

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE

TUESDAY, June 13, 1972.

The chief clerk makes the following entries under the above date.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

To the Honorable, the Senate:

The following bill, originating in the senate, has been approved, signed and deposited in the office of the Secretary of State:

Senate Bill	Chapter No.	Date Approved
775 (approved in part)	332	June 10, 1972

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICK J. LUCEY,
Governor.

June 10, 1972.

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have signed Senate Bill 775 creating an independent Board on Aging, removing the citizen board from the Department of Health and Social Services. However, I have deleted those sections of the bill which would remove the administrative responsibilities of the Division on Aging from the Department.

I recognize that this bill was advocated and passed with the hope that it would significantly improve the rendering of services by the state to senior citizens. But in my judgment, there is considerable evidence that the contrary result would be accomplished by enactment of the entire bill. The new department established could, in fact, result in a fragmentation of programs for senior citizens and the creation of additional administrative expenses that would consume funds otherwise available for program improvement.

It is an irrefutable fact that all levels of government in our society have historically neglected the special needs of

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elderly citizens. Those who have been capable of continuing to make a meaningful contribution to their communities have been cast aside and forced into a lifestyle of dependency; others who have required special services or care have discovered that such care has either not been available or that obtaining it has only been possible at the expense of personal dignity and independence.

The legislature, in recognition of these difficulties, has passed a measure which is seemingly responsive. But in fact, it merely compounds existing problems. Senate Bill 775 removes from the Department of Health and Social Services the Division on Aging, but leaves behind the major programs administered by the state to assist elderly citizens of limited economic resources and those with social and medical problems. Thus, while the bill purports to create an agency for the aged which will improve the planning and delivery of services, because it does not transfer essential functions of the Divisions of Family Services and Mental Hygiene, it could result in the frustration of planning, the further fragmentation of services and an even greater dissatisfaction with state government by those we would hope to serve.

Of additional concern is the fact that a number of services such as budgeting, accounting and purchasing, now provided the Division on Aging by the Department of Health and Social Services, would require the funding of new administrative positions in the proposed new department. The additional dollars required to fund these positions would not bring to the taxpayers of this state or to the aged any improvement in program or services but would instead merely build a new bureaucracy to duplicate functions presently available to the Division of Aging at no expense. As new programs are implemented by the state and federal government, there could only be a continuing diversion of program funds to pay the expense of administrative services which would be unnecessary if the Division continued a relationship to the Department of Health and Social Services.

In 1967, the legislature transferred the Commission on Aging to the then newly-created Department of Health and Social Services. It is apparent at this time that the intent of the legislature to improve services to the elderly has not yet been fully realized. It is my belief that a concerted effort

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by the Health and Social Services Board and Secretary, by the Council on Aging and its administrative staff and by those who are most concerned about the problems of senior citizens can result in a more promising proposal to resolve the existing failures which are acknowledged by all.

I can understand the fears of the elderly that, due to the insulated structure imposed by the Board form of government, their needs will not be met in a responsive manner. However, it would seem to be premature to start to dismantle the reforms made in the Kellet reorganization. Furthermore, the real quest is not for a separate agency for functional reasons, but rather for increased responsiveness. I believe this result can best be achieved by having the administrative head of the agency appointed by the chief executive of the state and thereby responsible to the voting constituents of the state. It is only then that not only the elderly, but also all of the other client groups served by the Department of Health and Social Services and the other board-form agencies, can be confident that their needs will be met in the ways most responsive to their own concept of their needs.

As a part of the budget process for the next biennium, I have directed the Department of Administration to examine the organization of the Department of Health and Social Services in terms of the manner in which services are delivered to the many special groups it serves. The senior citizens of Wisconsin are not the only client group of that agency who have insisted that their needs could be better met by a different kind of delivery system. If during the course of the legislative session next year there is continuing evidence that the present organization of services for the elderly does not assure these citizens the most efficient and effective possible help from the state, I am confident that a more comprehensive proposal to reorganize *all* of the services for the elderly can be introduced for legislative consideration which would not merely represent a change in the administrative structure, but rather a genuine improvement in the quality of services rendered.

We live in a time when a large measure of the public dissatisfaction with government is directly attributable to the gap between promise and performance, the disparity between the creation of high expectations and the failure of

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the public sector to fulfill those expectations. To fully enact Senate Bill 775, which creates a department of aging in name, but which establishes a department crippled in the ways I have described, in my judgment would be to perpetrate a deception on the senior citizens of this state which would be both cruel and unwarranted and would represent an action clearly contrary to the public interest. However, to establish an independent Board on Aging which reports directly to the Governor and the legislature seems a sound means of establishing a citizen ombudsman organization which will have a continuing input into the services rendered to the elderly. By removing this board from the Department of Health and Social Services, we are assuring that the group can exercise maximum independence and will have optimal impact.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICK J. LUCEY,
Governor.