

MINUTES

**MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON SENATE AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 135

Call to Order: By **SEN. DAN WEINBERG**, on April 18, 2005 at 9:00
A.M., in Room 137 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Dan Weinberg, Chairman (D)
Rep. Dee L. Brown (R)
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)
Rep. Robin Hamilton (D)
Rep. Rick Ripley (R)
Sen. Donald J. Steinbeisser (R)

Members Excused:

Rep. Emelie Eaton (D)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Kyanne Kelly, Committee Secretary
Leanne Kurtz, Legislative Branch

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: SB 135, 4/14/2005
Executive Action: SB 135

EXECUTIVE ACTION SB 135

SEN. DAN WEINBERG said the conference committee meeting held last week on SB 135 was illegal because a senator has to chair the meeting. He explained that in the Senate committee hearing they felt the bill was too brief and opened-ended and that is why they wanted to add the amendment with a termination date. He said the Senate committee wanted the Department of Administration to come back to the legislature to show how the new plan was working.

REP. DEE L. BROWN stated it was a Legislative Audit Committee bill, not a Department of Administration bill. The audit found that there could be a possible savings of \$800,000. She said the Audit Committee would do another audit in a year to see if it is working.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG his concern was when a new program such as this is started he wanted to make sure they were doing the right thing. The most direct way to get the information is by having the Department of Administration come back to the legislature in 2007. He stated he was interested in how the new plan would look, how would it be administered and how well is it working.

REP. DEE L. BROWN said that the amendment terminates the program when what is really wanted is a review to see if it is working. She said by terminating it you are saying go back to what it was.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG said it probably would not terminate. He stated if it is working in 2007 then the Department of Administration would come back with another bill and the legislature could see if it is working.

SEN. DONALD J. STEINBEISSER asked what report would come back from the Legislative Audit.

REP. RICK RIPLEY said everybody would get a copy of the audit to determine if the new plan is working. He thought it would be a needless step to come back to the legislature.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG asked if frequent flyer miles would be addressed.

John Northey said this bill would not address the frequent flyer miles in one way or another.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG said the frequent flyer miles need to be dealt with because it could be as much as 5% of total spending.

REP. DEE L. BROWN said that if the buying is consolidated the Department of Administration will be able to leverage the tickets by volume buying. She stated the State is paying \$56 per ticket more by not having this in place.

REP. RICK RIPLEY said the legislature should let the Audit Committee do what it was set up to do.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG said that without the termination date the committee in the Senate probably wouldn't have passed the bill.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG asked if we could do both, an audit, and a termination date.

SEN. DONALD J. STEINBEISSER said it would be smoother to go along with the recommendations of the Audit Committee.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG said the bill is too brief and open-ended and doesn't tell how the thing will work. He said he wants the Department of Administration to come back in two years and tell how it is working. If it is working, the termination date will go away.

REP. ROBIN HAMILTON said he sees both sides, but as a member of the State Audit Committee he has come to trust recommendation of Audit Committee.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG asked if the savings be right away or if there would be a "ramp-up" time.

REP. DEE L. BROWN said it would take a "ramp-up" time.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG stated an audit report wouldn't tell too much information, however if someone comes from the Department of Administration to tell what they are doing, and how they are doing it, then that would be information used to decide whether to keep the program or let it go.

Motion: SEN. DAN WEINBERG MOVED THAT THEY RETAIN THE TERMINATION DATE AS JUNE 30, 2008.

Vote: SEN. WEINBERG, SEN. PEASE AND REP. HAMILTON voted yes, SEN. STEINBEISSER, REP. RIPLEY AND REP. BROWN voted no. The House report is no. The Senate report is yes.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 9:38 A.M.

SEN. DAN WEINBERG, Chairman

KYANNE KELLY, Secretary

GP/DB/kk

Additional Exhibits:

EXHIBIT ([cch83hb0135aad0.PDF](#))