

1999 SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
SCR 4017

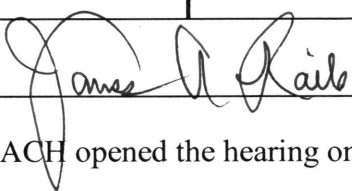
1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 4017

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date February 4, 1999

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		X	1715-2510
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes: CHAIRMAN KREBSBACH opened the hearing on SCR 4017 which relates to the election of executive officers. AL JAEGER, Secretary of State for the state of North Dakota appeared before the committee to introduce the resolution. He indicated that Senator W. Stenehjem had visited with him in the last session on a similar resolution and he indicated at that time that he was in support. He indicated that he had talked with him about this particular resolution and he told him once again that he, the secretary of state, was in favor of it. He asked that Mr. Jaeger appear in his behalf while he was gone. He indicated that if he's around in 2004, he wouldn't relish running for a two year term. But, he would have to say that that's kind of selfish on his part. I think that the reason that I favor this bill I think it is better for the citizens of North Dakota. When he decided to run in 1992, making the rounds at the editorial offices, and the editor of one of our larger papers who he knew and who knew him said Al, you know we got the presidents race, the governors race and quite frankly the secretary of states office isn't quite

sexy enough. What he was essentially telling me was you know we won't be able to cover that race like we will the presidents race or the governors race. So in an attempt to do whatever you don't have the resources and we kind of get equated to being somehow lower level elected officials or lower level positions on the ballot. I'd like to think I'm maybe not in duty but I am elected and that election equates to all of the other elected officials on the ballot. But I think if it were switched as suggested by this resolution, I think it would give an opportunity for the citizens of North Dakota to be better informed of those individuals that are running for those particular positions. The positions that are listed in this particular resolution. I think it would be an opportunity where the news media can provide better coverage. It would just from a candidates standpoint we wouldn't be competing for instance for funds because we are not running against the governor, the president. Also I think the fact that the people chose the last, not the last election the previous election to make the house four year terms. So essentially in half the legislative districts of ND there will not be an election in that middle break. I think that even heightens the reason why perhaps there should be some statewide offices on that so called off year. I see a lot more advantages. Like I say if I'm here in 2004. I know there are still a lot things that I've still got to decide in 2000. It would be kind of rough to run for that two year term but I think if I can look beyond to the future I think it becomes somewhat more valuable. Just for better informed citizenry so that they don't get down to about the fourth place on the ballot and say who's she, who's he and just check. If I'm going to be elected or if I get a vote or don't get a vote I'd rather have it be an informed vote than one that somebody could say they heard my name from time to time or they like the name or it's German or whatever. I think there is some value to this particular resolution. At this point Mr. Jaeger indicated he would be open

to questions from the committee. SENATOR DEMERS: Do you have any idea how Senator Stenehjem picked the offices? MR. JAEGER: I'm not sure just how he picked them this time. The discussion we had two years ago was probably on the order that when the subject was brought up I know for myself I said I'm for it, so I probably volunteered myself to be on the list. I don't know. Again I can't, if I look at it selfishly I should standing up here and saying, but that's assuming I'll be here at that time. I think it looks to the future well enough so everybody knows going in a long time ahead of time that they're running for a two year term. But I think for the betterment of state government and the citizens having better knowledge of the, well maybe the attorney general's office is sexy but the secretary of states office apparently wasn't. I think it's people need to be informed. I think it will make for better campaigns and better informed voters. That in the long haul is help for the state of North Dakota. As to the other ones I'm not sure if it was conversation or if he did have some, I'm not sure how they were selected. That part we will leave the hearing open and let him address that to the committee. SENATOR DEMERS: Who's left to be elected? I've got the governor, the insurance commissioner, the treasurer if there's still a treasurer and DPI. MR. JAEGER: There will always be a public service commissioner in every election, there will always be a supreme court justice in *every* election. Even if we take this last election year. We didn't have the labor commissioner and so really we had the public service commission, we had an uncontested supreme court race. I think we need some more. This is about half and half I think is what it would be. There was no further testimony in support, neutral position, or opposition to SCR 4017. The hearing on SCR 4017 was recessed at this time.

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Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Bill/Resolution Number SCR 4017
Hearing Date February 4, 1999

The committee discussed the resolution. Senator Stenehjem explained how he chose the offices as he listed them in this study resolution. The discussion continued. A motion for DO PASS was made by Senator W. Stenehjem, seconded by Senator DeMers. Roll Call Vote indicated 7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, and 0 ABSENT OR NOT VOTING. SENATOR STENEHJEM offered to carry the bill.

Date: 2-11-99
Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 30R 4017

Senate GOVERNMENT AND VETERAN'S AFFAIRS Committee

Subcommittee on _____
or

Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Stenehjem Seconded By Demers

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
SENATOR KREBSBACH	X				
SENATOR WARDNER	X				
SENATOR KILZER	X				
SENATOR STENEHJEM	X				
SENATOR THANE	X				
SENATOR DEMERS	X				
SENATOR MUTZENBERGER	X				

Total (Yes) 7 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Stenehjem

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 11, 1999 1:44 p.m.

Module No: SR-28-2594
Carrier: W. Stenehjem
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4017: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Krebsbach, Chairman)
recommends **DO PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
SCR 4017 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

1999 HOUSE JUDICIARY

SCR 4017

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SCR4017

House Judiciary Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date 3-16-99

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
One SCR 4017	x		7.5 to 15.6
Committee Clerk Signature	<i>Alan Gindberg (by Pam Dore)</i>		

Minutes:

Summary of Resolution: This resolution would set the election for certain State Agency heads to be elected on off year elections periods.

Senator Stenehjem: This resolution if passed would enable the candidates and the electoral to focus on State Wide issues instead of the national picture as in a presidential election year. Move office of Attorney General, Agriculture Commissioner, Secretary of State, and tax Commissioner to the off year election so we can balance off the election load. This would balance out the fund raising efforts etc for each election cycle. The Attorney General and Agriculture Commissioner because they are members of the Industrial Commission and the other two so it wouldn't appear partisan.

Rep Maragos: Has the current alignment always been like they are now?

Sen Stenehjem: Yes for many years. Now when we changed the length of terms last session for House members it changes the picture completely.

Rep Maragos: Has the current system served the State well?

Sen Stenehjem: Yes but this system will serve it better in light of what we did last year.

Al Jaeger: Sec of State Here in support of this particular resolution, I feel if these 4 offices are running in the off Presidential election year more scrutiny of the candidates rather than getting lost in the Governor or Presidential election races. Lot of advantages from all aspects of the election. One would be fund raising as there is only so much money to be raised and most of that goes to Gov or Pres races. Many years ago all races for St offices were 2 year terms.

Hearing closed on SCR 4017

Motion by Rep Maragos for a do pass on SCR 4017, second by Rep Delmore

Vote called for: YES 13 NO 0 ABSENT 2 motion prevailed

Carrier of the resolution: Rep Maragos

Date: 3-16-99
 Roll Call Vote #: 1 HCR 497

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
 BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 4017

House JUDICIARY Committee

Subcommittee on _____
 or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do pass Consent Cal.

Motion Made By Maragos Seconded By Delmore

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
REP. DEKREY	✓		REP. KELSH		
REP. CLEARY	✓		REP. KLEMIN	✓	
REP. DELMORE	✓		REP. KOPPELMAN		✓
REP. DISRUD	✓		REP. MAHONEY	✓	
REP. FAIRFIELD			REP. MARAGOS	✓	
REP. GORDER	✓		REP. MEYER	✓	
REP. GUNTER	✓		REP. SVEEN	✓	
REP. HAWKEN	✓				

Total Yes 13 No 1 ~~2~~

Absent ~~1~~ 1

Floor Assignment MARAGOS

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 18, 1999 9:47 a.m.

Module No: HR-49-5053
Carrier: Maragos
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4017: Judiciary Committee (Rep. DeKrey, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(13 YEAS, 1 NAY, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4017 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

1999 TESTIMONY

SCR 4017

SCR 4617

2-26-49

Shifting races to 'off year' a ballot winner

For all the reasons mentioned by state Sen. Wayne Stenehjem, R-Grand Forks, the proposal to move election of four statewide officers to the "off year" is a good one.

Stenehjem's constitutional amendment breezed through the Senate Wednesday, 46-0. With the approval of the House, and then voters, balloting for attorney general, secretary of state, agriculture commissioner and tax commissioner would be shifted to the nonpresidential year in 2006.

At present, these are four of 13 statewide officers, including governor and U.S. senator, whom voters choose in presidential years. The profusion of races makes it hard for some candidates to get the attention of the media and public and to raise money, Stenehjem says.

At the same time, the elections on either side suffer from a lack of excitement, as voters usually are presented with choices for only congressman, public service commissioner and (rarely) U.S. senator. With, perhaps, more opportunity to focus than they want, voters tend to glaze over, instead.

The Stenehjem plan would spread out the action, helping the parties sustain interest without tapping out their faithful. And it should help election-day turnout, which has been nothing to brag about, of late, in presidential years, and dismal in the off years.

The proposed change offers voters more substance — better than latter-day changes of style, such as voting by mail, designed to make voting "easier." Going to the polls isn't hard, when voters are motivated; when they aren't, even licking a postage stamp is too much work.

Somehow, North Dakotans must rediscover fun in their elections, along with pride. Every dull election we have hurts the cause, making future elections easier for people to pass up. The constitutional amendment promises more fun, as well as a fairer shake for candidates and a leg up for party-building — win, win, win. It deserves our support.

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