MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M

ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

1397

2001 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

HB 1397

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1397

House Political Subdivisions Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 2-7-01

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	xx		1--5714

Committee Clerk Signature Pam Dever

Minutes: Chair Froseth called the hearing on HB1397 relating to dispatching of ambulances in emergencies to order.

Rep. Audrey Cleary, Dist 49, Bismarck, ND : introduced in support HB1397. Please listen to all the people here to testify in support of this bill. They can answer your questions better than I.

Delores Boutilier, Riverdale, ND : here in support of HB1397. **(SEE ATTACHED)**

Frank Boutilier, Riverdale, ND : (355) here in support of HB1397 and handed out many letters of support from Riverdale area. **(SEE ATTACHED)** In contact with the Corps of Engineers of Riverdale, they want the quickest time possible to get emergency care to the people of the Garrison Dam area regardless of ambulance location.

Chair Froseth : If an ambulance is dispatched outside of their boundary, how does the reimbursement work?

Frank : There have been ambulance districts set up. The districts will have the right to levy a mill levy to the ambulances. Riverdale funds the ambulance. We are not under the tax basis.

The city funds the training. The other funds come from the service calls that go out. The ambulance charges so much a loaded mile. The other district will reimburse the ambulance who made the service call to another district.

Rep. Disrud : If I have an accident and you call 911. 911 dispatches the closest ambulance, right?

Frank : Not exactly. Now, say you had an accident 4 blocks from Riverdale. You would have to wait for the ambulance to come from Underwood, which is 15 miles away to pick you up. We have an ambulance in Riverdale that is closer. That is what concerns us in this area. Right now, Riverdale can only service the city itself.

Rep. Ekstrom : Does this open up a liability problem for the 911 dispatchers?

Frank : More than likely the 911 coordinator will draw up certain area that would be covered. They will define area. When the dispatcher receives the call, they will know exactly the location of the call. They will pin point on the map and they will know who need to be sent out.

Disrud : I have an accident on Hwy 200. The first number available to me was the ambulance's own number. And I called, but it wasn't their area. Will they respond or will they say, this is not my area?

Frank: Our responsibility is to get out as fast as possible, regardless of where the call came from.

Vice-Chair Severson : In your particular situation, have you gone to Underwood and Hazen and try to negotiate to eliminate the problem.

Frank : Yes, we have. When this districting was set up as such, it was an understanding that we would have a written agreement drawn up between Underwood and Riverdale or Hazen. That never came to pass. We did discuss it. I think the revenue part slowed the agreement. They may have not wanted to release that revenue.

Timothy Wiedrich, Director of Emergency Health Services-Health Dept. : (1510) neutral on the bill. We are the agency responsible for how efficient ambulance services provide care for the citizens of ND. We are supportive of the concept of this bill. Our concerns go beyond the Riverdale area. This is a systemic issue. From a purely medical standpoint, the closest ambulance near the emergency needs to be dispatched. **(SEE ATTACHED TESTIMONY)**

Rep. Herbel : Do we have reciprocity with states like MT, MN, and SD?

Tim : We pretend the border is invisible when it comes to providing emergency services. Have not seen a problem dealing with other states. It's with our own internal geopolitical borders.

Rep. Eckre : Do you see any problems with private ambulance services competing?

Tim : I don't think so. Right now we have a huge mix. We have 141 ambulance services across the state. The difficulty is not with private, because they usually did a rotation type system. The problem was when we dispatch life threatening ambulances and the ambulance comes from 26 miles away when there was one closer. The bill needs to have some additional requirements to make sure the 911 dispatch centers send the closest ambulance, because I believe this is the intend of the bill. We have what is called a tiered response. The closest ambulance is sent out, but another service may be more equipped to handle an extreme emergency. The first ambulance asks for the better qualified one to also come.

Rep. N. Johnson : Has your division set up any system?

Tim : We have counseled on the local levels, but we don't have statutory authority to establish the districts.

Rep. Niemeier :(2790) Aren't we asking the 911 dispatcher to determine the extent of the emergency?

Tim : No, this resolves the determination. If the closest is dispatched, then the first one may trigger the tiered response.

Rep. Niemeier : The first ambulance is the one who triggers the second one.

Tim : That's generally what happens now. Some local protocol may require something different.

Vice-Chair Severson : (2931) I helped Rep. Cleary draft this bill. I went to L.C. And asked them specifically to write us an amendment to the licensor of ambulance that allows the dispatch center to dispatch the closest ambulance. We could not use the word dispatch. It ended up unclear. How can we address and make sure that the second unit will go. Do you have a solution?

Tim : Easiest would be to add a provision. Or, you could have the Health Dept., as part of their license requirements for the annual service, require the ambulance service demonstrate that it is the closest. If they can't demonstrate that, they may not get a license. Not a real good solution. It would show legislative intent.

Rep. Disrud : If you are sending two ambulances out, aren't we talking about double billing, double man power, etc?

Tim : Yes, but how can we hold back life saving procedures because of cost. From a medical stand point, I can't swallow that. Fiscal can't rule here.

Rep. Kretschmar : Would this law prohibit ambulances services from cooperating with each other?

Tim : I would argue the opposite. So, no.

Derek Hanson, ND EMS Assoc. : Just here to support the bill. We accept the amendments.

Jerry Berquist, Stutsman County 911 Coordinator : (4069) here in opposition to HB1397. I see lots of problems with the bill. It will be hard to comply with this bill the way it is written now.

It will be hard for the 911 coordinator to decide which one to dispatch. Also, the data bases will have to be redesigned in the whole state for the closest ambulance to be dispatched. That will take a lot of time. We will be mandated to do this and this will put strain on our relationship with ambulance services. All 911 coordinators agree with the intent of this bill. We all want to save lives and do the best for everybody. All counties, except one, have the 911 system. That took a long time to accomplish. Now, we have the problem of wireless phones. We don't know where the call is coming from. We don't have the technology yet. I disagree with the implementation of the bill, not with the intent.

Rep. Maragos : (4820) How much of a task would it be to modify the data base with regard to jurisdictional boundaries?

Jerry : That will vary from county to county. You may get some done by the end of the year.

Rep. Maragos : All we are talking about here is the boundary part of the jurisdiction. These are the ones that come into question. Who establishes the boundaries of the ambulance services?

Jerry : Back originally when everyone got into 911, it was done differently. Some parts of ND use taxing districts. Some don't have taxing districts. The services agreed by consensus to boundary lines.

Rep. Maragos : Do any of these taxing districts cross jurisdictional boundaries?

Jerry : I don't know. From our point of view, there is no reason why they couldn't cross.

Rep. Maragos : It would seem to me if they use the taxing district, because that is easy to set the boundary, then are all the taxing districts in one jurisdiction? Are you aware of any taxing districts that transcend jurisdictional boundaries?

Jerry : I'm not aware of any.

Rep. Ekstrom : Last session, didn't we pass some sort of locator system?

Jerry : There was a bill similar to a bill dealing with the wireless issue, and it was vetoed by the governor.

Rep. Delmore : We are dealing with lives and services. 911 isn't new and we have had court battles. Maybe this bill will make it better for both 911 and ambulance services. Money has gone into the program.

Jerry : We want to make sure we are doing what the public mandates. Because we have money attached to every ambulance call, it makes it harder to resolve this issue.

Chair Froseth : Any more testimony? Hearing none, HB1397 is closed.

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1397 a

House Political Subdivisions Committee

❑ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 2-08-01

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		xx	2100-2160

Committee Clerk Signature Pam Dever

Minutes: Chair Froseth : What about HB1397?

Vice-Chair Severson : I would appreciate holding this one more day to make sure the amendments are O.K. with all the parties that had input during the hearing.

Chair Froseth : We will hold it.

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1397 b

House Political Subdivisions Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 2-09-01

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
2	xx		800--1083
Committee Clerk Signature	Pam Dever		

Minutes: Vice-Chair Severson : Let's take up HB1397. I need a do not pass since HB1409 has this bill in it with it's amendments.

Rep. Herbel : **I move a DO NOT PASS.**

Rep. Ekstrom : **I second.**

VOTE: 12 YES and 0 NO with 3 absent. PASSED. Vice-Chair Severson will carry.

Date: 2-9-01
Roll Call Vote #:

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. NB 1397

House POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS Committee

☐ Subcommittee on _____
or
☐ Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do NOT PASS

Motion Made By Rep. Herbel Seconded By Rep. Ekstrom

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Glen Froseth	AB		Rep. Wayne W. Tieman	AB	
Vice-Chair Dale C. Severson	/				
Rep. Lois Delmore	/				
Rep. Rachael Disrud	/				
Rep. Bruce Eckre	AB				
Rep. Mary Ekstrom	/				
Rep. April Fairfield	/				
Rep. Michael Grosz	/				
Rep. Jane Gunter	/				
Rep. Gil Herbel	/				
Rep. Nancy Johnson	/				
Rep. William E. Kretschmar	/				
Rep. Carol A.Niemeier	/				
Rep. Andrew G. Maragos	/				

Total (Yes) 12 No 0

Absent 3 AB

Floor Assignment Vice-Chair Severson

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 9, 2001 11:30 a.m.

Module No: HR-24-2847
Carrier: Severson
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1397: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Froseth, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 3 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1397 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2001 TESTIMONY

HB 1397

HB 1397

Mr. Chairman and members of the Political Subdivisions Committee.

My name is Audrey Cleary and I represent District 49 in Bismarck.

HB 1397 came about because situations have arisen in which the closest available ambulance is often not dispatched to the scene where emergency medical services are needed.

This bill seeks to make certain that situation is remedied and that the person needing assistance receives the quickest possible response. That of course, is the mission of ambulance services.

Since this is a matter of emergency, I would ask that the committee attach the emergency clause.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY FOR HB 1397
FEBRUARY 2, 2001

We are in spport of HB1397. When the 911 System was implemented it changed the ambulance dispatching drastically. We have an ambulance in Riverdale ND and we used to service Pick City, less than five miles away. Pick City now must wait for the Hazen ambulance about 25 miles away. Many times this is a matter of life or death. Sakakawea State Park, north of Pick City, must also depend on Hazen ambulance. A new ambulance district has been formed under the Underwood Ambulance. When this is implemented the Riverdale ambulance will not be called outside of Riverdale City limits. Therefore, Highway 200, Corp of Engineers Downstream Campgrounds and Wolfe Creek Campgrounds will all have to wait for the Underwood ambulance which is 14 miles from the City of Riverdale. During camping season there are hundreds of campers at these campsites(when full close to 1000). Riverdale ambulance is less than five miles from these sites and one block from Highway 200. The "CLOSEST" ambulance should always be sent!

We know money is involved in this matter, but something can be worked out regarding that issue. But a "LIFE" cannot be brought back. Could it be you or your loved ones who will have to wait for an ambulance miles away when one is closer? This is a problem throughout the State of North Dakota.

We urge you to pass HB1397 -- "The Life you save may be your Own". Thank you.

Dolores Boutilier

Frank Boutilier

Dolores Boutilier
101 4 ST Riverdale ND 58565

Frank Boutilier

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
GARRISON PROJECT OFFICE
RIVERDALE, NORTH DAKOTA 58565-0527

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

31 January, 2001

Natural Resource
Management Branch

Mr. & Mrs. Frank & Dolores Boutilier
101 – 4th Street
Riverdale, ND 58565

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Boutilier:

In reference to the discussion that you had today with Park Rangers Tony Jacobson and Garth Zimbelman about the response time of emergency personnel and equipment to Corps of Engineers' customers. It is my opinion that the quickest response by emergency personnel and equipment would be in the best interest of our customers on Garrison Dam Project lands and waters. Our interest lies solely in seeing that our customers receive the emergency care that they require in the quickest time possible, regardless of location that the equipment or personnel are dispatched from.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 701-654-7411 x217, or write to Box 527, Riverdale, ND 58565.

Sincerely,

George H. Wolf
Project Manager

CF:

Subject HB 1397

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Gary Blankenship and I live in Riverdale,ND. I have had several heart attacks. I have been totally disabled since Nov. 1996 because of this. I have had to have Riverdale ambulance take me to Garrison Hospital several times. I like fishing and camping. We camp a lot at the Downstream Campground and I fish from the tail race boat ramp and Government Bay, all of which are outside Riverdale city limits. As I'm sure all of you know that when one is having a heart attack time is very important in limiting damage to the heart muscle. I would much rather have Riverdale ambulance pick me up than have to wait for Underwood or some other district. Riverdale can have me at Garrison Hospital before the others can get to me. I feel that the closest help should be sent for me or anyone else in a similar situation.

Thank you for your time

Gary L Blankenship Feb. 1, 2001

Gary L Blankenship
112 2nd Street
Riverdale,ND 58565

North Dakota State Legislature
Re.: Testimony for House Bill 1397

February 2, 2001

This testimony is in support of house bill 1397. I live in Riverdale, located at the Garrison Dam site, right across from Pick City. I understand that ambulance services at this time, are not addressed by standards of need, but by arbitrary lines drawn for tax purposes.

I find this an irresponsible and a money-calculating practice, where the saving of a life takes a back seat in order to observe boundaries for tax purposes. How can one weigh the saving a life against some tax dollars? The nearest ambulance service needs to respond to the call.

I am confident that the legislature will see beyond the dollar signs and focus on the real mission of an ambulance service, which is to save lives.

Sincerely,

Maria Fagerstrom

Maria Fagerstrom
Riverdale, ND 58565

February 1, 2001

North Dakota State Legislature
State Capitol Building
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

Dear Legislators:

My name is Claudia Gordon and I am a resident of Riverdale. I work at home and have been a board member of the Underwood School District for 6 years. I urge your support and passage of HB 1397, relating to dispatching of ambulances in emergencies.

180 days of each year, 86 students in 2 different school buses travel twice a day along U.S. Highway 200, one bus transporting children to and from the Riverdale area and the other bus going on to Pick City to transport school children from that area. Highway 200 is also a major route used by other school districts as they transport their children to various extracurricular activities. We are very fortunate to have excellent bus drivers and have not had any accidents that I can recall. If an accident were to happen to one of these buses while on the highway, the ambulances that would be called to respond would have to come either from Underwood, which is 13 miles from Riverdale, or if the bus were in the Pick City area, the ambulance dispatched would have to come from Hazen, 25 miles from Pick City. That is what the current law allows.

Riverdale has an ambulance service, but is restricted to the city limits. U.S. Highway 200 runs along the southern edge of the city limits. If either of these two buses were to have an accident along this highway, ambulances from Underwood or Hazen would be asked to respond when the Riverdale ambulance would be from 2 blocks to 2 miles away, depending on where the accident occurs. That is quite a difference in response time!

Not only are school children at risk with the law as it currently stands, but this area has a large volume of tourist traffic with people using the facilities at the different campgrounds and Lake Sakakawea. Many of these people are tourists who come back year after year and are aware that Riverdale has an ambulance service, but I'm sure many would be surprised to know of their restriction to the city limits.

I strongly urge all of you to vote to accept HB 1397 to allow the closest ambulance service to be dispatched in emergencies. Do this for our school children. Do this for our families who are away from their homes. Do it for North Dakota.

Thank you for your interest and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Claudia Gordon

Claudia Gordon
Box 546
Riverdale, North Dakota 58565

North Dakota State Legislature
Re.: Testimony for House Bill 1397

February 2, 2001

This testimony is in support of house bill 1397. I live in Riverdale, located at the Garrison Dam site, right across from Pick City. I understand that ambulance services at this time, are not addressed by standards of need, but by arbitrary lines drawn for tax purposes.

I find this an irresponsible and a money-calculating practice, where the saving of a life takes a back seat in order to observe boundaries for tax purposes. How can one weigh the saving a life against some tax dollars? The nearest ambulance service needs to respond to the call.

I am confident that the legislature will see beyond the dollar signs and focus on the real mission of an ambulance service, which is to save lives.

Sincerely,

Maria Fagerstrom

Maria Fagerstrom
Riverdale, ND 58565

Testimony on House Bill No. 1397
Political Subdivisions Committee
Prairie Room
Friday, February 2, 2001
By
Timothy Wiedrich

Chairman Froseth, members of the committee. My name is Tim Wiedrich. I am the Director of the Division of Emergency Health Services for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the Department regarding this bill.

Emergency medical service (EMS) response time is critical when a medical emergency occurs. Many people would assume that when a medical emergency is reported to the 9-1-1 system and an ambulance is requested, the closest available ambulance service is dispatched and responds. Unfortunately, this is not always the case in North Dakota. It is our belief that many of the situations in which 9-1-1 does not currently dispatch the closest EMS unit occurs because the 9-1-1 system planners did not include EMS services outside their geo-political boundaries when establishing the system. That means that an ambulance is dispatched to the scene of a cardiac arrest which is 26 miles away simply because it is in the same county as the dispatch center when an ambulance which is six miles away but on the wrong side of a county border is not dispatched. In some situations, the EMS service for economic and other reasons has made a deliberate decision to receive emergency calls and respond to scenes knowing they are not the closest available service.

The most complete resolution to this potentially life-threatening problem must include two components. Dispatch centers must be required to dispatch the closest available EMS service regardless of city, county or district boundaries and EMS services must be required to respond to emergencies regardless of city, county or district boundaries if they are closest to the call. We believe that this is in fact a current standard of care and we further believe that this approach places patient care concerns above economic or turf issues.

While we believe it is the intent of HB 1397 to require that the closest available ambulance service respond to the scene of an emergency, it appears that the language contained in the bill may not cause this to happen. As currently stated in the bill, an ambulance service would be required to send its closest available ambulance. In cases where the ambulance service receiving the call is not the closest service, the problem will continue. We believe that the solution should include both a requirement that 9-1-1 dispatch systems notify the closest available EMS service regardless of city, county or district boundaries and that the closest available EMS service respond to emergencies regardless of city, county or district boundaries.

I would be happy to try and answer your questions.

TESTIMONY FOR HB 1397
FEBRUARY 2, 2001

This letter is in regard to proposed HB1397 and the necessity of its subsequent passage. If enacted, a potential life-threatening precedence will be remedied. The result of this action will positively affect the outcome during many medical emergencies and could ultimately save the life of any citizen of North Dakota..

Time is of the essence when an ambulance is dispatched to a true emergency situation. This is one of the basic tenets of prehospital emergency care. Unfortunately, in some parts of the State, this basic tenets is being severely compromised. The problem has arose with the formation of ambulance districts. When a district is created, said district's ambulance service becomes the designated dispatched unit. Often-times, this has caused a nearer service not to be dispatched. The resulting increase in a timely response equates to the potential loss of life. This should not be happening and needs corrective legal action to ensure it will no longer continue.

Riverdale Ambulance Service (RAS) is a case in point. Due to a legal district decision, RAS is not dispatched to emergency calls in the Pick City area. A sick or injured person has to wait for an ambulance coming from over 20 miles away, instead of one which is less than five miles away. How is this conducive to good patient outcome? When every minute counts, it isn't.

Now, due to a recently enacted district, all land surrounding Riverdale, excluding the City itself, may have to wait for an ambulance 14 miles away. These surrounding areas include many campgrounds and other tourist/recreational facilities, thusly jeopardizing many more lives than just those of Riverdale residents. Conceivably, if involved in an accident when turning out of Riverdale onto Highway 200, a person will not have an ambulance mere blocks away dispatched to them. Legal, yes---but again, in the best interest of the patient?

The purpose for creation of an ambulance district is to provide a financial base. For the purpose of response, the intent never was to bypass a nearer service in favor of the financial recipient. Passage of HB 1397 will assure that the closest service be dispatched. Everything possible must be done to give those in a life-threatening situation the greatest chance for survival.

As a volunteer EMT, I know first-hand the hard work and dedication that is expended to keep emergency care in North Dakota at a high standard. With so many great people willing to give so much of themselves, an easily remedied misconception should not continue to stand in the way of their being called upon to do what they are trained to do. It is a devastating feeling to wonder if the outcome would have been different if only we would have been called out.

I regret I was unable to appear in person today to express the many reasons I feel this bills passage is imperative to the welfare of the people of North Dakota. Instead, I am in class refreshing my EMT skills so I can continue serving. It will be your decision if I can use these skills for the maximum benefit to the public.

Please, help keep the patient's best interest our #1 priority. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Laurie Rowe

Laurie Rowe, NREMT-I
Riverdale Ambulance Service
Riverdale, ND 58565