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2009 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

HB 1315

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 1315

House Human Services Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 20, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 7367

Committee Clerk Signature

Vicky Crabtree

Minutes:

Chairman Weisz called to order the hearing on HB 1315.

Rep. Kretschmar from Dist. 28 introduced his bill and testified in support: Our community of Ashley has been trying to get a dentist there for a number of years and it is not an easy task to do. Is there is a program under law already, but this bill makes the program better for the dentists who come to a rural community.

Rep. Frantsvog: Is it your intent if this bill passes that if a dentist wants to move into a community that he actually physically live in that community?

Rep. Kretschmar: He has to have his office there, but don't believe he has to live there.

Rep. Nathe: In Section 1, number 2 where it references to a minimum of 5 years to be there, what happens if they don't meet that five year threshold?

Rep. Kretschmar: Have to give the money back.

Don Kosel, Mayor of Ashley, ND: testified in support. **See Testimony #1.**

Rep. Conrad: Of the dentists you have interviewed, would \$30,000 be amount that would make them interested in coming?

Don Kosel: It certainly would help.

Sheerece Zimmerman, Economic Developer for Ashley, ND: See Testimony #2 in support.

Clarice Kesler representing ND Association of Electric Cooperatives: testified in support of bill.

Rep. Kilichowski: The program was put in, in the last session?

Chairman Weisz: There were two programs. The loan repayment program and community grant program. This bill would be an additional \$30,000.

Rep. Conrad: Could someone gives us information on results of that.

Joe Cicy representing the Dental Association: Three slots were filled. One in Rugby, one in Wishek, one went to public health clinic in Grand Forks.

Rep. Conrad: How does this program differ from the last program?

Joe Cicy: The grant program that was passed last session is a matching program. Community half and state half.

Gary Garland runs the repayment program: Currently the program requires dentists to be in debt for educational loan expenses. This bill does not require to be in debt.

Rep. Kilichowski: Would the \$30,000 come on top of the \$30,000 match too and this is over a five year period? What's amount of loan repayment?

Gary Garland: \$80,000 paid over a 4 year period.

Rep. Porter: The money that's in the community grant program, is that in the budget for the upcoming biennium?

Gary Garland: Yes.

Rep. Porter: If we would take that whole program that required a community grant and repealed that with this bill, what would be the amount that would be required as far as appropriation to match up what is currently in the budget?

Gary Garland: I don't recall the exact amount. I can find that information for you. The appropriation for this particular bill is \$180,00 over the biennium. Three grants of \$30,000 the first year, same for the second year.

Rep. Porter: Would this be a good focus for the state to take to try to get interest into some of those without the community matching just get rid of the other program and fund this one?

Gary Garland: That would be your option. It would be my belief that this would provide a different (inaudible) of incentive.

Rep. Frantsvog: How much money is in that other grant program?

Gary Garland: Have to find that amount for you.

Rep. Frantsvog: Maybe this could run in harmony with other one. So they would have an option of one or the other.

Dr. Lana Schlecht from Ellendale: See Testimony #3 (handed in) .

James Ruff, President Dakota Heartland Champion Community: See Testimony #4 (handed in).

Tom Lovik, EDC Wishek Job Development Authority: See Testimony #5 (handed in.)

Becky J. Meidinger, Ashely Job Development Authority. See Testimony #6 (handed in).

Bruce Lindgren from Kulm, ND: See Testimony #7 (handed in).

Kathleen Hoefft, Administrator and CEO Ashley Medical Center: See Testimony #8 (handed in).

Chairman Weisz closed hearing.

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 1315

House Human Services Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 21, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 7498

Committee Clerk Signature

Nicky Crabtree

Minutes:

Chairman Weisz: I'd like to look at 1315.

Rep. Porter: Mr. Garland said previously because the way the wording was that they had \$45,000 in the budget that would cover the biennium plus bring back one person. Then came back with note saying that was cut from the budget down to \$10,000 that wouldn't even cover one now in the other program.

(Chatter back and forth between Representatives Porter, Pietsch and Weisz.

Chairman Weisz: I know several communities that would put up the money if they thought they could get a dentist. This bill enhance that potential.

Rep. Porter: My argument on this bill would be that community isn't limited to what the state match dollar amount is. The community certainly can add any additional amount or things they want to do for the dentist coming in.

Discussion about some towns and what they have done to get them to move in.

Rep. Porter: I don't think it is necessarily the incentive for a package that is lacking in getting a dentist to move to a small rural town.

Chairman Weisz: I don't disagree with that.

More discussion on small towns and why or why not dentists would start a business there.

Rep. Hofstad: Before implementing more dollars to a program, we should utilize the programs we have and we are not doing that.

Chairman Weisz: I support the intent because we are struggling in those areas.

Unfortunately, some of the things we try just aren't (inaudible).

Rep. Hofstad: Motion for a DO NOT PASS.

Rep. Nathe: Second.

Roll Call Vote: 7 yes, 3 no, 3 absent, Rep. Uglem, Rep. Conrad and Rep. Holman

MOTION CARRIED FOR A DO NOT PASS.

BILL CARRIER: Rep. Pietsch

Date: 1-21-09
Roll Call Vote #:

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1315

House HUMAN SERVICES Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken ☐ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended

Motion Made By Rep. Hofstad Seconded By Rep. Nathe

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
CHAIRMAN ROBIN WEISZ		✓	REP. TOM CONKLIN	✓	
VICE-CHAIR VONNIE PIETSCH	✓		REP. KARI L CONRAD	✓	
REP. CHUCK DAMSCHEN	✓		REP. RICHARD HOLMAN	✓	
REP. ROBERT FRANTSVOG	✓		REP. ROBERT KILICHOWSKI		✓
REP. CURT HOFSTAD	✓		REP. LOUISE POTTER		✓
REP. MICHAEL R. NATHE	✓				
REP. TODD PORTER	✓				
REP. GERRY UGLEM	✓				

Total (Yes) 17 No 3

Absent 3

Bill Carrier Rep. Pietsch

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

*Motioned carried on
D N P*

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1315: Human Services Committee (Rep. Welsz, Chairman) recommends DO NOT PASS (7 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 3 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1315 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

HB 1315

#1

Mr. ~~Chairman~~ ^{man} and Committee Members. My name is Don Kosel, Mayor, at Ashley, ND, and I favor HB1315. Ashley is a community of 882 people according to the 2000 census. We have had a dentist in our community since I moved to Ashley in 1965. In 2005 our dentist left and we have been unable to obtain another to this point. Towns within 45 miles of us that have a dentist are Wishek, Ellendale, and Eureka, SD. The dentists in Ellendale and Eureka I have been told would like to cut back or will be retiring within a couple of years.

Our dental clinic was built in the year of 2000 and is fully equipped. We have interviewed dentists who are close to graduation and each of them relay the same message to us and that is they have such large school debts and are fearful of starting a practice where a client base is not established. We have talked to them about the other incentives offered through the dentist loan repayment, but with their large debts, this does not immediately help them to get started.

Health care is very important to all people and providing that health care in a community keeps people in that community and helps keep the local economy going. Our skilled nursing facility has to bus its 44 residents to other communities for dental health care. Some of our residents go out of town for dental care and others have not seen a dentist since 2005. The question that is often asked of us is when are we getting a dentist in town.

I am sure you realize that smaller communities do not have the amount of money to help recruit professional people even though we do have the same health care needs as larger communities. Our intent for suggesting this bill is to put money into the hands of a dentist immediately so that they can have some time to establish a patient base or to purchase equipment for their practice along with having some money for moving and living expenses.

Thank you and we ask for your vote in favor of this bill.

~~Chairman~~^{Mr. G.} Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Sherrece Zimmerman from Ashley and I am the Economic Developer for Ashley. I'm in favor of this bill because we have been trying to get a dentist in our community for a couple of years now and have had no such luck. We have tried many different strategies and have talked with the dentist's who have inquired on our Dental Practice and have asked them what it would take to get them here. Every dentist has said it would take money: Reasons are they come out of school with huge student loan debt and need money up front to be used towards relocation costs or startup costs. This is also the same response we have gotten from dentists who have been practicing for a couple years. They need that cushion so they are able to start building their patient base. If we are able to offer more of a financial incentive, I personally feel our practice as well as other rural community practices will be more attractive.

Listed below are things we have done to recruit a dentist and these things have not worked:

- We have emailed and mailed letters to most dental schools in the United States and have really focused on ND, SD and MN Dental Schools.
- We have been working with the ND Dental Association very closely.
- Attended the ND Dental Assoc. Annual conference as an exhibitor to advertise our clinic.
- Have posted our Ad on Bismarck Online.
- We have also been in contact with Patterson Dental and Sullivan-Schein Dental reps.
- We have also received letters of support from businesses in town, for a dentist.
- We have also gone Door to Door to dental clinics in Aberdeen, SD. Have given them information on our clinic.
- Have also worked with the ND Dept. of Health
- We advertise our Dental Clinic on our community website and post an ad on the ND Dental Assoc. website.
- We have advertised on many websites and in newspapers like The Fargo Forum(\$116), Bismarck Tribune (\$160), the Star Tribune in Minnesota and also online (\$220)
- Advertised with the Minnesota Dental Assoc. St. Paul MN(\$80)
- Advertises with the American Dental Assoc. (\$155) we have done this approx. 3 times total \$465

- We have contacted all ND Dental Labs, Board of Dental Examiners.
- We have talked with National Dental Placements: which is a search firm in the recruitment and placement of general dentists and specialists. Cost was high in which we were not able to use this firm.
- We have also spoken with local area dentist who are in support and have helped us try and recruit someone.
- Minnesota Dental Assoc. have watched their classified ads.
- We have also even made personal phone calls to Dentist's

We come to you in hopes to get your help and support this bill. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

Dakota Dental Care

LANA R. SCHLECHT, D.D.S.

January 19, 2009

Dear Committee members,

I am Dr. Lana Schlecht and I practice in Ellendale, ND (population about 1600). I have watched as Ashley has struggled to find a new dentist to serve their community. I must commend them as I have never seen so many avenues explored to achieve a goal. Their energy and determination have been awe inspiring. I think they have done everything humanly possible to help themselves. They now come before you to ask for your help. I have spoken to many dental student groups about the wonderful advantages of a rural practice. The one question I was always asked was "How can you help me financially so that I can consider a rural practice?" Often a student comes out of dental school with a heavy debt load. (In the range of \$250,000 indebtedness) Their spouse must work in order for them to have a house, car and other necessities. Employment for the spouse is difficult in a smaller town although the dentist will always have plenty of work to do. If we could offer another financial incentive I believe this would make the rural practices more attractive and feasible for new dental school graduates. I write in favor of House bill 1315 and ask your help for Ashley and other small North Dakota towns.

Sincerely,

Lana Schlecht, DDS

Dakota heartland champion community

TOWNS AFFILIATED:

Ashley

Edgeley

Kulm

Lehr

Napoleon

Wishek

Zeeland

On behalf of the Dakota Heartland Champion Community, we are in total support of the Rural Practices Grant.

This would give small communities an opportunity to bring a dentist into their community. This would be part of rural development at its best, and be a big part of rural survival in small communities in North Dakota.

We certainly hope that this bill gets total support from the Legislative Assembly.

James Ruff, President

Dakota Heartland Champion Community

Wishek Job Development Authority



P.O. Box 456
Wishek, ND 58495-0456
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e-mail: libek@bektel.com

Jan. 20, 2009

Dear House Committee Members:

This letter is written in full support of HB 1315.

The lack of dental coverage is in crisis mode for many rural North Dakota communities, or it will be at that point in the coming few years. As rural populations continue their decline, residents of small towns are becoming accustomed to giving up the daily shopping conveniences they once had. We figure we can do without some retail or service related businesses without losing our identity as a community.

But when health-related services--the local clinic or hospital, nursing home, dentist--are affected, it begins to cut at the core of who we are as a community, and the urge to fight to save it heightens. Those communities who engage in that fight are finding extreme difficulty.

My community has been where many still find themselves, searching desperately for a dentist to establish a local practice that can provide this most basic healthcare service for our residents. The obstacles most encounter in luring a dentist are difficult, at best, to overcome. The population isn't there to generate the revenue the dentist needs or wants; the social community doesn't provide the opportunities he or she and their family wants; an adequate facility doesn't exist, or what does exist is sorely outdated to the point a potential candidate will have to inject tens of thousands of dollars before they can even open the door. That is money that may be piled on top of staggering school loans.

The Wishek JDA's efforts in recruiting a dentist spanned 24 months, during which time we spent considerable money and effort marketing an existing dental practice. After many contacts, the pursuit of countless leads and requests for help from several in the dental industry, we were successful in finding a young dentist who wanted to practice in a rural area after discovering he didn't enjoy working in a large city. The former dentist made our new recruit "an offer he couldn't refuse," literally giving his practice away if this young man would commit to Wishek for at least five years. He recognized the fantastic opportunity and made the commitment. It was a matter of money. In our case, we negotiated a deal that made economic sense to this young dentist. A cash incentive such as requested in HB 1315 could conceivably work the same way for others.

We were one of the lucky ones. Many small communities continue searching in vain for a dentist to maintain services for their residents. We have no idea what will happen at the end of this five year commitment. We hold out hope that our dentist's practice will be successful enough for him to stay.

Small towns are at such a disadvantage in most economic development areas, an incentive like this could be what turns the tide and allows them to find or retain needed dental service. The Wishek Job Development Authority Board of Directors strongly encourages the N.D. Legislature to pass this bill.

Respectfully,

Tom Lovik, EDC



Visit us on the Web at: www.wishek-nd.com
and www.tournd.com



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January 19, 2009

Ashley Job Development Authority
Attn: Sherrece Zimmerman
PO Box 97
Ashley, ND 58413

Dear Mrs. Zimmerman,

This letter is to inform you that the Cooperstown-Griggs County Economic Development Corporation supports the efforts to pass HB 1315 as a means of securing dentists in rural communities. It is important to the survival and growth of the rural communities to provide professional services, such as dentistry, to ensure that the residents' needs are addressed.

It is very difficult for medical professionals to practice in rural communities the size of Ashley and Cooperstown without some financial assistance to help with moving expenses, setting up an office or paying off school loans. This bill will help address this need and ensure that the practitioner will stay in the rural community for an appropriate length of time. We know that if they are committed to staying and become involved in the community they are more likely to stay for a longer period of time. Our rural communities can offer a great deal to these professional people and their families if they will only give us a chance.

Good luck with this bill and I sincerely hope it will be passed.

Sincerely,

Becky J Meidinger, Development Specialist
Cooperstown-Griggs County EDC

Greetings Honorable Kretschmar;

As a representative of the Kulm Community Development, Rural Leadership North Dakota and Dakota Heartland Champion Communities I would like to thank you for sponsoring House Bill 1315 that will help rural communities establish or replace a dentist within their communities and region. I strongly support the bill and I encourage the other Representatives from our region to also support it.

Bruce Lindgren
7174 Hwy 13
Kulm, ND 58456

January 26, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Kathleen Hoeft, Administrator and Chief Executive Officer of the Ashley Medical Center in Ashley, North Dakota.

I am writing in support of House Bill No.1315.

The very rural areas of North Dakota are facing a crisis in the finding and being able to hire licensed dentists. This is putting at risk many of the very young and the elderly, who are unable to travel to another dentist by themselves.

This Bill would help improve the ability for the very rural areas to compete with the larger towns and cities and would have the potential to improve the healthcare of our State.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hoeft
Adm/CEO