	No
Chairman Lawrence R. Klemin	X		Rep. Pamela Anderson	/	
Vice Chair Patrick R. Hatlestad	X		Rep. Jerry Kelsh	X	
Rep. Thomas Beadle	/		Rep. Kylie Oversen	X	
Rep. Rich S. Becker	X		Rep. Marie Strinden	/	
Rep. Matthew M. Klein	X				
Rep. Kim Koppelman	X				
Rep. William E. Kretschmar	X				
Rep. Andrew G. Maragos	X				
Rep. Nathan Toman	X				
Rep. Denton Zubke	X				

Total (Yes) 11 No 0

Absent 3 (Beadle, Strinden, Anderson)

Floor Assignment Oversen

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

motion carries

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4001: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Klemin, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR (11 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 3 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4001 was placed on the Tenth order on the calendar.

2015 TESTIMONY

SCR 4001

Testimony to the
Senate Political Subdivisions
Prepared January 9, 2015
North Dakota Association of Counties
Terry Traynor, Assistant Director

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4001

Chairman Senator Burckhard and Committee members, the North Dakota Association of Counties supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 4001 and our members appreciate the legislature's efforts to take this on. This study will result in a greater understanding of exactly what counties are required to report, and for what reason. We know of cases where some of their reporting has resulted in duplicate information, which is a not an effective use of resources both time and money. In addition, we know requests are made continuously by legislators, officials and even the public for certain information. This study will provide us all with insight into what is being already being collected and how it can best be utilized.

We would also encourage this committee to expand the study to include looking at the notices required by law, the intent and effectiveness. In addition, perhaps this resolution could provide insight into another emerging issue by including language to also look at alternatives for distribution of notices and other information through electronic methods. The House Tax and Finance Committee this week heard testimony on House Bill 1069 which would require Counties to display property tax information online. There are 7 counties who do not have a website and 30 Counties currently do not have their tax data available online. If this study could be expanded to examine what is available in a 53 counties that could help legislators address policy issues like in House Bill 1069, and possibly reduce the need for paper reporting and notices even further.

We look forward in assisting lawmakers in the interim if this study passes. NDACo is committed to providing any assistance with the research needed to develop accurate information for this study.

SCR 4001

3/12/2015

1.1

Testimony to the
House Political Subdivisions
Prepared March 12, 2015
North Dakota Association of Counties

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4001

Chairman Klemin and Committee members, the North Dakota Association of Counties supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 4001 and our members appreciate the legislature's efforts to take this on. This study will result in a greater understanding of exactly what counties are required to report, and for what reason. We know of cases where some of their reporting has resulted in duplicate information, which is a not an effective use of resources both time and money. In addition, we know requests are made continuously by legislators, officials and even the public for certain information. This study will provide us all with insight into what is being already being collected and how it can best be utilized.

An examination of the Century Code matching "county" or "counties" with "report" or "reporting", reveals over 390 sections of law. Reports involving valuation, taxes, budgets, expenditures, dead bodies, live bodies, water projects, weeds, legal filings, liens, and the list goes on and on. Clearly some of these are of significant importance, but just as clear is that some are duplicative, some are redundant, and many are filed and never referenced.

Two of the most recent examples have grown out of the Legislatures very wise and helpful decision to provide state appropriations for local road infrastructure. In 2001, the legislature required oil counties to annually report their expenditures of GPT revenues as a means of tracking the effectiveness of the state investment. When local infrastructure funding was expanded statewide, a reporting requirement was added that all counties report all roadway investments – but the original reporting requirement for oil counties was not repealed. For decades counties have been required to report ALL expenditures to the state as well. All counties now do two reports with much the same information, oil counties do three, with the information just formatted somewhat differently. And it appears

1.2

that, with the exception of NDACo, no one has ever requested the compiled data from one of the reports.

It is our hope that through a study we can pare reporting and data sharing down to what is needed and used, and then discuss how we can do things better, faster and cheaper. Until this process runs its course, adding one more reporting mandate moves us in the opposite direction.