

MINUTES OF THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Stephen Morris at 10:35 a.m. on February 2, 2004, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Christine Downey- excused
Senator David Adkins- excused
Senator Henry Helgeson- excused
Senator Jean Schodorf- excused

Committee staff present:

Alan Conroy, Director, Kansas Legislative Research Department
J. G. Scott, Chief Fiscal Analyst, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Audrey Dunkel, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Amy Deckard, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Susan Kannarr, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Norman Furse, Revisor of Statutes
Jill Wolters, Senior Assistant, Revisor of Statutes
Judy Bromich, Administrative Analyst
Mary Shaw, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Senator John Vratil
Candace Shively, Deputy Secretary, Integrated Service Delivery, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Kim Strunk, Grandmother
Joe McFarland, President, Kansas Council of Silver Haired Legislators
William Dean, Silver Haired Legislator, Overland Park (written testimony)
Joan Bennett (written testimony)
Leann Hochstetler, Roeland Park, Kansas (written testimony)
Ernest Kutzley, Director of Advocacy, AARP Kansas (written testimony)
Reverend Mack and Johnetta McConnell, Kansas City, Kansas (written testimony)
Barbara Jones Mosley, Wichita, Kansas (written testimony)
Melissa Ness on behalf of Sharon Ringler, St. Francis Academy
Colleen Pederson, DCCCA

Others attending:

See Attached List.

Bill Introduction

Senator Jordan moved, with a second by Senator Jackson, to introduce a bill to address the 3 percent pay plan adjustment in the Governor's budget systemwide. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Chairman Morris referred the following bill to the KPERS Issues Subcommittee:

SB 381--Naming of beneficiaries by members of KPERS

The Chairman opened the public hearing on:

SB 320--Allowing grandparents to serve as foster parents

Staff briefed the committee on the bill.

Chairman Morris welcomed the following conferees that testified on **SB 320**:

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Senator John Vratil testified in support of **SB 320**, the “Grandparents as Foster Parents Act.” ([Attachment 1](#)). Senator Vratil explained that the idea of the bill originated with the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature and was adopted at their annual meeting in October of 2003. **SB 320** requires the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to establish a grandparents as foster parents program within SRS. The intent of the bill is to provide additional resources for the care and nurturing of foster children in need.

Candace Shively, Deputy Secretary, Integrated Service Delivery, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, discussed **SB 320** ([Attachment 2](#)). Ms. Shively mentioned that their understanding is, to qualify for the program, the grandparent must be 50 years of age, have actual custody of the grandchild, an income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level and participate in training exercises. She noted that SRS is unable to determine how many grandparents might be eligible for the Grandparents as Foster Parents Program as data on income level and custody of the child was not available. Senator Kerr requested that SRS run information on income below 100 percent and 150 percent of federal poverty level in addition to the 200 percent identified in the testimony.

Kim Strunk, Altamont, Kansas, grandmother, testified in support of **SB 320** ([Attachment 3](#)). Ms. Strunk suggested a possible addendum to the bill to lower the eligibility to lower than 50 years of age which is the age listed in the bill. She mentioned that she became a grandmother at age 38 and they were the primary financial care givers of a grandchild for the first three months of the child’s life.

Joe McFarland, President, Kansas Council of Silver Haired Legislators, spoke in support of **SB 320** ([Attachment 4](#)). Mr. McFarland explained that the fundamental logic supporting the bill is that instead of funding foster parents to care for these children, the State would be better served to provide support to needy grandparents who meet certain criteria stipulated in the bill.

Written testimony in support of **SB 320** was submitted by:

William A. Dean, Silver Haired Legislator, Overland Park, Kansas ([Attachment 5](#))

Joan Bennett, Retired Social Worker ([Attachment 6](#))

Leann Hochstetler, Roeland Park, Kansas ([Attachment 7](#))

Ernest Kutzley, Director of Advocacy, AARP Kansas ([Attachment 8](#))

Pastor Mack and Johnetta McConnell, Kansas City, Kansas ([Attachment 9](#))

Barbara Jones Mosley, Wichita, Kansas ([Attachment 10](#))

There being no further conferees to come before the committee, the Chairman closed the public hearing on **SB 320**.

Chairman Morris welcomed Melissa Ness, who on behalf of Sharon Ringler, St. Francis Academy, introduced Colleen Pederson, DCCCA. Ms. Pederson presented a briefing on the Family Preservation Collaborative. Copies of the Effectiveness of Family Preservation Services in Preventing Foster Care Placements in Kansas ([Attachment 11](#)) and Serving Families: Family Preservation ([Attachment 12](#)) were distributed.

J. G. Scott, Chief Fiscal Analyst, Kansas Legislative Research Department, briefed the committee on the staff summary of the Governor’s Budget Recommendations. Copies of the Overview of the Fiscal Year 2005, Governor’s Budget Report ([Attachment 13](#)) were distributed to the committee. The committee discussed the State Employee Healthcare Benefits in regard to insurance rate increases, State Workforce Adjustments in regard to the Department of Administration, Larned State Hospital and Regents Systemwide (page 10 of the report). Chairman Morris mentioned that the State Employee Healthcare Benefits group will be invited to a future meeting regarding state employee health care insurance. Due to time restraints, Mr. Scott will continue the staff summary of the Governor’s Budget Recommendations at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2004.