

M I N U T E S

STUDIES COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

July 12, 1990

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

The Studies Committee of the Legislative Council met on Thursday, July 12, 1990, in the Speaker's Conference Room, State House, Des Moines, Iowa. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Speaker of the House Don Avenson, at 1:03 p.m. Members present in addition to Chairperson Avenson were:

Senator C. Joseph Coleman
Senator Emil Husak
Senator Bill Hutchins
Senator John Jensen
Senator John N. Nystrom
Representative Bob Arnould
Representative John Connors
Representative Roger Halvorson
Representative Mary Lundby

Representative Halvorson moved to dispense with the calling of the roll and to approve minutes of the June 14, 1990, meeting, which motion was adopted unanimously.

RESTRICTIONS ON COMMITTEE MEETING DAYS

Senator Hutchins commented that there have been a number of requests received for additional interim study committees, e.g., relating to restrictions on tinted automobile windows, funeral directors' issues, and drainage district concerns. He moved that due to the state budget crisis with certain exceptions, the Committee not recommend any additional requests for interim studies to the Legislative Council. No discussion was had and the motion was adopted unanimously. Representative Halvorson commented that he thought the Committee should review those interim committees that have been approved. He moved that the Committee recommend that one meeting date be pared from the number of meeting days authorized for each of the interim committees that were appointed by the Legislative Council. Senator Hutchins expressed his concern that this would result in cutting some of the study committees which have two authorized meetings to one. Chairperson Avenson suggested a substitute motion that would recommend that those interim committees approved by the Legislative Council which have been authorized more than two meeting days must make a request for approval by the Legislative

Council to hold the additional meeting days in excess of the first two. Chairperson Avenson's substitute motion was adopted unanimously.

EXCEPTIONS TO AUGUST 1 DEADLINE

Senator Hutchins moved that the Committee recommend that the Public Employees' Retirement Systems Study Committee be exempt from the requirement to hold its first meeting by August 1. Senator Husak queried whether or not there are other interim studies that also need to be exempted from the August 1 deadline. Chairperson Avenson noted that in the packet received by the members there is an interim committee status report which lists those committees along with letters to the Legislative Council requesting that they be exempt from holding the first meeting by August 1. Senator Hutchins then amended his motion to recommend that the Council approve later first meeting days for those study committees requesting to be exempted from the August 1 deadline for holding their initial meeting. He added that as part of the interim study committee guidelines, the Legislative Service Bureau should inform the chairpersons that they are expected to meet as soon as possible. The motion was adopted unanimously. A copy of the interim committee status report is on file in the Legislative Service Bureau.

INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

The next item taken up by the Studies Committee was discussion concerning proposed guidelines for interim study committees. Committee members had been provided with copies of the guidelines adopted by the Legislative Council for the 1989 interim. Senator Husak commented that the paragraph requiring approval of the Studies Committee or legislative leadership for the payment of expenses for speakers or for contracts for consulting work should be amended to require the approval of the Studies Committee and the Legislative Council because he believes that the Legislative Council, rather than the leadership, should give its approval. Senator Husak moved that the language that would have allowed the legislative leadership to grant approval for expenditures of expenses for speakers and consulting work be stricken and in lieu thereof Legislative Council approval be required in addition to approval of the Studies Committee. The motion was adopted unanimously. The Committee then unanimously approved the guidelines for interim study committees as amended by Senator Husak and amended previously by Senator Hutchins' motion. The amended guidelines are attached and by this reference made a part of these minutes.

MOTION TO POSTPONE STUDY COMMITTEES TO NEXT FISCAL YEAR

Representative Lundby moved that the Committee recommend to the Legislative Council that the 22 interim study committees created by the Legislative Council be postponed until the 1991 interim. A copy of Representative Lundby's motion including an explanation is attached and by this reference made a part of these minutes. Representative Lundby expressed a concern that she believes many have that there is a need to implement budget constraints and has heard that legislative staff budgets will be cut by the Legislative Council by two percent as recommended by the Service Committee.

Senator Hutchins expressed his belief that the proposal to defer all Legislative Council studies may be an overreaction because the projected budget deficit is less than one percent of the total budget. He pointed out that the Senate staff plans to reduce the Senate budget by two percent and that the central legislative staff agencies are being requested by the Service Committee to do the same. Senator Hutchins added that if other agencies of the state government would make similar reductions, then the budget deficit problem would be settled. Senator Hutchins also mentioned that interim committees provide for citizen input and that there are at least five study committees looking at issues that need to be addressed during the 1991 Session, and he said that these issues cannot be held over until the 1992 Session. Senator Coleman commented that he had reviewed the interim study committees from last interim and the number of authorized meeting dates and that he felt that those interim study committees resulted in the General Assembly saving much time during the 1990 Session and that the use of the interim for conducting studies is instrumental in allowing the General Assembly to adjourn on an earlier date. Senator Hutchins agreed with Senator Coleman's analysis.

Representative Connors inquired whether Representative Lundby's motion was in order. Chairperson Avenson said that it was because it relates to Studies Committee activities. Representative Halvorson commented that he supports Representative Lundby's motion and said that the Governor has proposed significant cost cutting procedures for the executive branch. He felt that because of that, it is appropriate and timely that the General Assembly take similar significant action. Senator Husak asked for clarification on the motion as to whether or not this would affect mandated committees. The motion would only affect those committees approved by the Legislative Council, responded Representative Lundby. There then was a general discussion of the number of study committees that would be affected by the motion. Chairperson Avenson said that the legislative leadership has reviewed the need for reducing expenses and has agreed to budget reductions more extensive than the Governor has recommended. A roll call vote was taken on the Lundby motion which failed by a vote of 4 ayes by Senators Jensen and Nystrom and Representatives

Lundby and Halvorson and 6 naves by Chairperson Avenson, Senators Coleman, Hutchins and Husak and Representatives Arnould and Connors.

ECONOMIES AND EFFICIENCIES TASK FORCE

Representative Arnould commended Representative Halvorson on his motion to reduce the interim committee meeting days and added that he feels it would be appropriate that a task force be established consisting of five Senate and five House members appointed by the bipartisan leadership with approval to hold three meeting days. He commented that this task force would be responsible for identifying methods to increase economies and efficiencies in state government and to improve state government responsiveness. The task force, he said, should be required to submit a preliminary report of its recommendations on specific cost saving measures by January 1, 1991, and a final report by July 1, 1991. In response to Representative Halvorson's query as to why these functions could not be performed by the Fiscal Committee of the Legislative Council or another committee that has already been established, Representative Arnould said that the proposed charge of this task force is more expansive than the Fiscal Committee's charge, which is limited to review of budgetary appropriations. Representative Halvorson moved that the Arnould motion be amended to provide that the Fiscal Committee be responsible for identifying cost saving measures. Senator Hutchins expressed the belief that the intent of the task force is broader than budgetary matters, as it includes the operations and administration of state government. He pointed out that when a previous study was done as part of downsizing state government in 1986, the members of the task force were members of the state government committees. Representative Halvorson, in closing comments, stated that the Fiscal Committee is created in law as part of the Legislative Council to review budgetary concerns. He added that directing the Fiscal Committee to perform this study is appropriate since this is a budgetary problem and the proposed task force may consider some of the same items the Fiscal Committee considers, thus creating a duplication of efforts. On a nonroll call vote, Representative Halvorson's amendment to the motion was defeated. Representative Lundby, in discussing the motion to establish the task force, inquired whether the members would receive compensation and whether the task force charge was too broad. Representative Arnould commented that the members would be entitled to per diem and expenses in the same manner as are members of other interim committees. There being no further discussion, the motion to recommend that a task force be established to find methods to increase economies and efficiencies in state government was adopted.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairperson Avenson reiterated that the legislative leadership has agreed that all agencies of the legislative branch should be directed for the current fiscal year to reduce their budgets by two percent and said that other expenditures of the General Assembly might be reviewed, e.g., travel expenses outside Iowa.

Chairperson Avenson then noted that the last order of business was recommendation of appointments to the Judicial Compensation Commission. He asked that the Committee recommend the appointments of Dorothy Kerkhoff from Audubon for reappointment to a four-year term and Linda Life of Oskaloosa for appointment to a four-year term. There were no objections.

A copy of the Committee's report is attached to these minutes.

ADJOURMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee the motion was made that the Committee arise. Upon adoption of the motion the Committee adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL J. GOEDERT
Senior Legal Counsel