

Members

Rep. Scott Mellinger, Chairperson
Rep. Ed Mahern
Rep. Win Moses
Rep. Dean Mock
Rep. William Ruppel
Rep. P. Eric Turner
Sen. Charles Meeks, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. John Waterman
Sen. Thomas Weatherwax
Sen. John Broden
Sen. Timothy Lanane
Sen. Frank Mrvan



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Sarah Freeman, Attorney for the Committee
John Parkey, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 14, 2001
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 125
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Scott Mellinger, Chairperson; Rep. Dean Mock; Rep. William Ruppel; Sen. Charles Meeks, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. John Waterman; Sen. Frank Mrvan.

Members Absent: Rep. Ed Mahern; Rep. Win Moses; Rep. P. Eric Turner; Sen. Thomas Weatherwax; Sen. John Broden; Sen. Timothy Lanane.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mellinger introduced the Committee members and called the Committee to order.

II. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Chair Mellinger introduced the four topics assigned to the Committee: (1) House Bill 1566, truck transportation issues; (2) Senate Concurrent Resolution 26, telephone services for inmates of state and local correctional facilities; (3) House Concurrent Resolution 39, investigation of the Indiana Department of Correction; and (4) House Resolution 62, the

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design-build method of project delivery for public construction.

With the agreement of the Committee, Chair Mellinger scheduled the second meeting of the Committee for Tuesday, August 28, 2001, and set as the topic for discussion SCR 26, concerning telephone service for inmates in state correctional facilities and local jails.

Chair Mellinger accepted for the Committee's consideration a letter from Committee member Senator Weatherwax addressing several of the topics assigned to the Committee. (See Exhibit A.)

III. HOUSE BILL 1566 (Exhibit B)

The Committee postponed extensive discussion of HB 1566 until a later meeting because Representative Robert Alderman, the author of HB 1566, was unable to attend the meeting. Senator Meeks stated that he wished to hear from Representative Alderman before addressing the issue.

The Committee heard testimony about the Indiana trucking industry from Kenny Cragen of the Indiana Motor Truck Association. Senator Meeks asked about the feasibility of instituting truck-only or truck-free highways in Indiana. Chair Mellinger stated that Representative Alderman had told him that states east of Indiana have experimented with those types of highways. Mr. Cragen stated that the use of such highways is not widespread, although some local streets and roads prohibit truck access.

At Senator Meeks' request, Mr. Cragen agreed to provide the Committee with information about the application of weight restrictions on state roads and highways and interstates and the impact of the restrictions on the trucking industry.

Chair Mellinger stated that Representative Alderman had told him that truck traffic in Indiana would become safer if Indiana implemented federal regulations that were already in effect in other states. Mr. Cragen stated that Indiana has adopted all federal regulations, including optional intrastate regulations.

Senator Meeks questioned Mr. Cragen about the effect of the North American Free Trade Agreement ("NAFTA") on the trucking industry. Mr. Cragen stated that he supported fully opening national borders to truck traffic but expressed his concern that existing rules and regulations would not be enforced. Mr. Cragen further stated that the Indiana Motor Truck Association has no official position on NAFTA.

Senator Meeks asked Mr. Cragen's opinion on the use of cameras on stoplights to enforce traffic violations. Mr. Cragen stated that he did not oppose the use of cameras if the violations were assessed against the driver, and not the owner, of the truck. Mr. Cragen also stated that tractor-trailer fatalities, per mile, have decreased nationally in recent years.

Senator Meeks then asked Mr. Cragen how he would remedy the problems created by trucks parking in the ingress and egress lanes of truck rest stops. Mr. Cragen stated that he would favor redesigning and enlarging the truck stops because the drivers are required to stop and rest at designated intervals. Mr. Cragen also stated that truck stops are less common now than in the past.

Senator Meeks asked Mr. Cragen if he would support placing computers in all trucks, including those driven by "wildcatters" who operate outside the organized trucking industry, in order to download driving data at weigh stations to discover traffic violations. Mr. Cragen stated that it would first be necessary to make sure the computerized information would be

admissible in court as would the same information entered manually in a log book.

Chair Mellinger stated that he would like to receive testimony at a future meeting from the Indiana Department of Transportation about why state regulations governing the passage of highways through cities or towns are so complex.

IV. INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION and SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 26 (Exhibit C)

Chair Mellinger moved the topic of discussion to the issue of calling systems provided in state correctional facilities and local jails as addressed in SCR 26. Chair Mellinger stated that in the mid-1980s, both incumbent and competitive local exchange carriers began soliciting county jails and sheriffs to enter into exclusive contracts with the carrier for provision of telephone services to the local correctional facilities. By entering into a two to four year contract, the local correctional facility would receive a percentage of the profits from collect telephone calls made by inmates. This money generally was designated for the jail commissary fund.

Senator Meeks stated that the DOC receives ten to fifteen million dollars from this type of contract. Senator Mrvan stated that the financial burden falls on the family of the inmate who places the collect call. Senator Meeks questioned whether an individual can buy telephone time from a carrier and then sell that time at a higher rate to the DOC.

V. DISCUSSION OF NEXT MEETING

Chair Mellinger reiterated that the next Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 28, 2001. Senator Meeks asked if the two DOC topics would be addressed in separate meetings. Chair Mellinger answered that he would like to hold one or two meetings on each individual topic. Representative Mock stated that he is receiving more constituent complaints than ever about the topic of calling systems in correctional facilities. Senator Meeks stated that he would like to hear testimony on this matter from representatives of DOC, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), the State Board of Accounts, and the telephone industry, as well as members of the public, including those who have accepted and paid for collect calls placed by inmates. Chair Mellinger asked that Representative Vernon Smith and representatives from the Indiana Sheriff's Association and the Indiana Department of Administration testify at the August 28 meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mellinger adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:20 p.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2001, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 125 of the State House.