

M I N U T E S

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

May 26, 1982

A meeting of the Administration Committee of the Legislative Council was called to order at 10:45 a.m., Wednesday, May 26, 1982, in Committee Room 22, State House, Des Moines. Committee members present were:

Senator James E. Briles, Chairperson  
Senator Calvin O. Hultman  
Senator Lowell Junkins  
Representative Donald Avenson  
Representative John Clark  
Representative Lester Menke

Also present were:

Mr. Serge Garrison, Director, Legislative Service Bureau  
Ms. Diane Bolender, Legislative Service Bureau  
Mr. Thane R. Johnson, Legislative Service Bureau

The first agenda item was discussion of the establishment of a joint Senate-House Public Information Office. Mr. Garrison briefly reviewed a staff memorandum relating to the states of Rhode Island and West Virginia which operate nonpartisan, joint public information offices. In response to a question by Senator Hultman, Representative Jim Johnson, Chairperson of the House Committee on Administration, replied that the House Committee proposes a public information office to provide public information and services during the sessions. He added that the office would operate full-time during the session only. He noted from 1980-1982 expenditures of the House Public Information Office which were given to the Committee, that during the 1982 Session, the House Public Information Office spent approximately \$12,000 as compared to approximately \$72,000 spent in 1980 when the Office operated full-time during the interim also. Representative Johnson concluded by asking for Senate cooperation in operating and financing a joint public information office on a limited session basis.

Speaker Delwyn Stromer added that the House Information Office has worked well with a single person, session only operation, but he added that it should be a joint House-Senate operation. He also stated that during the interim, other permanent House and Senate staff can carry out the office's limited duties.

Senator Hultman commented that there is a legitimate need for a public information service during the legislative sessions, but he emphasized that it should be a public information office, not a public relations office. He suggested that the Committee consider the use of the Legislative Service Bureau to provide a nonpartisan

service or, perhaps, recommend the study of a joint public information office as a part of the proposed study of legislative procedures.

Representative Menke stated that he agrees in general with the preceding statements, but he does not believe the Legislative Service Bureau should provide the service.

After further discussion, Senator Hultman moved that the Administration Committee recommend to the Legislative Council that the proposal to establish a joint public information office be assigned as a study topic for the Legislative Procedures Study Committee. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

The second agenda item was discussion of the legislature's authority to control and punish its members for absenteeism. Mr. Garrison briefly summarized a staff memorandum relating to legislators' absenteeism and the legal authority to punish legislative members. He noted that each house has the power to establish rules to govern procedure, discipline or expel its members, and compel the attendance of absent members under the Constitution, Article III, sections 8 and 9. He added that the courts have found this power to be exclusively vested in the legislature and this rule-making authority is limited only to the extent that the rule does not violate the Constitution or a fundamental right, and that a reasonable relationship exists between the rule and intended result. The salary of a legislator is generally held to be an incident of the office due a legislator independent of performance, but expenses may be withheld if the expenses are not incurred.

After discussion, Senator Hultman moved that the Legislative Service Bureau send a copy of the staff memorandum on "Policy on Legislator Absenteeism" to the respective chairpersons of the House Committee on Administration and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration for their information. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

A copy of the staff memoranda on "Joint Operation of Public Information Office" and "Policy on Legislator Absenteeism", and the report, "Expenditures of the House Public Information Office, 1980-1982" are filed in the Legislative Service Bureau.

There being no further business, Chairperson Briles adjourned the Administration Committee at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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