

2003-04 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Senate Committee on
Health, Children,
Families, Aging and
Long Term Care
(SC-HCFALTC)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 03hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 03hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 03hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ **

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

➤ **

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ 03hr_SC-HCFALTC_Misc_pt03

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

MISC

Sen. Carol Roessler
Dear Sen.,

Re:
Assembly Bill - 107 (Very poorly written)
Senate Bill - 51 (Very incomplete - poorly written)

The sponsors of both bills represent a very small percentage of the Wisconsin Cemeteries. None of them represent Rural Wisconsin.

A. Bill - 107:

Six (6) sponsors are from Milwaukee, one (1) from Racine, one (1) from Madison, and one (1) from Eau Claire.

S.B. Bill - 51:

Eight (8) of the sponsors are from Urban areas and two(2) from partly rural.

80% of the cemeteries have no representation at all - that's 4 million Wisconsinites unrepresented.

Throw out both of these Bills.

SBS

Dewey Mathewson

Dewey



Duwayne R. Mathewson
504 W North Water St.
New London, WI 54961-1138

APR 09

SB 57

Assembly Bill 107 sounds a whole lot like a draft proposed by an assembly person, Lorraine Seratti. The only real difference between that draft, although as wrong and as poorly written as this bill, it was a little easier to read and understand.

I have worked on these issues as a member of the State Cemetery Advisory Committee and the State Cemetery Task Force. These are very tough issues, and they must be solved. An example of a tough problem is what should be considered a small non-profit cemetery. It was more or less agreed that selling 20 or less grave lots per year should exempt many cemeteries from many of the new laws.

Please remember 20 lot sales would mean 10 sales per year (because most couples buy 2 lots; a grave is a lot). Any cemetery selling 20 lots per year could be burying probably 10 deceased per year. Burying only 10 per year would make their cemetery a typical Wisconsin small non-profit cemetery. These 1800 Wisconsin cemeteries have never been a burden to the State. We are 1800 cemeteries, each run by local volunteers, honest, very highly respected, very conscientious local people serving their neighbors and friends - that do it right!

It appears to me that Seratti has attacked these issues with a shotgun, no knowledge and expertise. The small non-profit cemeteries take care of 80% of the 40,000 burials made each year in the state of Wisconsin. If you want to talk to experts, talk to small non-profit cemeteries. They have been burying their own for over 150 years!!! And They Do It Right!!!

The Waupaca County Cemetery Coalition (formed in 1999) has 23 cemetery members representing the cities of Waupaca, Marion, Clintonville, Weyauwega, Manawa, and a dozen or so village and church cemeteries. An area survey brought in over 1000 citizen signatures asking that the Legislature defeat not only Assembly Bill 107, but also Senate Bill 51.

Senate Bill 51 is like a bad itch that keeps coming back. It is a Bill that could force all 1800 non-profit cemeteries to throw up their arms in disgust and simply abandon their cemeteries. This would cost the State millions of dollars and would cost the taxpayers millions in new taxes every year. It is a bill that has the State telling the cemeteries how to operate their individual cemeteries. Budgets would double and law suits would flourish. Four million Wisconsinites and eighteen hundred cemeteries would suffer greatly. The only benefactors of this Bill are the 150 or so Funeral Home Owners!

A couple of years ago the New London Cemetery Commission (a 3-man committee chaired by an illegal Funeral Director Chair Person) won by a narrow margin vote of the NL City Council to keep the cemetery open all winter. Cemeterians with 150 years experience behind them warned that the budget would double - and it did! We warned against burials being made in the wrong place, and they were!! We warned against the damage to the trees, monuments, etc. It has been sad!! We warned against liability and sure enough a death has been attributed to a fall at a local cemetery due to the ice. Why do people have to die, be maimed, and suffer pneumonia before you listen to those who have gone through this all before.

In my opinion, the Legislature should encourage the Department of Regulations and Licensing to get a State Cemetery Board in place as quickly as possible. a 9 man State Cemetery Board made up of cemeterian from small non-profit cemeteries, township cemeteries, association cemeteries, small church yard cemeteries, and from the for profit cemeteries. These people with hundreds of years experience would do the best possible job for our taxpaying consumers.

A lot more energy should have been spent on enforcing laws already on the books. This done would have prevented headaches like Evergreen Cemetery. Registering - Licensing - Perpetual Care Funds - Mapping - Standard Records - Grave Indentification - all these could be handled much better by a Board made up of cemeterians than a bunch of politicians, bureaucrats, and funeral directors. All of whom I feel know nothing about cemetery operations.

They are more concerned with their own personal agenda than they are with the well-being of the State of Wisconsin and the consumers.

The purpose of this lengthy letter is that you might be more aware of the importance of the traditional Wisconsin non-profit cemeteries. We ask that you show your support to the 1800 non-profit cemetery to the thousands of volunteer experts. These are your own people - your district constituents. Send these bills back to their sponsors and tell them to study the subject. Go the townships in their districts, and find the cemetery boards in their areas; be informed before you vote.

Save the Consumers, Save Volunteerism,
Save the Taxpayers, and Save Our Cemeteries!

Sincerely yours,



Dewey Mathewson
Member - State Cemetery Advisory Committee
State Cemetery Task Force
Acting Chairman Waupaca County Cemetery Coalition

Roessler

- Scott
- Jensen Rep. Proposal.

Give it to someone
else -

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BC out

Health in

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~~emancipated~~
minors

Best friends
raise other
programs

**SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.**

149 N. Iowa Street, Dodgeville, WI 53533

Voice: (608) 935-2326 Fax: (608) 935-2876

September 15, 2003

M. Bill Oemichen
President and CEO
Wisconsin Federation of Co-ops
131 West Wilson Street, #400
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Mr. Oemichen:

I wish to go on record as offering my enthusiastic support for your efforts to develop a Cooperative Health Care Purchasing Alliance in Wisconsin (Assembly Bill 447 and Senate Bill 204).

The staff of the Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP) and I interact with our clients and the communities we serve on a regular basis. We provide health and human services to farming areas and to small towns with many small independent businesses. We consistently hear about the difficulties farmers and small business owners have with getting health insurance and being able to afford health insurance for themselves and their employees. In some cases when there is a catastrophic health care problem the end result is financial ruin and/or bankruptcy. It is not unusual to hear that farmers have to ration the health care coverage to their family members and are only able to afford insurance for themselves who are working and not to their children who are in school.

The potential for forming a member owned cooperative for the purpose of purchasing health care for their members, in my view, will be very well received in southwestern Wisconsin. I encourage you to continue with your efforts to develop your project and the staff and I of SWCAP are ready and willing to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter J. Orzechowski".

Walter J. Orzechowski, MSPH, MBA
Executive Director



Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives

131 West Wilson Street, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703

Phone: 608.258.4400 Fax 608.258.4407 www.wfcmac.org wfcmac@wfcmac.org

THE WISCONSIN COOPERATIVE HEALTH CARE PURCHASING ALLIANCE PROJECT

Assembly Bill 447/Senate Bill 204

Today in Wisconsin, thousands of farmers and small business owners are living without adequate health insurance for themselves, their employees and their families. The problem is especially dire in rural areas of the state, where individuals have little access to comprehensive coverage plans.

The Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives (WFC) represents a large number of agricultural and small business interests and has been working with Representative Curt Gielow and Senator Sheila Harsdorf toward a viable solution to this growing problem. The result is the introduction of companion bills, Assembly Bill 447 and Senate Bill 204, which would authorize up to five health care purchasing alliances formed as cooperatives under Chapter 185 of the statutes.

Known as the Wisconsin Cooperative Health Care Purchasing Alliance Project, Assembly Bill 447 and Senate Bill 224 give health care purchasing cooperatives the leverage needed to tackle health care cost and quality issues. The overriding goals are to stabilize insurance rates, improve health care delivery in rural Wisconsin and, most importantly, provide affordable, quality health care coverage to farmers and other small employers who have little or no access to health insurance. Integral to the project's success are several underlying key objectives, including:

- The cooperative model allows members to be directly involved in all aspects of the decision making process;
- Alliances determine participation criteria and negotiate directly with health plans to ensure that benefits are responsive to the needs of the region and alliance members;
- An educational component informs participants about health care cost drivers, including the impact of utilization and the importance of preventative care;
- Data analysis ensures cost efficiency, quality and patient safety;
- Risks are pooled to minimize premium fluctuations and gain leverage;
- An emphasis on cooperation and coordination allows individual purchasing alliances to learn from one another and eliminate duplicative administration efforts;
- State, federal and private planning grants have been identified as funding sources to meet actuarial, administrative and legal expenses;
- A federal grant will be sought to support a reinsurance stop loss fund to reduce risk and attract providers;
- Marketing initiatives and agent involvement are considered vital for gaining market share;
- A three year commitment by members and providers promotes access and stability; and,
- Farmers and small businesses have the flexibility to address health insurance issues in the private market outside of government involvement.

The Wisconsin Cooperative Health Care Purchasing Alliance Project is modeled after a similar demonstration project that is off to a strong start in the state of Minnesota. Less than two years after enabling legislation was finalized, two health care purchasing alliances are offering competitively priced insurance products to alliance members in Minnesota. Several additional purchasing alliances are in various stages of development, and the movement has spawned a number of private business coalitions seeking new and innovative ways to control health costs.

For more information about the Wisconsin Cooperative Health Care Purchasing Alliance Project, contact WFC President & CEO Bill Oemichen or WFC Government Relations Director Melissa Duffy at (608) 258-4400.



Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives

131 West Wilson Street, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703

Phone: 608.258.4400 Fax 608.258.4407 www.wfcmac.org wfcmac@wfcmac.org

To: Members of the Wisconsin Legislature

From: Bill Oemichen, President and CEO

Melissa Duffy, Government Affairs Director

Date: November 4, 2003

RE: Support of AB 447 and SB 204, the "Co-op Care" Health Care Purchasing Alliance Project

On behalf of WFC's 865 member cooperatives and the 2.9 million Wisconsin citizens who belong to cooperatives, we urge your positive consideration of Senate Bill 204 and its companion legislation, Assembly Bill 447.

A Private Sector Response That Does Not Request State Funding. This legislation does not require any state funding. Rather, the Legislature is being asked to provide a statutory framework for the cooperative that will make it more understandable and appealing to insurers.

A Pilot Cooperative Health Care Project for Rural and Urban Wisconsin. SB 204 and AB 447 would establish a new pilot project in rural and urban Wisconsin that would bring cooperative members and other small employers together under the cooperative umbrella to negotiate directly with health plans for insurance coverage. The goal of "Co-op Care" plan is to control health care cost and quality by increasing consumer market power and by putting health care decision-making squarely in the hands of consumers. A similar pilot project in the state of Minnesota is already helping a significant number of cooperative members and small employers gain control of runaway health insurance costs and quality issues.

Consumers Would Make the Critical Health Care Coverage Decisions. While the concept of "pooling" isn't new, the Co-op Care plan brings new ideas to the table that we feel will make our demonstration project a success and avoid the pitfalls that have plagued other ideas tried in the past. For one, the cooperative model is 100 percent consumer-oriented. By law and design, cooperative members are owners of the cooperative, and as such have a vested interest and input in all business decisions made by the cooperative. This will help the cooperative avoid the adverse risk selection issue that has negatively impacted prior purchasing alliances.

Consumers Would Be Educated About Health Care Choices. In recent years, policy-makers have discussed the importance of giving consumers more control over their health care decisions, but the WFC Co-op Care plan takes it a step further and puts a model in place for consumer involvement. As required by AB 447 and SB 204, members of the cooperative would be informed about health care cost drivers and initiatives they could employ to lower health care costs and improve health.

Federal Financial Assistance Is Possible and Timely Passage is Needed. Another factor setting the Co-op Care project apart is that U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Thompson has offered his assistance in helping to secure federal grant funding that would support a "stop loss" fund to help bring down the cost of health care for those who participate in Co-op Care. WFC has also identified other private and federal grant funding sources that could support start-up, actuarial and administrative costs associated with the pilot project. The timely passage of SB 204 or AB 447 is critical to allow WFC to take advantage of identified grant funding sources before their application deadlines pass.

Health care is the number one issue facing cooperative members and other small employers who are the foundation of our state's economy. Without a viable solution, Wisconsin will continue to lose our family farms and small businesses. WFC urges your positive consideration of SB 204 or AB 447.

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